

6-2016

# Tanzanian Art: Attracting Tourism and Constructing A Packaged African Image

Ben Washburn

*Union College - Schenectady, NY*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses>



Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), [African Languages and Societies Commons](#), and the [Art and Design Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Washburn, Ben, "Tanzanian Art: Attracting Tourism and Constructing A Packaged African Image" (2016). *Honors Theses*. 222.  
<https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses/222>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at Union | Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Union | Digital Works. For more information, please contact [digitalworks@union.edu](mailto:digitalworks@union.edu).

**TANZANIAN ART:  
ATTRACTING TOURISM AND CONSTRUCTING A PACKAGED AFRICAN  
IMAGE**

**By**

**Ben Washburn**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
Honors in the Department of Anthropology**

**UNION COLLEGE**  
March, 2016

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Methodology.....	5
Chapter Outline.....	7
<b>Literature Review.....</b>	<b>10</b>
1) Tourist Art & Cultural Tourism in Tanzania.....	10
2) Cultural Tourism in Africa.....	11
3) Defining Culture for Tourists: Postcolonial and Postmodern Tourism.....	13
4) Commodification of Culture, a Branding of “Otherness”, and Orientalism.....	18
5) Maasai history, marginalization, and cultural identity.....	21
6) The Effect of Globalization on Tourist Art.....	24
7) The Tourist Perspective: How important is authenticity?.....	25
<b>Chapter 1: The Lives of Artists in Bagamoyo.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Background of Bagamoyo and the Art Industry.....	32
Why Become an Artist?.....	35
Producing Art, Art Styles, and Efficiency.....	41
Artist—Tourist Interactions.....	48
<b>Chapter 2: Branding the Self.....</b>	<b>54</b>
Reinforcing a Cultural Brand.....	56
Creating Products of Sameness.....	58
Discrimination Against the Maasai.....	66
A Distinctive NGO Brand.....	68
<b>Chapter 3: The Tourist Perspective.....</b>	<b>76</b>
Why Visit Bagamoyo/Tanzania/East Africa.....	76
Low-Budget Tourists, Volunteers, Work.....	78
High-Budget Tourists, Vacationers, Safari-goers.....	86
<b>Epilogue.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Works Cited.....</b>	<b>92</b>

## **Abstract**

Over the past thirty-or-so years, there has been a large increase of tourism in East Africa. In the coastal town Bagamoyo of Tanzania, many young men have made a career out of the tourist-industry – by producing tourist art. In this paper, I analyze the lives of local artists in Bagamoyo, as well as argue that they brand their art in particular ways that align with their ideas of tourist expectations and preconceived ideas of Africa. I argue that these artists practice different types of branding – primarily depicting Africa as primitive and wild, as they see producing art as a business geared towards its target customers and their interests. In addition, tourists have different interests when buying tourist art, which is often influenced by what brought them to visit East Africa.

Through informal interviews, countless hours of ‘hanging out’ with local artists, taking painting and carving lessons, among other informing experiences, I uncover the lives of artists in Bagamoyo – why they became artists, how they brand their artwork, and how they feel in control in a tourist-dependent business. I spent seven weeks conducting fieldwork in Bagamoyo, as well as a week in Moshi, and a few days in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar.



## Introduction

*After Mselem, his art student, and I practiced shooting targets with a crafted slingshot in front of MSEBI shop – a small, local art shop managed by two Bagamoyo artists (Mselem and Biki) – Mselem and I sat down in the painting gallery area of his shop. While sitting in his shop, Mselem gave me tips and phrases to overcome the deceptive “Mzungu price (White person price)”, which artists often give a potential tourist buyer for an art piece in the hopes that the tourist is oblivious of both the low prices of local Tanzanian artwork and the local bargaining norms. As I am aware of from my frequent visits to Bagamoyo, tourists are often deliberately given higher prices at first because they are thought to be unaware of the relative cheapness of local art prices. Mselem told me how to tell an artist “I am not a white person” in Swahili, and if the artist responds with laughter, then the artist was most likely trying to ‘rip me off’. Also, he told me how to say “I know the price [of this]” in Swahili, as a means to assert myself as an experienced tourist – a tourist that has been to Bagamoyo before, and is therefore not easily tricked.*

Although the above form of tourist deception is relatively harmless to tourists (as they would only be ‘tricked’ into paying a relatively small amount more for the artist’s piece), this is just one of many realities that makes the artist feel *in control* of the artist-tourist exchange interaction. Bagamoyo artists, like many local East African artists, participate in a tourist-dependent industry. Tourists visit Bagamoyo, and largely East

Africa, for a variety of reasons. Such reasons influence their perceptions of ethno-tourism and the Western-formed stereotypes of Africa that they carry with them, which in some cases, are stereotypes that can be ‘untaught’. For artists in Bagamoyo, I argue that they do not in fact produce art that is authentic to their local culture, but rather produce art in ways that they have often been *taught*, and of images that they believe best depicts the tourists stereotypical perception of Africa. Therefore, although the artists see tourist-art as a business, they are often reinforcing/reproducing the tourist stereotypes of Africa, which may have an influence on what the tourist perceives as ‘authentic’ Africa. That being noted, most artists do not mind their distortion of their own local culture, as well as Maasai culture, as they feel they are in control of their art production, sales interactions, and lifestyle.

## **Methodology**

In this paper, I give an in depth look at the artist’s lives and their artwork, as well as the many types of tourists that visit Bagamoyo. Artists brand their culture in particular ways that they believe replicate the different tourists’ perceptions of East Africa. Two particular branding styles are the most prominent: 1) Branding Africa as primitive and wild; and 2) Branding Africa as underdeveloped and in need of help. As I will argue, both of these brands are situated towards particular kinds of tourists: those who come to Africa to relax, vacation, and safari; and those who come to Africa to volunteer, research, and do humanitarian work. My main emphasis is that, although artists choose to brand their art in particular ways that align with tourist interests and perceptions of Africa (rather than

create art that replicates their local culture), they feel in control of the situation, and for many, achieve a feeling of mobility.

During the summer of 2015, I conducted two months of fieldwork (mid-June to mid-August) in Tanzania. I spent about seven weeks in Bagamoyo visiting and building relationships with the local artists there. I also spent a couple days in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and over a week in Moshi, in which I met tourists during a 6-day hike of Mount Kilimanjaro. While in Bagamoyo, I volunteered part-time with an education-based non-profit organization. Volunteering only ‘part-time’ gave me countless hours to ‘hang out’ and research various artists within Bagamoyo – in their art shops, as well as elsewhere. Although I created relationships with many artists within Bagamoyo, I became the closest with Mselem – an artist whose shop was down the street from where I resided.

Throughout my fieldwork, I conducted numerous informal interviews with artists throughout Bagamoyo. My reputation as a tourist, and therefore a potential buyer, influenced the way that artists interacted with me. That being said, I like to believe the close relationship I built with Mselem (and a couple of other artists) eliminated the chance of a ‘fake persona’ that often comes with urging a tourist to buy their art.

During my time in Bagamoyo, I also participated in painting and carving lessons from local artists (in order to learn about the painting/carving process). In addition, I developed relationships with tourists from all over the West and who were in Tanzania for a variety of reasons, and many of them informed me of what they look for when buying African ‘tourist art’. I also conducted surveys with many tourists in order to get a better understanding of their intentions of buying African art. I am aware of several confounding variables within my research – mainly being restricted to a basic-level of

speaking and understanding Swahili. I feel as though fully understanding Swahili could have helped me build ‘real’ relationships with artists, as well as made me appear as less of a tourist, and more of an ‘insider’. My reputation as a tourist definitely influenced how artists interacted with me, as many were trying to pitch their artwork to me in the process. As many artists try to tie relationships with local NGOs (as a marketing/business strategy), the fact that I was volunteering with an NGO influenced my interactions. That being noted, I do not think I would have been able to build such relationships with artists if they had not first seen me as a tourist, and therefore as a potential buyer of their artwork. Lastly, I have visited Bagamoyo eight times before the summer of 2015 (for a total of about three months), so many of the local artists already knew myself and some of my family members well.

In acknowledgement of these variables that influenced my research, I believe that I made well of my fieldwork circumstances and situation.

## **Chapter Outline**

In this paper, I begin with providing a literature review of relevant topic and concepts to my fieldwork and research. I first analyze cultural tourism in Tanzania (and more broadly, Africa), in which I discuss what factors attract tourists to Africa. I then discuss a brief history of tourism in East Africa, and I distinguish between different types of tourism – postcolonial tourism and postmodern tourism – as described by Edward Bruner. Next, I discuss the how artists often brand and ‘commodify’ their culture as a way to align with Western stereotypes of Africa – much of which can be understand by

Edward Said's concept 'Orientalism'. I primarily note on the works of John & Jean Comaroff in this section. I provide a brief history of Maasai discrimination in East Africa, followed by an analysis of the influences of globalization. The literature review concludes with a short section on the tourist's perspective, which is mostly explored towards the end of my paper based on my own fieldwork.

In the first chapter, I discuss the lives of local artists in Bagamoyo. I analyze why most of these individuals decided to become artists, providing a main focus on self-employment and expressing creativity. Here I also discuss the artist-tourist interaction dynamic, in which artists often attempt to play off of the presumed interests and African stereotypes held by the tourists. The artists feel as though they are in control of these interactions. Lastly, I provide an analysis of many of the artists' desires to relocate.

In the second chapter, I discuss the ways in which artists brand their artwork to portray Africa as either wild and primitive, or undeveloped and in need of help. I discuss a particular 'traditional' dance performance that I attended, and I argue that the performers brand themselves as 'wild'. Next, I discuss the three prominent types of painting styles, and I argue that these styles are in fact *taught* and branded, rather than 'free' paintings of local cultural depictions. I dedicate particular attention to how the Maasai are branded as primitive, wild, and exotic. Lastly, I discuss 'Ten Thousand Villages': an international organization that sells art created by artisans from undeveloped countries. I argue that this organization rebrands African art in a feminized and sustainable way that gears towards the interests of their targeted Western customers.

In the third chapter, I discuss the different types of tourists I have come across in Bagamoyo, as well as elsewhere in Tanzania. I argue that the reason(s) tourists visited

Tanzania impacts their particular interests in buying tourist art. For instance, vacation/safari-going tourists tend to be more entrenched with Western stereotypes of Africa, as they are largely experiencing these stereotypes of Africa as exotic, full of animals, and wild. On the other hand, volunteer/researching tourists often buy local art as a means to support the artists – they are often more interested in the interactions/connections with the artist than the authenticity of the actual art piece.

In conclusion, I provide an epilogue that portrays where Mselem is in his life now, and the paths that he has taken since I last saw him in August of 2015. Like most artists, he is looking for other reliable ways to earn a living on the side of being an artist, which is dependent on ‘tourist seasons’.

I hope that this paper will provide a better understanding of why local artists often choose to brand their art in ways that reproduce stereotypes of Africa. Additionally, I hope that my analysis will make clear of how both local artists and tourists feel about the depiction of Africa within local art, and the local art tourism industry in broad.

## **Literature Review**

## 1) Tourism Art & Cultural Tourism in Tanzania

My topic of interest is how culture is portrayed in cultural tourism, and particularly in tourist art in Tanzania and Kenya. Tourist art often presents a distorted picture of culture to tourists, catering to their desires for exotic “otherness” that confirms their stereotypes of Africans. For instance, the Maasai, a pastoralist tribe known as warriors, and for exotic garb and extensive initiation ceremonies, are the “face” of East Africa in many advertisements. Much tourist art either represents Maasai or claims to be something used and created by Maasai. As an indigenous group, the Maasai have been marginalized by the nation-state during both colonial and post-colonial times (Hodgson 2011: 28), yet their cultural image is often celebrated as a national symbol of both Tanzania and Kenya because it caters to a tourist desire to see an exotic, primitive, Africa. Here I explore several kinds of literature relevant to this topic. First, I explore a specific literature on cultural tourism and more specifically tourist art. This literature examines the ways local cultures are distorted for tourists and what impact this has on people in those cultures. I will particularly focus on the ways East African and Maasai cultures are portrayed for tourists. This will lead me to a more general literature examining the ways Euro-Americans view “non-Western” cultures, most of it stemming from Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism that suggests that Euro-Americans view other cultures as foils for themselves, and that this is a strategy for domination. Finally, I will look specifically at the Maasai: their history within Kenya and Tanzania in the context of colonialism and globalization; the ways they are portrayed for tourists and the consequences this has for them.

## 2) Cultural Tourism in Africa

Although tourism in Africa represents only about three to five percent of world tourism, “income from tourism [in Africa] is crucial and tourism investments are considered to be the most profitable”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 1). African cultural tourism grew because of the growing European interest of Romanticism. Van Beek & Schmidt write: “Romanticism has been a crucial feature in the development of long range tourism in Europe, and characteristically, the majority of international tourists still stem from North-western Europe where the influence of the Romantic ideals on the elite has been strongest”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 2). Romanticism created a change in how Europeans perceived nature: “nature was no longer to be conquered, mastered and tamed but to be admired, protected and cherished”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 2). Therefore, the interest of cultural tourism in Africa began with the European appreciation of nature, as “Africa is the prima donna of ‘nature’”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 2). Africa began to represent a “theme park” to the West, in which they could observe the wildlife and the “wild”: that being African tribes (van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 2-3).

African tourist agencies often advertise Africa as exotic and wild. Van Beek and Schmidt write: “A tourist brochure describes an African holiday as a ‘comfortable adventure,’ highlighting the paradoxical nature of travelling in ‘the wilds,’ while keeping the wilderness at arm’s length. Africa is daunting, full of dangers, wild animals, strange people, deadly diseases, without security, a ‘wilderness’”(2012b: 4). Because Africa is portrayed as wild and dangerous, tourists are more comfortable with African tourist



resorts and agencies that are run by a European rather than an African (van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 4). Additionally, African national parks are created and distorted in ways that align with the European imagination of nature. African parks are in fact “culturally created wilderness, indeed, colonial products resulting from shutting off areas, ousting people, limiting hunting rights and struggling against ‘poaching’”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 7). Similar to African performances, the “behind the scenes” of the cultural production is hidden from tourists. Without the knowledge of most tourists, “the host culture sets the stage for tourists, to show their life as they want to portray it, in particular as they think the tourists want to see it: a local culture tailor-made for visitors”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 14).

Before experiencing African culture, tourists often have an image of what they expect the culture to be like. Much of this constructed image is a result of media, which either displays Africa as “a continent of suffering and crisis”, or else displays the wildlife aspect of Africa, which mostly “feature white people whispering tidbits of interesting information about the animals close-focus to the camera”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 17). Sally Price writes further into the impact of the media: “Even for those who don’t leave home, the exotic images of world diversity, which had long been disseminated through the printed page to readers’ imaginations, have come alive with both action and color in movies and television”(1989: 23). For cultural tourism, especially in Africa, “the notion of fragility dominates”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 18), as tourists see Africa as close to nature. The tourism agencies are well aware of the stereotypical cultural image that the tourists expect to see. Van Beek and Schmidt write: “The tourist encounter is an exchange of images, for the tourist is armed with notions how ‘the other’ should look

stemming from media, travel books and guides, with the photographic high ground of the National Geographic Magazine as the ultimate yardstick”(2012b: 20). When experiencing cultural tourism, the tourists often believe whatever they are shown. Tourist agencies often promise the tourists cultural authenticity, though as I will return to further in the literature review, “the tourism industry then more or less tricks the traveller by a performance of otherness, a ‘staged authenticity’”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 22).

### 3) Defining Culture for Tourists: Postcolonial and Postmodern Tourism

Cultural tourism often results in “a process of homogenization and abstraction” (John & Jean Comaroff 2009: 12) that simplifies cultures as one, and creates an “interchangeable sameness”(2009: 23) that embraces the Western stereotypes of African culture. For instance, the Maasai are often presented as “unchanged and resistant to modernity”(Bruner 2005: 55), and therefore, as “timeless and ahistorical”(2005: 73). In order to be successful in the ethno-tourism industry, the advertised culture must go through a commoditizing process. John and Jean Comaroff explain the “commodification of culture” process using the example of the Zulu of South Africa. They write: “*the* Zulu (or *the* Tswana or *the* San), for all their internal divisions, become one; their ‘lifeways,’ withdrawn from time or history congeal into object-form, all the better to conceive, communicate, and consume”(2009: 12).

I will first focus on postcolonial tourism in Tanzania and Kenya: a form a tourism existing during the twenty-or-so years after these countries gained independence, in which the colonial-native relationship is revisited through how the native is

dehumanized and separated from the tourist. In postcolonial tourism, Maasai culture “hid all outside influences and manufactured objects”(Bruner 2005: 73), which emphasizes the viewpoint that the Maasai have resisted modernization and civilization, and have stuck to their “traditional” and “primitive” ways. The Maasai focus on exaggerating their cultural difference and replicating the Western stereotypes of their own culture: that stereotypical image being “a beautiful, proud, illiterate people who live in an ancient, traditional and unchanging way, in perfect harmony with nature”(Wijngaarden 2010a: 100). Presenting the culture as ahistorical is essential to succeed in the tourism industry because Maasai culture must reproduce Western stereotypes of the “other,” untouched by Western culture, in order to satisfy the tourists’ desires for a foil to the perceived problems and to the perceived superiority of their own culture.

Vanessa Wijngaarden argues that “Maasai have been produced and reproduced according to ‘the ideal mental conceptualization of the Western European idea of an African ‘noble savage’. They represent ‘a global image of African tribesmen’ and are often seen as the symbol of an Africa that has remained static and devoid of civilization”(Wijngaarden 2012a: 184). Additionally, she argues there is a certain code Maasai must follow in order to attract ethno-tourism. Wijngaarden claims: “In order to be an attractive object of tourism and achieve a higher standard of living through industry, a certain amount of primitivism has to be put on stage”(2012a: 196). Local Tanzanian artists have caught on to the Western tourist attraction to the Maasai image, so they too often reproduce an exoticized Maasai image in many of their art products.

Edward Bruner presents the tourist site “Mayers Ranch” as an example of postcolonial tourism in Kenya. Organized and run by a British couple in the 1970s and

1980s, “the site enacts a colonial drama of the savage pastoral Maasai and the genteel British, playing upon the explicit contrast between the wild and the civilized so prevalent in colonial discourse and sustained in East African tourism”(Bruner 2005: 23). The Maasai are presented as less civilized than their superior, “colonial” Western audience, which in turn satisfies the tourist’s desire of “imperialist nostalgia”(Bruner 2005: 34). Tourists are guided to believe the Maasai are resisting civilization, modernization, and globalization; and therefore, they are guided towards a perspective of the Maasai that colonists held many years ago. Bruner writes: “From the early 1900s, the British saw the Maasai as warlike, militaristic, primitive, as ‘natural man’ who drank blood and ate raw foods, and rejected cultivated plants”(2005: 57). Although the tourists are viewing Maasai “primitiveness” through what Bruner calls an “experience theater”: “an imaginary space into which tourists enter and through which they negotiate a physical and conceptual path”(2005: 49), the tourists are deceived into believing that, what they are witnessing is not a distorted cultural performance, but instead Maasai everyday life. The tourists are blind to the fact: “The Maasai and the Mayers are on display and their culture is for sale, but the lines they speak are written for them by the real producer of Mayers Ranch, the tourist industry”(Bruner 2005: 70). The Mayers present the Maasai performance as a natural Maasai scene: “The background is uncluttered, the light is perfect, and it is as if the tourists were traveling in the bush and just happened to come upon a charming domestic scene”(Bruner 2005: 50). The created scene presents “Maasai men as exemplars of an African primitive, as natural man, It depicted Maasai men as brave warriors, tall and athletic, who, at least in the past, would raid for cattle, kill lions with but a spear, consume raw foods such as blood and milk, and instill respect and fear

in others”(Bruner 2005: 73). By portraying the Maasai as such, the Mayers create an exaggerated boundary between the tourist and the Maasai and emphasize the benevolent paternalism of European colonialism.

The rigid boundary is also displayed in the guided movements of the tourists that is part of a distorted “cultural realistic” experience: “The physical movement from the mud huts and brown dust of the Maasai compound to the lush green garden adjacent to the Mayers’ main house crystallized the contrast between the primitive Maasai and the genteel British and evoked the broader contrast between the wild and the civilized”(Bruner 2005: 77). By creating a distinct boundary between the civilized, modern, tourist and the wild, primitive Maasai, the Mayers believed that they were fulfilling tourist desires. Overall, “Mayers Ranch catered to the darkest desires of the tourist imaginary, fixing Maasai people in a frozen past, representing them as primitive, denying their humanity, and glorifying the British colonialism that had enslaved them”(Bruner 2005: 77). Because the Maasai scene was a distorted creation that the tourists were deceived into believing was natural Maasai life (in which the Maasai are primitive, wild, and uncivilized), “the tourists viewed the Maasai from a colonial subject position, as did early explorers and ethnographers”(Bruner 2005: 73). In the 1980s, the Kenyan government shut down Mayers Ranch, because an African tourist site owned and controlled by a British couple resembled too much of the colonial past. Additionally, most of the profits were going to the European couple rather than the Maasai performers.

Bruner also discusses the “Out of Africa” Sundowner tourist site: an example of contemporary postmodern tourism, to show how inaccurate, simplified images of African culture are sometimes embraced by Africans themselves. Unlike postcolonial tourism,

postmodern tourism creates a site where those who are performing have control over how they present their own cultural image to tourists. Additionally, the performers and artists receive much more of the tourism profits. The Sundowner is a tourist resort in the Mara Reserve of Kenya, and unlike Mayers Ranch, the performers and artists present “a good show rather than staged authenticity”(Bruner 2005: 75). The Maasai are no longer presented as ahistorical and unchanging, and therefore, there is a “breaking of the binary, [and] ethnic tourism in Kenya is structurally changed”(Bruner 2005: 85). Although the Maasai present their culture as romanticized and distorted at the Sundowner, the “boundaries are not rigid—tourists and natives do move into each other’s spaces”(Bruner 2005: 90). Tourists, for instance, are invited to interact with Maasai performers and to dances with them. The Sundowner dissolves the dehumanized version of the Maasai that was presented at Mayers Ranch.

Despite the fact that the Maasai have control of their own cultural image in postmodern tourism, they often distort their culture in a way that aligns with the Western stereotypes of their culture. Bruner writes: “What is new is that the Americans at the Sundowner, who have presumably made the journey in order to experience African culture, instead encounter American cultural content that represents an American image of African culture”(2005: 86). The Maasai present their “exoticized” cultural image (which conforms to Western stereotypes) while allowing the tourists to view from what Wijngaarden calls the “tourist bubble”(2012a: 177). The tourist bubble creates a form of “mediating infrastructure that stands between local ‘hosts’ and visiting ‘guests’”(Wijngaarden 2012a: 177), and allows tourists to “enjoy the experience of change and novelty only from a strong base of familiarity, which enables them to feel

secure enough to enjoy the strangeness of what they experience”(Wijnngaarden 2012a: 177). Allow the tourist bubble brings the tourist and the Maasai closer together; it is also what separates them and allows the tourist to view the culture from a “comfortable” distance.

#### 4) Commodification of Culture, a Branding of “Otherness”, and Orientalism

In the process of creating an exotic timeless image of Africans for tourists, ethnic cultures are commodified and branded. Branding and commodification of culture causes the culture to lose its true meaning, as “‘ethnic tourism’ is frequently said to ‘destroy ... that which it seeks,’ creating, in place of [the appearance of] ‘authenticity,’ a feeling of ‘cultural flatness whereby all sense of meaning and belonging’ is eroded, rendered superficial”(John & Jean Comaroff 2009: 20). Other scholars see the process of commodification of culture as not turning the culture into an abstract form, but instead only packaging the culture into an object readily available for the tourist industry: “To the extent that the commodification of culture is refiguring identity, it is doing so less as a matter of brute loss, or of abstraction, than of intensified fusions of intimacy and distance, production and consumption, subject and object”(John & Jean Comaroff 2009: 27). Scholars would agree that “there is a gap between reality and the image projected by the tourism industry”(Wijnngaarden 2012a: 184), though there are different interpretations of whether the projected cultural image has long-lasting effects on the actual culture. Also, because “there is no single authentic Maasai culture in part because Maasai culture is continually changing and there are many variants”(Bruner 2005: 93),

the effects on the actual culture from selling a cultural brand could be viewed as not making the culture inauthentic, but instead as solely a cultural change shifting toward greater homogenization, stability, and emphasizing elements that make the culture exotic to Western tourists.

In order to succeed in the ethnotourism industry, the ethnic group must identify their “cultural uniqueness ... which are often considered ‘backward’ by the dominant ethnic majority”(Picard & Wood 1997: 6), and then use this “uniqueness” to create a cultural brand. The cultural brand is often exaggerated and exoticized to relate with Western stereotypes of the culture, and it is also objectified in order to sell in the tourist market. John and Jean Comaroff write:

Those who seek to brand their otherness, to profit from what makes them different, find themselves having to do so in the universally recognized terms in which difference is represented, merchandised, rendered negotiable by means of the abstract instruments of the market: money, the commodity, commensuration, the calculus of supply and demand, price, branding. And advertising (2009: 24).

By analyzing Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism, one can begin to understand why Westerners perceive Africans as “the ultimate Other”(Wijngaarden 2010a: 99). Although Said particularly focuses on Middle-Eastern peoples as the Orient, I will show that the concepts he articulates could just as easily represent Africans, or more specifically, indigenous African peoples. Said explains that people everywhere look to other groups as foils, allowing them to define and understand themselves. Western scholars, for example, created an image of “the Orient” that opposed it to themselves:



“The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences”(Said 1978: 1). Similarly in Africa, Wijngaarden claims: “The savage [indigenous Africans] exists only in the human imagination, and therefore the concept can never justly be attributed to people”(2010a: 100). The “savage” viewpoint exists in thought, and therefore Maasai who are selling ethno-tourism try to display their culture as this “Western imaginative viewpoint” in order to attract tourism. In Said’s writing, as Asian and Islamic cultures, defined as “the Orient”, “helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience”(1978: 1-2). Groups tend to define themselves in comparison to the anti-group, and this is why tourists compare themselves with the Maasai (who they view as being completely the opposite).

Although Said argues “the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that gives it reality and presence in and for the West”(1978: 5), he also claims “it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was *essentially* an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality”(1978: 5). In other words, once scholars defined an Orient, Islamic and Asian cultures began to live up to this image in order to please the more powerful Westerners, and Westerners acted as if cultures really were as they were imagined. In the contemporary world, the media (and tourist industry) greatly exaggerates the “primitive” Maasai image, which is then reproduced within the ethnotourism industry. Said argues that: “The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be ‘Oriental’ in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European. But also because it *could* be—that is, submitted to being—made Oriental”(1978: 5-6). Similarly, the Maasai who participate in the

tourism industry often play along with Western stereotypes of Africans, and Jean and John Comaroff address this issue by writing: "...it is tragic evidence of the plight of people whose survival depends on running with the romance of their own primitivism—and on the fitful recognition of fee-paying strangers"(2009: 26). The West begins to view the Oriental with many stereotypes that are reproduced through ethno-tourism: that of being a people of "backwardness" and "unchanging abstraction"(Said 1978: 7-8). Said claims the "Orient follows (perhaps occurs within) certain distinct and intellectually knowable lines"(1978: 13), which can be seen within the Maasai tourism industry.

##### 5) Maasai history, marginalization, and cultural identity: The Maasai-State Relationship

Colonialism in Africa impacted the formation of African ethnic groups, as well as influenced their cultural identities. Colonialism in Africa depicts Said's ideas that colonial stereotypes of other cultures justify controlling them and in some ways bring these stereotypes into reality since they become defined with colonial policy. Colonists tended to lump African groups together into "a single 'tribal' identity", whereas before colonialism, "most Africans moved in and out of multiple identities"(Grinker et. al 2010b: 455). Aidan Southall describes the issue of clumping together African groups: "The representation of adjacent stateless societies as neatly discrete series of named units is to misunderstand and misrepresent them"(Grinker et. al 2010b: 89). By splitting African groups into different "tribes": a term that "masks our ability to see the internal diversity of African communities and to look for models other than descent and lineage to

account for social and political organization” (Grinker et. al 2010b: 68), colonialism set up a hierarchical and divided society where the nation-state could treat “tribes” as inferiors. Additionally, the term “tribe” connotes a degree of primitiveness and changeless-ness (Lewellen 2002: 103): connotations that influenced the Tanzanian state’s discrimination towards the Maasai and other indigenous groups after colonialism. Due to their image as primitive, uncivilized, and unchanging, the Maasai have “experienced a long history of political subjugation, economic marginalization, territorial dispossession, and cultural and linguistic discrimination”(Hodgson 2011: 37). For example, the Tanzanian government created a campaign in the 1960s called “Operation Dress-Up”, which “focused on Maasai’s perceived poor, dirty and uncivilized way of being, and was meant to induce them to wear ‘modern’ clothes instead of their traditional attire”(Wijngaarden 2010a: 105). Discrimination from the Tanzanian government continued into the 1970s: the government refused “access to bars, restaurants and public transport, and threatened to deny medical care, to Maasai who were dressed ‘improperly’”(Wijngaarden 2010a: 106).

Today, although the Tanzanian and Kenyan government advertise the “cultural uniqueness” of the Maasai as a means to attract cultural tourism, the Maasai are still victims of forced land migration, as well as other forms of discrimination. For example, the Maasai living in the Ngorongoro Crater of Tanzania are discriminated against by wildlife conservation policies, which are “undermining Maasai rights to land, endangering their livelihoods, and possibly promoting the further eviction of Maasai from Ngorongoro”(Hodgson 2011: 29). The Maasai are not a rare case of indigenous group discrimination by the nation-state. Hodgson writes:

Indigenous peoples have often suffered greatly *because* of certain environmental interventions in the name of conservation and tourism: they have been forcibly relocated to make room for game parks and buffer zones, prohibited from accessing and using customary resources to protect forest reserves, and so forth (2011: 6).

Indigenous groups are demanding rights from their nation-states, such as “the right to determine their own development and to control and protect their cultural knowledge and performances”(Hodgson 2011: 7). With the demanding of indigenous rights from the governments comes a paradox. That paradox being: “indigenous groups must demand recognition from the very nation-states that have historically treated them as second-class citizens (if citizens at all) by ignoring their rights, exploiting their resources, and disparaging their cultures and identities”(Hodgson 2011: 6). Additionally, Hodgson argues that these “exploitative relationships between nation-states and certain kinds of people” are “relationships that have been produced and exacerbated by colonialism, nation building, and economic modernization”(2011: 28). Because the Maasai, among other African indigenous groups, “had long posed a challenge to colonial and postcolonial state agendas of control, containment, and modernization”(Hodgson 2011: 37), they are discriminated against by their governments, yet their cultural image continues to be advertised for cultural tourism purposes.

## 6) The Effect of Globalization on Tourist Art

The great rise of globalization beginning in the 1990s resulted in the opportunity for a growing number of indigenous cultures to participate in the world market, although, their participation significantly changed (and continues to change) their cultures. Lewellen writes: “Wherever capitalism became the dominant form for indigenous peoples, further transformations of culture, social structure, economy, and politics were inevitable”(2002: 13). He continues: “By and large, specific cultures are inevitably transformed by changes in technology, mobility, and more porous and malleable boundaries, but rather than being absorbed by some global culture, *they* do most of the absorbing”(Lewellen 2002: 53). Cultures who participate in the global market adopt aspects of this global culture within their own, and this “global culture exists only through other cultures”(Lewellen 2002: 54). As a globalized world becomes more prevalent, “mass media creates new scripts for possible lives and possible futures. The limits of what can be conceived, of what is possible, have been enormously extended”(Lewellen 2002: 96). Through cultural tourism, indigenous cultures are able to gain much profit from primarily Western tourists: a circumstance that only becomes possible with the globalized spread of ideas and people.

Globalization brings much attention and focus on the anthropological term “hybrid”, which is “the intermixture of cultures *at different levels of traditionalism and modernism*”(Lewellen 2002: 100). It is important to clarify that no cultures are completely isolated prior to globalization, and therefore, “all cultures are already hybrid, so what we are witnessing today is one hybrid culture mixing with another”(Lewellen 2002: 102). That being said, what is deemed “traditional” and “modern” of an indigenous culture comes into debate during globalization. Lewellen distinguishes the two as follows: “Traditionalism tends to be much more culturally embedded, with a high value on

continuity; modernism is more individualist, atomizing, and supportive of change”(2002: 102). In tourism art, it is particularly difficult to distinguish between what is traditional and modern, and the creators of the art may distinguish their art differently from the tourist or outsider.

#### 7) The Tourist Perspective: How important is authenticity?

Many scholars like Wijngaarden, claim that tourists are “yearning for authenticity, ‘realness’ ...that only traditional societies supposedly maintain”(2010a: 103). Bruner, in contrast, argues, the importance of authenticity differs between tourists (2005: 97). Bruner uses the phrase “the questioning gaze” to “describe tourists’ doubt about the credibility, authenticity, and accuracy of what is presented to them in the tourist production”(2005: 95). Whereas some tourists may have a strong questioning gaze, others “may push the questioning gaze aside [at Maasai performances] so they may delight in the excitement and danger of being with the Maasai and so they may play, in their imagination, even temporarily and tentatively, with the colonial slot into which they are being positioned”(Bruner 2005: 97).

Authenticity is also very difficult to determine in art and performances. Van Beek and Schmidt argue that the term “implies a contradiction” because “no living community will define itself as authentic or inauthentic; the question only surfaces when a third party comes in with a preconceived idea and then extends judgment”(2012b: 22). They continue by stating: “Authenticity is the way we think that the past should inform the present. Authenticity is a myth, in fact the foundational myth of tourism and a powerful

driving myth in the case of Africa, and as such reflects something of the fundamental paradoxes of this global industry”(van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 22). Whereas I would not go as far to categorize authenticity as a myth, I do agree that it is very difficult to determine, and there is not a distinct line between authentic and inauthentic. As I hope to focus on throughout my fieldwork, some cultures may produce art and performances that are more true to their local culture than others, and this “trueness” is what I would define as authentic. I hope to discover more about what this authenticity, or “trueness”, in tourist art would look like for specific cultures.

The literature, in short, suggests that European and American tourists look to Africa as a place of primitive animals and primitive people, unchanging through history and living in harmony with nature. In order to make money, Africans must cater to these tourist desires by making their own cultures appear to be exotic, unchanging, and primitive. Some scholars argue that tourists understand and are not bothered by the situation, and that Africans don’t mind ‘branding’ their own cultures as long as they are in control and profit. In the following pages, I will suggest through my fieldwork that African artists working in the tourist industry have a sense of control and satisfaction, and that they perceive being a small artist as something that gives them greater control of their lives. Artists see themselves as manipulating tourists instead of being manipulated by tourists, and they produce stereotypical art because it is easy for them to mass-produce such paintings, leading to more profits. I further suggest that the portrait of the tourist is oversimplified and neglects an increasingly common kind of tourist – the volunteer/research tourist who spends up to six months in Africa. Such tourists do not

look to Africa as a primitive place, but instead as a poor place where volunteers can form relationships, learn about other cultures, and help people. The art sold by NGOs like Ten Thousand Villages caters to such tourists, suggesting an image of enterprising, domestic, culture-bound women whose lives buyers can participate in and improve.

## **Chapter 1: The Lives of Artists in Bagamoyo**

*I showed up a half hour early for my first scheduled painting lesson with Mselem, so I ended up watching him finish a knife-style 'landscape' painting. The painting was of a*



*savanna landscape with two giraffes, two elephants, and two zebras. For a knife-style painting, the artist first paints the background, and once that dries, the artist then paints the animals (usually in all black). Before the black paint dries, the artist carves the designs and details into the animals and landscape with an art knife. I watched as Mselem would carve out the spots on the giraffes and the stripes of the zebras, while occasionally breaking to wipe the black paint off of the knife using a pair of cut up jeans as a rag. The speed of his work made me realize how many paintings an artist is able to create in a short amount of time. From what I've seen (including in the 'Old Market'), many artists are in their shops throughout the day, and therefore they spend a lot of time creating new paintings and carvings. Artists in Bagamoyo seem to value quantity over quality – Mselem said he does not spend more than two weeks on even his largest, most detailed paintings (and based on how quickly I have seen Mselem paint, I am confident he is able to complete multiple paintings in a single day). Also, when a layer of paint is drying, an artist will often use that time to work on other paintings. Largely, the painting process is very efficient, and the artists are talented in being able to mass-produce a variety of paintings styles; some of which are altered in small details.*



*A knife-style painting in MSEBI shop*

The Old Market is the most popular art destination for tourists who are traveling within or through Bagamoyo. The Old Market is run by fifteen to twenty artists, many of whom have been producing and displaying their paintings, carvings, and jewelry there for numerous years. The Old Market is a roofed outdoor market, and about two-thirds of the space is dedicated to the production and sales of art. Another one-third is used by primarily women cooking ‘local’ food and as a dining area. Although the Old Market is the largest site for an art industry geared towards tourists, there are various other small art shops located throughout Bagamoyo. Most of these art shops are rented, small, cement block buildings, or else are small wooden rooms. In both cases, small art shops often have art on display in front of the shop to lure in potential buyers. With the exception of the Old Market, most art shops within Bagamoyo are independently run, or else are run together by two or three artists.

During my nearly two months in Bagamoyo, I spent much of my time in “MSEBI”: a two-room art shop run by two friends, Mselem and Biki. Although there are many exceptions, Mselem generally creates paintings, and Biki generally manufactures

and brings in carvings and jewelry made by other craftsmen. Like most small art shops in Bagamoyo, MSEBI shop is located very close to one of the many hotels or resorts. By establishing an art shop close to temporary tourist destinations, artists are more likely to have a walking-by tourist wander into their shop. On most summer days, Mselem sits at the desk inside of his shop while either painting or relaxing, and he attempts to welcome in tourists who walk by his shop on the stone road (a road that leads to many popular tourist attractions in Bagamoyo, such as a slave-trade museum, the Old Market, restaurants, and the fish market).

As I immersed myself in the world of the local artists of Bagamoyo in the summer of 2015, I had the intention of learning much about how the Maasai are portrayed through art, and how they felt about their image being presented by artists who are not Maasai themselves. Although the Maasai have been historically discriminated against by the state, and although I have encountered experiences in which locals themselves regard the Maasai as ‘un-modern’ and ‘warrior-life,’ their ‘primitive’ image is constantly reproduced as a tourist commodity, and the artists, as well as many tourist agencies, benefit off of this distorted, and often uninformed, representation. During my research, I began to realize that the artists themselves do paint a lot of scenes that evoke the Maasai, but do not spend much time thinking about what kind of image they are portraying of their country. In an environment where resources are scarce, art is a business in which artists think more about what will sell than about what kind of image there are representing of Africa. Additionally, due to a language barrier and lack of connections, I was unable to find out if the Maasai themselves cared about, or were offended by, their ‘primitive’ image being reproduced for the profit of others. Although, a few local friends

informed me that they believe Maasai are not in fact offended by their image being presented by artists.

Through spending a considerable amount of time with the artists themselves, my eyes were opened to the perspectives and lives of the artists. One of, if not the most, common painting is in fact what artists refer to as ‘Maasai style,’ which depicts tall, skinny figures standing next to each other, sometimes holding spears, or pots on their heads. I realized that there is a town-recognized (as well as nationally-recognized) artist understanding of how to simply produce this particular painting style through a combination of steps. Although the image of the Maasai presented in art is in fact ‘primitive,’ reproduced, and portrayed as a single generalized ‘culture of sameness,’ the artists themselves are not concerned by this depiction, and instead see themselves as using their talents to construct art (often in patterns) that will sell in a tourist-based market. Artists, in fact, think that each person injects his own “vibe” into paintings, so even if the products look very similar to each other, artists see the paintings they produce as unique.

Contrary to my suspicion that artists would resent having to portray their culture as ‘primitive’ for the benefit of tourists, the artists see themselves in power of the particular exchange relationship, as they are the ones choosing to construct their art in this way. In general, they also felt that they were able to manipulate tourists, some of whom they saw as oblivious to local prices, which again made the artists feel in control of the situation. I would also like to clarify that not all art is simplified to a generalized conception of Africa being a destination of wildness, where there exists beautiful sunsets and savannas, safari animals roaming in plains, and Maasai standing beside each other

with their traditional jewelry, shuka clothes, and spears. Some artists do occasionally incorporate their own outlying artistic ideas into their art, which are not based on the Western, romanticized conception of Africa. That being established, most artists do, at least for the majority of their art, stick to the generalized conception of Africa which I have described above, despite the fact that many artists incorporate their own ‘touch’ or ‘vibe’. To clarify, I will not be arguing that artists create art that is exactly the same with one another, but instead, that they often paint almost identical *scenes*, despite the fact that these scenes may be painted through a variety of popular East-African art styles (such as ‘tinga-tinga’: a very romantic, cartoonish style), and with a different artistic ‘vibe’. The artists are in control of these scenes that they choose to reproduce, just as they are in control of the business-dynamic between themselves and the tourists. Therefore, they often use a semi-harmless form of manipulation, or at least a ‘friendly,’ somewhat fake, persona, when doing business with, usually first-time, tourists. Additionally, they try to solidify relationships with larger tourist agencies and organizations, such as non-profit organizations, to expand their art sales and connections.

In this chapter, I trace these dynamics in the world of the artist.

## **BACKGROUND OF BAGAMOYO AND THE ART INDUSTRY**

As a town, Bagamoyo has a large presence of art: whether it be dance groups performing at local hotels and the Bagamoyo College of Arts, or the various art shops located on the sides of the main roads. The town is historically known for its port, which regulated the trading of salt, ivory, fish, and most notably, slaves. The town also has a

slavery museum, as well as the remainders of the historical local slave market.

Additionally, the town has a valuable history of Islamic influence: including old tombs and mosques.

Today, Bagamoyo is most prominent for its large fish market along the coast, which is made possible from a large fishing industry operated with manmade ‘dhow’ sailboats. Daily, hundreds to thousands of fishermen pull their dhows into the ocean at the crack of dawn, and return from their fishing quests around sunset. There is a large fish market located slightly further in from the coast, though some fishermen often auction their fish off to large crowds of locals while still on the beach. In late 2015, news broke that China plans to fund a US\$ 10-15 Billion project in Bagamoyo to construct the largest trading port in Africa by 2017. This ‘development’ project will most likely cause a drastic increase in tourism and migrants in Bagamoyo (especially among the Chinese, which has already become evident), though it will also result in other unpredictable influences on the Bagamoyo economy.

Also decorating the two-to-three mile coast are about eight tourist hotels, located there because of the beach. These tourist hotels, depending on whether it is a ‘tourist season,’ host numerous tourists from around the world. Many of these tourists are stopping in Bagamoyo prior to beginning safaris in distant regions of Tanzania, or prior to making excursions to Zanzibar. Some tourists are also in Bagamoyo as volunteers, though this is less so today, as the prominent volunteer organization recently closed its branch in Bagamoyo.

Art markets and shops in Bagamoyo typically have a variety of paintings, carvings, and jewelry. In the back of the Old Market, hundreds of paintings hang from the

ceiling to form aisles that the tourist can walk through. The paintings, most of which are of safari animals, Maasai, savannas, and ‘fish wheels,’ typically are signed by the painters themselves (in a corner of the painting). Paintings do not appear to be separated based on the painter, but instead all hang together. In the middle of the market, carvers each have their own table of their carvings. Typically, each table has both smaller and larger animal carvings, as well as an assortment of other carvings (candle-holders, bottle openers, bottle holders, salad tongs, sugar bowls, jewelry cabinets, etc.). In the Old Market, there are also a few tables that display a variety of colorful bracelets, a few shelves that display hanging necklaces and earrings (many of them having either animal ornaments or ornaments shaped as the African continent that say ‘Africa’, ‘Tanzania’, or ‘Bagamoyo’ hanging from them), as well as a table displaying painted postcards and Tanzanian ‘traditional music’ CDs. Typically, the art shops display paintings in the front of their shop (on the outside). In small art shops, the distribution of art products displayed are generally similar, though may differ slightly by displaying products such as drums, dhow boat carvings, etc. The paintings hanging from the outside of the shop are those that the artists believe would most likely pull tourists in – safari animals (usually in ‘tingatinga’ style) and Maasai paintings. The size of paintings usually fall between one to two feet on height and length, though most shops contain some smaller and larger paintings as well. Some art shops, such as the one I spent most of my time in, have their painting and carving stations in front of, or next to, the shop. As I will explain later, many tourists buy paintings with the intentions of supporting local artists, so being able to witness the artists producing the art may support to the tourists’ appeal of buying locally.

## WHY BECOME AN ARTIST?

In my discussions with many artists in Bagamoyo, they informed me of the roads that led them to becoming artists in a tourist-dependent industry, as well as reasons why they *chose* to create tourist art as a living. I argue here that although there are limited ranges of styles represented on the art market, every artist feels that he is able to incorporate his own ‘vibe’ to a finished product. Thus, instead of focusing on the way art depicts stereotypes that appeal to tourists, artists focus on the ways they inject their own style into their art. They are also drawn to the appeal of being small independent craftsmen in control of their own schedules, rather than working for employers. In short, artists think of themselves as in control of their art and their lives, rather than as being forced to reproduce stereotypes for tourists. I spent many days ‘hanging out’ with Mselem in particular: we spent many afternoons sitting on the front step of his shop, as well as at other locations within Bagamoyo. Mselem would often teach me Swahili phrases, give me painting lessons, and simply chat with me while working on paintings.

During one of my earlier ‘hang outs’ with Mselem, he told me about his life prior to becoming an artist. Mselem grew up in Bagamoyo with parents that have little ‘power,’ or wealth. We discussed the difficulties of moving onto the higher levels of education in Tanzania due to the fact that students are not only required to take more years of schooling before applying for college or universities, but there are also many country-wide tests in secondary schools, in which the tests must be passed in order for the students to continue moving up in secondary school. If the students fail, they can retake the grade level *if* their parents have enough ‘power’ to pay fees. Luckily, Mselem has a



brother-in-law that has a lot of ‘power,’ so Mselem was able to continue secondary school after failing once. He eventually began college as an ‘acting’ major (college is commonly known as a step below university in Tanzania), in which he left after a short amount of time, and instead spent four months at a school for computer programming. Mselem said that he received good grades during his computer-programming course, though after this, he was unable to find a job.

Mselem’s road to becoming an artist has similarities to those of many artists in Bagamoyo: many artists are in their twenties (primarily male), and began their career as artists after a failure to complete secondary school, an inability to afford college or university, or a lack of employment opportunities in their specialized fields. That being recognized, a small number of artists have in fact attended an art college prior to their art careers. The problem of finding a reliable income has become a prominent issue for most artists: due to the long months between ‘tourist seasons,’ many artists struggle to earn a living year-round. Therefore, many artists like Mselem take second jobs or activities to raise money during the long months in-between.

Additionally, many artists become involved in working with ‘non-profit’ and ‘volunteer’ organizations, possibly in sheer interest in humanitarianism, though also possibly to occupy a year-round activity that allows them to connect with other volunteers and organizations. For instance, Mselem volunteers through providing art lessons for about ninety primary school students (three to five days a week), who come from four different primary schools in the region. Mselem claims to choose the students for his program based on their art abilities, as well as through interviewing. This program is at least partially funded by an organization called ‘Hasaar Bujaar,’ and the program

allows the students to compete in different art contests, which may reward prizes such as school uniforms, art supplies, bicycles, etc. I would very often see Mselem working with his students, in which he teaches them drawing by using illustrations of safari animals from different travel magazines as instruction. When he believes a particular student is ready, Mselem will teach him painting (though painting materials are more expensive, so he has the student ‘master’ the drawing process prior to beginning painting).

A craftsman who owns an art shop a few stores down from MSEBI, Emmanuel, is involved with an organization called ‘Narcotics Anonymous,’ which provides a support group for people to conquer a variety of addictions. Emmanuel has a group-meeting center located in the back of his shop, in which he claims to host meetings daily at 6:00pm for people to discuss strategies to overcome addictions. The meeting center is an outdoor area that is set up with a circle of benches, as well as a front stand for the situational speaker. Emmanuel is very public in his involvement in the organization, which he advertises through the logos on clothes he wears (‘NA: Narcotics Anonymous,’ ‘No Matter What Club,’ ‘Courage to Change,’ etc.), through the stickers on his car, and through his frequent activity on Facebook. Emmanuel has formed many international connections through his involvement with the Narcotics Anonymous. He claims to have become involved in the organization because he was once addicted to drugs himself, though has been overcoming this addiction over the past few years. When I first met Emmanuel, he lent me a lengthy ‘Narcotics Anonymous’ book, which depicts the stories of various people overcoming addiction.

Although both cases of volunteer involvement may, at least partially, be for humanitarian purposes, both involvement cases also build relationships with foreigners,

as well as provide a sort of funding and support. Therefore, these connections allow the artists to be preoccupied year-round, rather than solely during ‘tourist seasons’. An artist who becomes involved with well-intentioned humanitarian organizations possibly gain more funding, enhances his international connections, and forms connections with the high proportion of tourists who travel to Bagamoyo to volunteer. These tourists, as I will show in a later chapter, like to buy art from people they know as they are committed to helping local craftsmen. Therefore, the connection with the volunteer crowd may enhance business. As I will explain further, some tourists purchase an artist’s artwork solely to support them, so if an artist portrays himself as a well-intentioned, good person, the tourist may be more likely to support them. Although, because ‘tourist seasons’ only occur a few months every year, artists need to expand their tourist and international networks in order to live off of such an occupation. Additionally, both Mselem and Emmanuel (as well as many other artists in Bagamoyo) offer painting and carving lessons to tourists, which is another strategy to gain sales and enhance business in a tourist-dependent market.

Additionally, local artists often use Facebook to advertise their artwork. Although I have been told Facebook artwork-advertising is not very beneficial in the actual sales of artwork, some artists believe it does create a viable opportunity for them to get their artwork advertised outside of their shops in Bagamoyo (and more largely, internationally). Unfortunately, artists often have difficulties selling their artwork to foreigners abroad, as there are many issues between the artist shipping the painting and the buyer shipping the money (i.e. the cost of shipping, the trust issue of who ships first, etc.). While I was discussing with Mselem the advertisements of his artwork via

Facebook, he said that the photos he posts of his paintings may get a lot of ‘likes’ and support, but this does not help the fact that the majority of tourists will not buy local art after departing from Bagamoyo. Although social media may help artists get their artwork seen and admired, most artists feel as though social media advertising does not generate a significant increase in their sales. That being noted, Facebook advertising is a relatively easy strategy to increase the chances of art sales, and an attempt to network.

Although artists often begin their art careers as a way to create employment in an otherwise scarce job market, many artists claim to enjoy their lives as artists because of their ability to be self-employed. Because artists are self-employed, they feel free to expand their creativities and ideas into their work. One of the artists at the Old Market, Gideon, explained to me why he enjoys being an artist. When he was younger, Gideon went to a technician college to become a yielder. After five years of yielding doors, he became tired of the lack of creativity and innovation of the occupation, and he therefore switched to carving, in which he said: “I can use my mind and creativity (he pointed at his head and smiled)”. Gideon is a rare example of an artist who was very capable of resorting to an occupation that earned him a living, but the emphasis here is on the reason why he chose to become a craftsman instead: during his job as a yielder, he felt as though his creativity was *restricted*. Although he took a risk by becoming an artist, he claims to enjoy this lifestyle much more.

During a carving lesson with Emmanuel, an artist who runs a shop just a few properties down from MSEBI shop, Emmanuel explained his thinking while teaching my brother Jack.

During one of our short discussions throughout Jack's carving process, Emmanuel told me: 'For now I just give [Jack the] technique for [the] eyes, nose, and mouth [of the carving]. I do this because I want you to have your own vibe... [Your] own style.' When Jack began to carve the mouth (which he found as very difficult), he joked with Emmanuel that he did not want to mess up and ruin the whole carving. Emmanuel told Jack: '...don't fear to carve; just carve. If you make [a] mistake I will correct [it].' He continues: 'I want you to get more experience with the tools... That's why I want you to get your own vibe, you know? ... (Me: 'Yeah') Your own. It's just you.'

Similar to Gideon, Emmanuel finds the 'creative' aspect of carving, what he calls your 'vibe,' as very crucial. Therefore, during the carving lesson, he continuously reminds Jack to have his own 'style' and 'vibe': a trait that he holds as very important when carving himself. The 'creative' aspect of being an artist is what attracts many of them towards the occupation: it allows artists to feel *free* to create their own products. Although artists create the same generalized scenes (which I will argue later on), they occasionally incorporate their own creativity into their art: making a lion-head carving in a very unique and distinct way; painting a 'tinga-tinga' painting of safari animals on a large, circular and hollow, tin ornament to make an instrument; etc.

Along with creativity, Mselem values the lifestyle of being self-employed, which makes his occupation as an artist enjoyable. Mselem claims to dislike working underneath a boss, and being an artist is a way for him to escape this employment dynamic. To many artists, being self-employed gives them freedom and empowerment: a feeling that generates happiness and fulfillment in an otherwise struggling business.

Although Mselem's father would rather have Mselem further his education rather than be an artist, Mselem contemplates going back to school if he is able to raise enough money. Like most artists in Bagamoyo, Mselem was not 'forced' into being an artist (although a scarce job market definitely had an influence), but he rather *chose* to become an artist due to the feeling of power and freedom he holds over his own occupation.



*Mselem in front of his shop*

## **PRODUCING ART, ART STYLES, AND EFFICIENCY**

Through spending countless hours in MSEBI shop, the Old Market, among other art shops, I have witnessed (as well as been taught) the various production processes of paintings, jewelry making, and carving. I will begin by elaborating on what I have witnessed and learned about the production of paintings – primarily from my time spent with Mselem.

Prior to beginning a painting, the artist must first create (or buy) a frame for his canvas. To create a frame, Mselem efficiently hammers in nails to attach four thin pieces of wood (usually two longer, two shorter) into a square or rectangle. After the frame is made, he then takes a 'sheet' (the canvas), and stretches it very tightly along the frame. As I have been informed, the more expensive canvas material is purchased in Dar es Salaam, whereas the cheaper, lower-quality canvas material can be purchased locally. An informed buyer can distinguish the canvas quality of a painting by analyzing whether the paint displays signs of 'cracking', especially if the painting is dated. While tightly stretching the canvas over the frame, Mselem takes a staple-gun to attach the canvas one corner at a time. After the canvas is tightly attached by being stapled along the parameter of the frame, Mselem takes the loose, excess sides of the canvas, and folds and staples them to the frame so they do not hang loosely over the sides. The following excerpt describes the proceeding steps for the artist after the initial layer of primer is applied and has dried, which Mselem guides me through during a painting lesson:

The sketching is done with pen, as using a pencil would not show up under the layer of dried primer. After completing the sketching, Mselem began to paint one of my 'tingatinga' birds using black paint and a thin brush. He would dip the brush into a cut up water bottle of black paint, and pat the brush on the table to prevent the brush from dripping (the table was already covered in dry paint). He then showed me how to correctly hold the paint brush when painting 'tingatinga' style: You are not supposed to hold the brush like a pen, but instead hold onto the brush low down, and use your pinky finger and ring finger as a guider/tracer. After trying this technique, I began to understand why I have often seen Mselem

fiddle with a hand strengthener as he sits at his desk (as your fingers need to be strong in order to guide the paint brush without your hand shaking).

As I watched Mselem efficiently and easily draw a ‘tingatinga’ style bird on the canvas, I realized that there is an organized set of steps that artists use to draw the birds. Mselem informed me that these steps are indeed understood and used by most artists when drawing and painting ‘tingatinga’ birds (in Bagamoyo). I later saw him teaching his students *the same set of steps*. Overall there are about twelve to fifteen steps to drawing the ‘tingatinga’ bird, and although I found them very difficult to master as a first-timer, Mselem is able to draw ‘tingatinga’ birds with efficiency and ease, making each bird on the canvas, despite its relative position and angle, look essentially identical.

Once the drawing of the ‘tingatinga’ birds and background is complete, the painting process begins. As I have observed Mselem and other artists do various times, they mix their paint with kerosene, each in separate, cut in half, empty water bottles. After Mselem gently and confidently paints strokes onto the canvas, he waits for that color of paint to dry prior to applying a different color. During the thirty-minutes-or-so that it takes for the paint to dry while the canvas lays out in the sun, Mselem can work on other paintings. Unlike the ‘landscape style’ paintings, Mselem paints the ‘tingatinga’ birds before painting the background. Although there are three or four ‘types’ of ‘tingatinga’ birds that can be painted, the birds are painted in the general same designs between various artists, despite the fact that the color patterns may vary. When the ‘tingatinga’ birds are painted and dried, Mselem begins painting the background. The following excerpt displays my observations of Mselem painting the background:



Mselem used a tool that was made of a cigarette filter tied to a wooden stick (a little larger than a toothpick). He dunked this tool into black paint (which he mixed with kerosene using the back end of a paintbrush), wiped off excess paint onto a ripped up pair of jeans, and began padding black dots all over [the] background. He told me: 'These are a type of leaf'. Beforehand, he helped me paint more 'squiggly' lines on [the] background, and I later realized that they are tree branches.

Mselem's painting of the 'tingatinga' birds, as well as the background, are similarly produced and depicted throughout Bagamoyo.

Another painting style, 'knife style,' is also commonly used throughout Bagamoyo, and Tanzania at large. With knife style paintings, the artist first paints the background, which usually consists of a sort of 'fading' as to depict a sunset. Once the background is complete and dry, the artist paints the animals, usually in all black, which he or she previously drew in with pen. Before the black paint dries, the artist uses an art knife to carve the designs and details of the animals. For instance, as I watched Mselem work on this final step of the process, he used the knife to confidently and quickly stencil out the spots of the giraffe, the stripes of zebras, the ears and eyes of elephants, etc. Mselem would often stop stenciling to wipe his knife on a ripped up pair of jeans, as to remove the excess paint.

Although I have not witnessed a 'Maasai style' painting being produced, I have been informed that, similar to 'tingatinga' style, it consists of an artist-recognized set of steps to produce. Additionally, there is 'landscape style,' which usually depicts a savannah with a beautiful, red sunset, and occasionally will have Mount Kilimanjaro

appear in the distance. This particular style is created through a lot of fading and blending of paints. Lastly, there is also a 'watercolor style,' which I have not seen as often throughout Bagamoyo and Tanzanian art shops.

By partaking in a carving lesson with Emmanuel, a carver who owns a shop a few units down from MSEBI shop, and who also is very publicly involved in a non-profit fellowship called 'Narcotics Anonymous,' I learned much about the carving process. Although the type of wood used varies, many carvings are produced from ebony. The following excerpt depicts the scene and processes as Emmanuel began a carving lesson with my brother Jack:

Emmanuel took a knife and cut up an empty package bag, and placed it on the dirt for Jack and himself to use as a mat. Emmanuel set up their carving station in between two other carvers, whom were both working on their own carvings while sitting on the dirt. One man, who was wearing a ripped up t-shirt, was sanding an elephant carving. The other man was working on a large carving of a Maasai (of just the head and torso). He took a saw tool and used it to carve out a spiral design on a pole that runs down the side of the carving. Emmanuel took the block of ebon wood, and he first began drawing lines using marker, as to indicate the areas on the wood that would be chiseled out first. In order to chisel out chunks of the wood, Emmanuel held the point of the chisel up against the block of ebon wood, and he would smack on the end of the chisel with a wooden club. It appeared as though a main component to carving was the angle to which the artist holds the chisel against the wood. As Emmanuel began chiseling out wood in the places where he drew the lines (as a demonstration for Jack), his expertise was distinguishable, and his work was efficient.

The chisel is the primary tool used for carving; a process that is completely done manually. The artist also uses larger, heavy blocks of wood as stoppers or stabilizers, so that the carving-in-process will not move while the chisel is hammered against it. Additionally, Emmanuel occasionally uses a large flint to sharpen the chisel.



*Emmanuel begins a carving outside next to his shop*

Although there are a variety of styles used for painting, what is being depicted is often a ‘romanticized’ depiction of Africa. The ‘tingatinga’ style is romanticizing and exaggerating in itself – but the key point is that, which ever style is being used, the scene usually falls under the following categories: Maasai; safari animals on a landscape; or a savannah with a sunset, and Mount Kilimanjaro often appearing in the background. There are a few exceptions, which do depict a more ‘authentic’ version of Bagamoyo culture. For example, artists in Bagamoyo often use ‘tingatinga’ style to make ‘wheels of fish’ –

fish are a large part of Bagamoyo's economy and culture, as the town is located directly on the coast. Also, the fish market is located less than a mile from the Old Market, MSEBI, and numerous other art shops located on roads running parallel to the ocean shore. Artists sometimes may paint 'landscape' paintings or carvings that depict the handcrafted sailboats used by local fishermen. Although, even though some local art shops may include the ocean-aspect of Bagamoyo culture, they also almost certainly include paintings and carvings of 'tribal' Maasai, and safari animals posed in open landscapes. These depictions are far from Bagamoyo culture, but instead are a generalized, single, Western-view of culture of Africa. These particular depictions are taught how to paint based on an exchange of guidelines and patterns between artists.

When producing paintings, an artist is able to work on many different pieces simultaneously. Additionally, most artists understand the patterns and steps of producing paintings that depict the stereotypical 'African image', so they can generally complete these pieces quickly. The set of steps of these particular paintings: Maasai, safari animals, and savannahs; are memorized, and they have been reproduced over and over again by most artists. With these particular paintings, artists in Bagamoyo are not necessarily painting something that they see, but rather something that they have been *taught* (through an exchange of an understanding of steps and patterns). Because of their ability to produce these paintings based on a recognized pattern, artists are able to produce paintings quickly. Additionally, because of a scarce job market, as well as their extended presence in their shops in order to welcome tourists (who can arrive at any time of the day), artists do not have much else to do while hanging around their shops, except to continue painting.

## ARTIST—TOURIST INTERACTIONS

In Edward Bruner's analysis of the tourist destination 'Mayers Ranch', he argues that tourists view this Maasai village, dance, and performance through what Bruner refers to as an 'experience theater': "an imaginary space into which tourists enter and through which they negotiate a physical and conceptual path"(2005: 49). Like the Maasai, who 'perform' for the tourists in what they consider a business, artists in Bagamoyo also put on a sort of 'performance' when doing business with 'first-time' tourists. Artists will often transition into a 'fake' persona when communicating with potential buyers in their art shops, and this persona usually consists of using the typical Swahili phrases that distinguish Tanzania and the people as very friendly, relaxed, and welcoming. In my early conversations with artists in their shops, most of them are constantly smiling, laughing, and offering me 'high-fives', which depicts their desire to make it seem that we are "pamoja"; meaning: "we are together as one".

In Bagamoyo, as well as local art shops throughout Tanzania, bargaining usually occurs between the artist and tourist on the price of an art piece. Bargaining is a large part of how the business interactions take place, though Mselem explained to me that he often attempts to offer the customer a large price in the hopes that the customer will be a 'first-time tourist', and therefore will be oblivious of the bargaining culture:

Mselem told me that, even in Bagamoyo, he would sometimes get a tourist who is unaware of bargaining. He explained: 'Even here, sometimes I say 'This here is TSH 150,000', and if they are [a] new stranger they say 'Okay'(laughs)'. He

explained to me that Bagamoyo artists need to make money, so they often want to see if the tourist is new, and therefore try to sell the art for as much as they can.

This small level of deception is completely understandable for sellers who are working in a very scarce art industry, and whose ability to earn a living depends on how much they can profit off of their artwork. The artists do not only feel that they are in control of the production of their artwork, but also hold the power in the exchange relationship between themselves and the tourist. The artist may submit partially to the tourist's payment requests as the process of bargaining occurs.

Additionally, artists will often claim to tourists that they will give them 'rafiki (friend) price' for the art commodity. The artist attempts to offer the tourist what appears to be a low price, as the artist 'sees the tourist as his or her friend'. The artist often offers 'rafiki price' within ten minutes of meeting a first-time tourist inside of his or her shop. Although it is difficult to value a piece of art concretely, an experienced buyer can partially distinguish a fair price relative to other similar pieces of art they have purchased, or have been offered, throughout Bagamoyo. With 'rafiki price', the artist insists that he is only offering the tourist this 'great price' because he or she feels very close to the tourist.

Another common term used and known throughout art shops in Bagamoyo is 'mzungu (white person; foreigner) price'. When a tourist is offered a 'mzungu price' for an art piece, this indicates that the artist is taking advantage of the fact that the potential buyer is an outsider, is oblivious to the relative low prices of art in Bagamoyo compared to those in Western countries, is oblivious to the bargaining culture, and is more generally

easily deceived. Even as a returning tourist, it is very difficult to distinguish when the artist is giving you a ‘mzungu price’ for their artwork, as the phrase indicates a sense of trickery, and is therefore difficult to identify. Also, as a tourist, it is difficult to distinguish the ‘reasonable’ price of an art piece in regards to the local art industry of Bagamoyo.

As I became closer to Mselem, he shared with me tips and phrases I could use to get past the ‘mzungu price’. Mselem told me how to tell the art seller ‘I am not a white person’ and ‘I know the price [of this]’ in Swahili, in response to the initial offer from the seller (if it appears to be a ‘mzungu price’). He says that, if the seller laughs at my Swahili response, then the seller was most likely trying to ‘rip me off’. Even so, being ‘ripped off’ by buying a piece of art for ‘mzungu price’ is still relatively cheap compared to art in the West.

Similar to many businessmen and women around the world, artists are just trying to generate as much income as possible for their product. The ‘fake’ persona and mild forms of deception used by the artists are relatively harmless strategies to make a little more profit for their products. When creating their ‘fake’ persona, artists may take into consideration the Western stereotype of ‘African artists’, ‘rastas’, and ‘African people’ in general. By appearing as friendly, carefree, and wanting a sense of unification with the outsider, the artists feel they are more likely to achieve sales from tourists while being in control of the interaction.

## **A DESIRE TO TRAVEL AND RELOCATE**

Many of the artists have a yearning to travel abroad. They use their art as a strategy to network with other people in hopes of increasing their mobility. This networking strategy shows that artists feel they are using their art to gain control of their lives, rather than feeling controlled by the tourists. Some artists do in fact routinely travel to different regions of Tanzania to sell their art: sometimes to tourists directly, and sometimes to art shops and middlemen at a cheaper price. By expanding the presence of their artwork throughout Tanzania, artists are more likely to achieve sales. I have spoken with multiple artists at the Old Market who have recently traveled to regions such as Kilimanjaro, Tanga, and Zanzibar; some of which to sell and distribute their art. Also, artists often relocate their shops to other regions of Tanzania, as they believe their art may sell better there. The following excerpt illustrates Mselem's movement of regions within Tanzania, and his desire to relocate out of the country, to a place where he believes his art will sell better:

In his art career, Mselem began in Bagamoyo, though eventually travelled to Zanzibar to set up shop there. He later moved to Arusha as well, but moved back to Bagamoyo after a while to create his own art shop: a place which he believed was the most successful and convenient to set up shop (out of the places he has been). He talked to me about his artist friend who was able to move to Cape Town in South Africa, and his friend is experiencing much better business and art success there. Due to travel expenses, visa expenses, and needing enough money to set up shop, Mselem has been unable to move to areas like South Africa: where he believes his art skills will achieve more success and business.



Because of the expense of traveling to sell art, or of relocating altogether, some artists feel as though they are ‘stuck’ selling art in Tanzania. This explains why, through my ten years of traveling back and forth to Bagamoyo, I have been around many of the same artists. Relocating is in fact difficult, and this is why many artists take a more moderate strategy to sell their art in various regions, in which they sell their art to fellow artists for cheaper. These artists in different regions most likely will then display the art in their shop. On a smaller scale, artists within Bagamoyo occasionally distribute their art into each other’s shops, as to help each other out by expanding the locations of their artwork. Lastly, artists often voice a desire to travel abroad when speaking with tourists. In simple terms, this desire can result from meeting tourists from all over the world, and they therefore would like to see the places that these tourists come from. Also, by stating a desire of traveling, artists voice a common interest with almost all tourists, as most tourists (seemingly obvious) enjoy traveling. The desire to distinguish a common interest in traveling goes hand-in-hand with getting involved in non-profit work: it creates relations and similarities with their customers, therefore increasing the chance of sales.

Therefore, artists *choose* to take part in this tourist-dependent industry for a variety of reasons – primarily, it gives them the pride and freedom of being self-employed, and they feel as though they are able to inject their own creativity into their art. As I have argued, artists often *learn how to* paint mass-produced paintings using particular sets of steps, but they feel as though they are still able to adjust these steps and incorporate their own ‘vibes’ into their artwork. Lastly, artists feel a sense of control and mobility in both their art production, and in their sales interactions with tourists. In the proceeding chapter, I will discuss how artists ‘brand’ their paintings in very particular

ways – the ‘brand’ either portrays Africa is primitive and wild, or as undeveloped and in need of assistance. These particular brands are targeted towards particular tourists.

## Chapter 2: Branding the Self

Through taking part in and witnessing the creation of ‘typical’ paintings in Bagamoyo, I saw that there are generally patterns of concrete steps on how to create the basic image (whether it be a tingatinga bird, Maasai, etc). These steps appear to be recognized by artists throughout Bagamoyo, and as shown by Mselem teaching his students, the steps are passed down to artists through training. In this chapter, I will analyze specific ‘typical’ aspects of these paintings to explain how they are branded, and why they are branded in these particular ways.

In order to understand why artists choose to ‘brand’ particular depictions in art, it is essential to recognize the historically crafted ‘Oriental’ perception of Africa (and Africans) as viewed from the West. Although the term ‘Orientalism’ is in specific reference to how the West created an image of Middle Easterners as foils to Euro-American, this concept also accurately represents how the West perceive the people of Africa. Generally, the West creates a generalized, exotic, and inferior image of the ‘other’ (or in this case, African peoples) in response to an anxiety caused by an inability to understand them, as well as a means to justify control over them. By stereotyping the ‘other’ as less developed and wild, the West is able to assert mental superiority.

With the establishment of a Western stereotypical image of Africa, it became easier for African artists to brand their art in the image of Western buyers, thereby reinforcing this Western-produced image of Africa. Whereas ‘Orientalism’ influenced the creation of a Western depiction of Africans as exotic, wild, and close to nature; and therefore indirectly guided *what* the artists created (artwork that portrays the image of

themselves viewed by Western tourists); the artists also engage in a *branding* of their culture throughout their artwork. Artists present a generalized and distorted culture as a *commodity*, in which they homogenize it based on the tourist stereotype, while simultaneously presenting it as ahistorical, primitive, and wild (John & Jean Comaroff 2009: 17-18). This cultural brand, which circulates and is taught to artists throughout Bagamoyo, is constantly reproduced, regardless of if or not the particular artist implements aspects of his own ‘vibe’ and creativity.

I argue also that the ‘wild and primitive’ brand is not the only one. For the past two decades, NGOs have marketed African art in efforts to raise funds to support local artists, and many volunteer tourists have come to East Africa with conceptions of Africa somewhat different from the ‘wild and primitive’ brand. Therefore, I argue NGOs promote a somewhat different brand. For example, as I will elaborate on, ‘Ten Thousand Villages’ advises artists to create products that turn their ‘wildness’ into ‘cuteness’; which is both depicted in the products themselves, as well as in how ‘Ten Thousand Villages’ chooses to advertise the product on their website. This usually results in another layer of branding: through their products, the artists first brand their culture as exotic, wild, and close to nature; whereas the international marketing organizations then push a further branding of the product to the interests of Western buyers who have most likely *never* come in contact with the host-culture: making the ‘wild’ artist-branded products seem as ‘cute’ and ‘gentle’. By re-branding a second layer of the art products, the international organizations, most of whom are non-profits, look to provide aid for the host societies. They are trying to attract people who see Africa as poor and in need of developing, instead of as wild and primitive. The products they market focus attention on

women, children and households, producing an image of a domestic Africa comprising many small independent craftspeople who can be empowered when people purchase their products.

## **REINFORCING A CULTURAL BRAND**

As was evident in the literature review, East Africans in the tourist industry must cater to the expectations of tourists looking for exotic, primitive, Africans who represent nature to Europe's culture. For instance, although there is truth to *particular* groups of Maasai being pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, they are far from the 'primitive,' 'savage,' and 'unchanging' peoples that they are made out to be from the perspectives of many uninformed Westerners. They do not in fact have a single, unchanging culture. Maasai culture is very diverse: there are agro-pastoralists that continue to live in more rural areas in Moshi, Kilimanjaro, etc., though also many Maasai in Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo, etc., who live more 'modern' lifestyles; such as working in hotel employment, business, and as of recently, running for the Tanzanian presidency. Despite their integration into contemporary Tanzanian society, "Maasai are popular [to tourists] because their image fits well into modern tourists' yearning for authenticity, 'realness' and spirituality that only traditional societies supposedly maintain"(Wijngaarden 2010a: 103). In Bagamoyo, non-Maasai African artists also present stereotyped images of Maasai even though the artists themselves are well aware that Maasai are not always these tall, skinny individuals with shuka clothes and spears.

Through generalized and reproduced Maasai tourist art, as well as through the reality that Maasai are often hired as security guards of tourist resorts, the stereotypes of the Maasai as ‘warrior-like’ and ‘primitive’ tribesmen is reinforced in Bagamoyo. The Western tourists are led to view the Maasai through what Bruner calls an ‘experience theater’: an imaginary space in which the tourist is deceived to believe that what he or she is witnessing is cultural reality, rather than staged, distorted culture (2005: 49). Bruner explains that in ‘experience theater’ Maasai often perform their own ‘packaged culture’ to tourists.

While ‘Orientalism’ creates an image of an ‘Other’ due to a urge to understand a different and distant people, ‘experience theater’ exaggerates this difference and makes it appear as a cultural reality, and therefore reinforces the initial stereotypes. The ‘experience theater’ appeared in a ‘traditional’ dance performed by the ‘Zawose family’ in a tourist hotel. The ‘Zawose family’ is a famous dance group that resides in Bagamoyo, and they take part in many regional and national dance performances. The dance group, which was made up of between fifteen to twenty performers, all of whom wore traditional African fabric dresses (women) or pants (men; most of whom were also shirtless), danced in the center of the restaurant while the audience, almost all tourists, sat around the dance group in a semi-circle. As some members of the dance group slammed their drums, and other members stomped around the floor in a fast pace, sweating, and in sync, while doing loud ‘tribal’ calls, singing, and drumming on drums between their thighs, tourists sat comfortably in their chairs and were served their requested western-style dinner entries by waiters. The tourists witnessed the performance through an experience theater: the tourists watched the ‘tribal’, ‘aggressive’, ‘warrior-like’ dancing

from the comfort and ‘safety’ of their chairs and the delight of their western-style meals, and they were able to catch this ‘tribal’ performance through their cameras and video-cameras.

Although many of the tourists may well be aware of the distinction between a ‘traditional’ dance ritual and the lived reality of the dancers themselves, some may be deceived to believe that this performance: ‘tribal’ and ‘uncivilized’ men and women aggressively drumming, yelling, and stomping around the floor in their traditional African fabric dresses and pants that leave much of their skin exposed, is what authentic East African culture looks like. In reality, “Identities are not given, they are performed by people with agency who have choices”(Bruner 2005: 90), though many tourists are at risk of viewing ‘true identity’ in what really is a performance.

Similarly, tourists may view the reproduced depictions of Maasai, safari animals, and savannas on the canvas of a Bagamoyo painting as ‘authentic’ Bagamoyo culture, when in reality, this is rather an example of ‘culture as performance’: a depiction of how the artist believes tourists think of Africa, and what they generally come to Africa to see.

## **CREATING PRODUCTS OF SAMENESS**

As John and Jean Comaroff describe for South Africa, the artists of Bagamoyo often ‘commodify’ their culture to present it as ‘packaged’ (2009: 27). As discussed above, the paintings of Maasai and safari animals often specifically follow identical patterns, and these patterns are taught and passed around from artist to artist. These set of steps are indeed taught and reproduced, rather than being scenes or culturally important

depictions that the artist has viewed with his own eyes. The artists themselves largely package this culture, which is not a representative of their actual local culture, into object form (John & Jean Comaroff 2009: 27). Although there are exceptions, such as the paintings of dhow boats off of the coast of the Bagamoyo coast, or the paintings of ‘fish cycles’ (as fish are such a vital part of the Bagamoyo economy and culture), generally artists depict what they believe tourists have come to Africa to see: national parks, ‘indigenous’, ‘primitive’ people, and beautiful sunsets over a never-ending landscape. The artists of Bagamoyo largely participate in the creation of a generalized ‘cultural brand’ that is packaged and reproduced throughout East Africa, and which is meant to depict the stereotypical, tourist-lensed culture of East Africa. Often, this cultural brand depicts East Africa as ‘untouched’: full of wild animals and exotic, primitive people.

I will specifically analyze three common painting depictions that are reproduced by artists throughout Bagamoyo (and largely, Tanzania). These three types: Maasai painting, savanna painting, and safari animal tinga-tinga painting, are bound to be in any art shop in Tanzania, regardless of local culture and region of Tanzania. Largely, these three types are branded: they depict very similar, if not identical, images, which often the artists have never laid eyes on themselves. The production of these three branded depictions is largely *taught* and *reproduced*, and therefore, whether or not the depictions are authentic to the regional/local culture of the artist is irrelevant (in regards to the producing of it).

The ‘typical’, mass produced paintings of Maasai are arguably the most common art piece found throughout the Bagamoyo art industry. First, I must elaborate on how these paintings are ‘typical’. In Tanzania, Maasai paintings do in fact come in different



forms, yet the majority of the paintings are of the most simple, basic form (that appear as almost ‘cave drawings’), in which the depiction is of black painted, skinny, stick-figured humans standing side-by-side. These figures, which are not given any sort of expressive traits, are all completely identical. The paintings depict the figures as wearing Maasai shuka clothes: usually painted completely red, though they occasionally differ in colors. Some of the Maasai paintings are slightly more simplified than others by only encompassing the dark figures, the Maasai shuka clothes, and the holding of spears (to depict men), or the holding of pots or sticks on the head (to depict women). Most Maasai paintings also include the exaggerated loops in the ears of the Maasai, which resemble the weighing down of the ear lobe because of the amount of large earrings Maasai supposedly wear. Additionally, most Maasai paintings include depictions of the Maasai figures wearing large numbers of bracelets and anklets, as these also support the generalization that Maasai wear large amounts of jewelry. I will now further analyze the significance of these Maasai details painted by the artists in relation to ‘branding’ a culture.

Each of these details in the ‘typical’ Maasai painting holds significance in how it portrays the Maasai as ‘exotic’, ‘tribal’, and ‘ahistorical’. As Bruner writes about tourists witnessing Maasai performance, “The thrill of being so close to wildness is located here in animals and in people more than in landscape: the ‘legendary’ Maasai ‘enacts warlike scenes,’ perform ‘awesome’ dances, and ‘leap high into the air from a standing position’”(2005: 39). Likewise, in Maasai ‘typical’ paintings, the specific details comes together to form the web that creates the larger, branding of the Maasai based on their ‘primitive’, ‘warriorlike’ stereotype. They also come together to create a very generalized

Maasai culture: no facial features are depicted giving the Maasai the generic homogenous image important to the Maasai primitive 'brand'. Furthermore, what is depicted is rather cultural exaggerations that reinforce the 'primitive' image: the image that Westerners have conceived of African tribes based on their exposure to Western media, as well as their yearning to have a concrete understanding. In reference to the Zulu ethnic group in South Africa, the Comaroffs write: "...ethnic incorporation rides on a process of homogenization and abstraction: *the Zulu* (or *the Tswana* or *the San*), for all their internal divisions, become one; their 'lifeways,' Withdrawn from time or history congeal into object-form, all the better to conceive, communicate, and consume"(2009: 12). In the case of Bagamoyo Maasai art, the Maasai become a single, generalized cultural brand, object-like and always being seen from the back, lacking in individual expression of feature. In order to reproduce this homogenized brand, artists are taught what details to include in the 'typical' Maasai paintings: the exaggerated, looped, ear lobes; the holding of spears; balancing pots on the head; the large amounts of jewelry. All of these details are included in the Maasai brand for a particular reason – this reason being to create an exotic, warrior-like, primitive brand of the Maasai that gears towards the interests of the Western stereotype of Maasai and African tribes; interests that Westerners adapt from romanticizing differences of the 'Other', and from the yearning to establish a sort of 'superiority' over these 'primitive, ahistorical peoples'. In the 'typical' Maasai paintings, the ear loops can be exaggerated as larger than the figures actual head; the spears as long and sharp; and the figures themselves as very tall but thin. The cultural brand is in fact an exaggeration – an exaggeration of the Westerner's distorted idea of African tribesmen.

Maasai paintings do not include domestic depictions, but rather only depictions that present the Maasai as primitive and close to nature.



*A 'typical' Maasai painting sold in a mall in Dar es Salaam: Tanzania's capital*



*Maasai paintings sold in MSEBI shop and the Old Market*

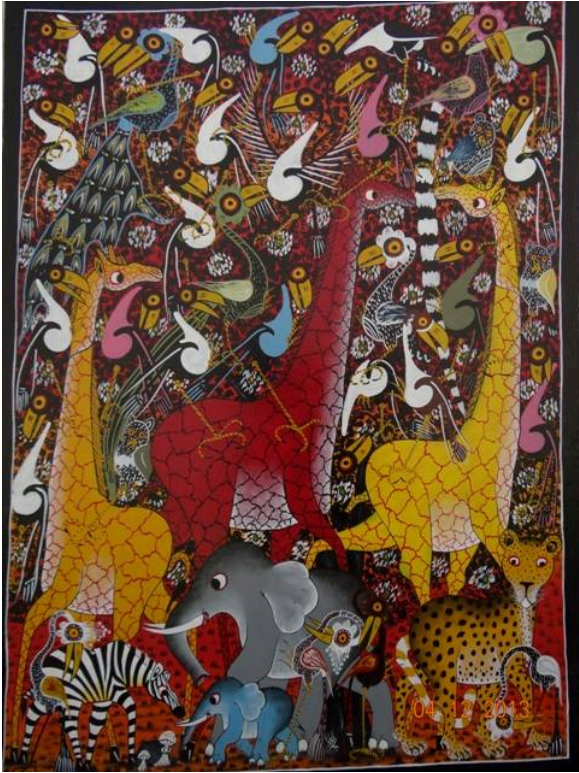
There are also ‘typical’ savanna, landscape paintings sold in Bagamoyo (and Tanzania), which are meant to brand the image of Africa as a, untouched, land of beauty and nature, with clear plains that exceed seemingly forever, and incredible sunsets. Bagamoyo itself is less agricultural than most regions in Tanzania; especially in the heart of Bagamoyo, where most of the artists reside. Despite the reality of Bagamoyo ocean-side culture and scenery, savanna paintings are very common. The presence of ‘typical’ savanna paintings reinforces the idea that these paintings are indeed *taught* rather than visualized: Bagamoyo is very far from these everlasting savannas that are depicted.

Although, these paintings continue to be produced because savannas and beautiful sunsets are often what Westerners think of Africa, and are often what tourists come to Africa to see. By branding art to the desires and expectations of the tourist, the artists disregard their own local culture, but believe that tourists are more likely to purchase art that depicts *their own* conceptualized visualization of Africa.

In addition, these savanna paintings often depict Mount Kilimanjaro in the distance. Although Mount Kilimanjaro is a monument within Tanzania, it is one that is very distant from Bagamoyo. By turning Tanzanian culture into a homogenized object that is geared towards the tourist's interests of Tanzania, the artists believe they will achieve better sales. With the savanna paintings, artists are clearly aware of why most tourists come to Africa, and what they predict they will see.

The third of these 'typical' paintings, the 'tingatinga' animal style painting, is a very popular painting style in East Africa. The style tends to depict animals as cartoonish, cute, and gentle, which indirectly aligns with the Westerner's unconscious urge to 'conquer' the wild, the exotic, and the unfamiliar. With 'tingatinga', the animals are branded as very colorful, playful, and fun. The brand, which has a little more leeway depending on what animals the artists decide to create, satisfies the tourist's interest of seeing 'exotic' animals in their voyage to Africa. Although, the animals are portrayed as cute and friendly, which is reinforced through a very rounded, cartoonish, painting style (with many colorful patterns). I will further analyze the depiction of wild safari animals as 'cute' and 'gentle' in regards to the advertising of the international organization: 'Ten Thousand Villages'.





*A rather complicated 'tingatinga' style painting – painted by Idd of the Old Market*

This packaged culture is inaccurate to the culture of Bagamoyo: a coastal town with little agricultural and pastoralist-dependent people, and distant from 'wild,' safari animals. In reality, Bagamoyo has a history associated with the slave trade, a thriving fish market, various tourist and backpacking grounds and resorts, music and dance, 'traditional' foods, Islamic mosques, Christian churches, local markets and manufacturers of all sorts, etc. Bagamoyo is very distant from national parks where safari animals roam, and the town has a rather small population of Maasai, most of whom in fact live much more 'modern' and 'urban' lifestyles than is depicted in the paintings of skinny, dark figures standing side by side, holding spears or balancing pots on their heads. During my time in Bagamoyo, I have often seen individuals dressed in Maasai shuka playing pool at outdoor bars, dancing to very 'modern' music, and riding motorcycles. Maasai who reside in Bagamoyo are not the agro-pastoralist, 'primitive,' and 'untouched' peoples that

are illustrated in these reproduced paintings. Instead, those who live in or commute to Bagamoyo often work as security guards (due to their primitive image), or are involved in manufacturing and local markets. Any depiction of domestic or urban life is erased when illustrating the Maasai, as such a depiction would contradict the tourist's perception of Maasai as wild and primitive. For the few Maasai paintings that do go above the general depiction of tall, dark figures standing side-by-side, the illustrations are of man-made, primitive features, such as huts, or bundles of sticks/pots balanced on the Maasai tribesmen heads.

Because artists profit off of mass-producing this 'cultural brand' through their artwork, they are less concerned on the larger impacts of this cultural packaging, and often, the inaccuracy of it. It is obvious that a reproduction and distribution of a Western-lensed stereotype of African culture would only reinforce this stereotype, though artists view art as a business, and therefore are more worried about making a living in an often struggling tourist-dependent market. I will return to whether there are any harmful results to selling a reproduced 'cultural brand' further in this paper.

## **DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE MAASAI**

As addressed in my literature review, there is a paradox in the fact that Maasai have been, and continue to be, discriminated against by the state and people, yet their image is used as a celebratory, 'exotic' trademark to market tourism in East Africa. Although there may not be as obvious governmental discriminatory acts against the Maasai such as those enforced in the 1960s and 1970s, the stereotypes and perceptions of

the Maasai have been instilled in the more ‘modern’ and ‘urban’ generations themselves. This negative perception of the Maasai often is of as an ‘uncivilized’, ‘isolated’ group that is holding back modernization. One of my close informants who grew up in an agricultural-based home in Moshi, and then moved to Bagamoyo for schooling, told me that discrimination towards the Maasai still continues today. As Maasai themselves are a clear minority in Bagamoyo, and since many speak ‘Maa’ rather than Swahili and/or English, they are subordinated due to a *cultural misunderstanding* from the government and the people. Tuma informed me about a recent governmental law that regulates the length of the blade of any publicly yielded knife or spear to be no more than three centimeters, as a means to prevent Maasai from walking around with long spears (which usually only occurs in more rural, agricultural areas anyways). Additionally, the discrimination against the Maasai is just one of many examples of discrimination of so called ‘indigenous’ groups within Africa. Although tourism marketing celebrates this sort of ‘uncivilized,’ ‘primitive,’ and ‘warrior-like’ image of the Maasai (and other ‘indigenous’ groups), at the same time, they are trying to erase it.

During my time in Bagamoyo, I have encountered many interactions with locals that show that they assume that the Maasai cannot be trusted, as well as have reinforced the Maasai ‘warrior’ image. The majority ethnic groups within Tanzania themselves often consider the Maasai as “backwards”(Picard & Wood 1997: 6). For example, my informant Tuma once told me that he would never hire a Maasai as a security guard, as if someone does, they will wake up the next morning and “they will find no car, no money, and no Maasai (laughs)”. Tuma would also often playfully pretend to fight our Maasai security guard, or speak at him in English, as the Maasai security guard could not



understand, and therefore he became uncomfortable and laughed. Additionally, the reason why Maasai are hired as security guards for tourist-based residential areas such as hotels and resorts is because of their ‘warrior-like’ image. Therefore, based on the tourist’s preconceived ideas of the Maasai ‘warrior’ (such as the many stories of Maasai need to kill a lion prior to achieving the ‘Maasai’ identity, they are more likely to feel safe and protected.

## **A DISTINCTIVE NGO BRAND**

Through examining the advertisements of Tanzanian and Kenyan-crafted products from an international, organization called ‘Ten Thousand Villages,’ I will argue how the ‘branding’ of these local products also exists at an international marketing level and that the NGO brand may be somewhat different from the local tourist art brand. With this higher-level of marketing, the local product is no longer intended to target the tourists directly, but rather Westerners who have most likely never been to East Africa, let alone, Africa, before, and may wish to support impoverished women, whom Ten Thousand Villages features as producing the crafts it sells. Therefore, the international agency uses the lack of knowledge of the Westerners to depict a product that creates Africa ‘wildness’ as ‘cute’, ‘lovable’, and ‘gentle’. Mainly, the crafts advertised are those that could sit as ‘cute’ ornaments or decorations in a Westerner’s home. A harsh skepticism of the owning of a ‘cute’ but ‘wild’ African product would be to claim that the Westerner unconsciously wants to have a sort of control over African ‘wildness’ and ‘exoticism’. A less harsh skepticism would be that the consumer only buys the African product because it is ‘cute,’

and they believe it would look nice as a decoration in their homes (and Ten Thousand Villages claims to give much support to the local producers themselves). Overall, the rebranding of the art products appears to appeal to those who may want to support poor people and women in developing countries. Additionally, the advertising emphasizes the sustainability of these art products, which may appeal to buyers as well. I will further analyze the 'Ten Thousand Villages' website with a critical eye of the 'branding' of products.

On their website, 'Ten Thousand Villages' provides a page called "the Makers", in which it gives a brief description of each country where products are bought from artisans. The description of Tanzania says: "Located on the Indian Ocean, Tanzania is a land of wildlife reservations and mountains, including Mount Kilimanjaro. Ninety-nine percent of the population, comprised of more than 100 tribes, is native to Africa. Tanzania's economy relies heavily on agriculture and exporting crops like coffee, rice, and sugarcane." This description of Tanzania provides the 'tourist gaze,' in which aspects are picked out that align with the outsider's idea of Africa as an 'exotic land'. However, while Ten Thousand Villages refers to common features like tribes and Mount Kilimanjaro, it paints a more domesticated vision of East Africa by referring to agriculture and export crops, as well as to the fact that the wildlife is confined to reservation,

Secondly, on the 'Why We Care' page, Ten Thousand Villages provides a description of how the international agency began, which emphasizes that Tanzania is not wild and outside of history, but rather is a developing country:

Byler believed that she could provide sustainable economic opportunities for artisans in developing countries by creating a viable marketplace for their products in North America. She began a grassroots campaign among her family and friends in the United States by selling handcrafted products out of the trunk of her car. Byler made a concerted effort to educate her community about the lives of artisans around the world. For the next 30 years, Byler worked tirelessly to connect individual entrepreneurs in developing countries with market opportunities in North America. From humble beginnings, Ten Thousand Villages has grown to a global network of social entrepreneurs working to empower and provide economic opportunities to artisans in developing countries.

With this description, the organization emphasizes that through consuming, the buyer is helping poor and enterprising people to help empower themselves. The company includes a self-proclaimed ‘charitable’ aspect to it: the organization connects local artisans in ‘developing’ countries with a global crafts market. This, as the company states, provides the local artisans with more economic opportunities. Thus the division between Euro-Americans and East Africans is not wild vs. civilized, but developing vs. developed. The organization tries to avoid sounding patronizing by emphasizing that it is helping people to help themselves.

The organization then pushes the local artisan’s to brand their products in a particular way. Under a section titled: ‘Design Influence’, the text reads: “Our designers and buyers work with artisans to build on their traditional skills with trend and color information and new product suggestions”. The website further elaborates on these ‘product suggestions’:

“Our in-house designers help artisans adapt traditional artistic skills to create a product that appeals to U.S. consumers. Our buyers make regular visits to artisan partners, where they collaborate to produce best-selling products and enable our partners to develop their businesses and design skills.” Although the designers are helping the local artisans produce art that they feel would sell better through their organization, they are simultaneously rebranding the products through their influence. The organization’s designers influence the creation of the product, therefore creating another layer of branding. I will argue that, in the case of Tanzania and Kenya, this second layer of branding makes the craft into an object of ‘cuteness’ and ‘fun’. Here, I will provide a few examples of advertised Tanzanian and Kenyan crafts, looking specifically at the craft description provided by Ten Thousand Villages, and providing my critique:

*Enormous Love Elephants*



Description: “Mama and baby elephant sculptures can be used as paperweights, they can hold up your file folders and documents, or they can simply keep you company. Kisii

soapstone, found only in Kenya, is a soft stone, easy to carve into many forms. Its satiny finish is achieved through multiple stages of sanding, followed by waxing.”

Here the elephants are portrayed as ‘cute’ through its description as “mama and baby elephant”, as well as their ability to “simply keep you company”. This art product is amongst the other advertised products as it is feminized: the product is advertised to achieve women (from the West) helping women (from developing countries). The animal is no longer branded as ‘exotic’ and ‘wild,’ but rather as helpful, loving, and domestic as it can be used for small tasks, such as a paperweight. In this case, the branded wildness of Africa is objectified and rebranded as domestic and cute, and providing very small, helpful favors for the customer.

### *Outrageous Hippopotamus*



The website describes this item as, “Outrageous can be oh-so-fun, like this fat little delightful hippopotamus. Carved dark kisii stone, hand-painted in assorted splashy designs. Kisii soapstone, found only in Kenya, is a soft stone, easy to carve into many forms. Its satiny finish is achieved through multiple stages of sanding, followed by waxing. In some cases, as with this piece, artisans also apply paint.”

This description also emphasizes the urge to own a product that rebrands the initial branded and stereotypically ‘exotic’ and ‘wild’ animal as cute, gentle, and feminine, and displaying it as a decoration. The “Outrageous” hippo “can be oh-so-fun”, and it is described as a “fat little delightful hippopotamus”. Again, this advertisement rebrands a stereotypically dangerous African culture into ‘cuteness’ and ‘fun’.

*Carved Hippo Eyeglass Holder*



This item is described with the caption, “Don’t forget your glasses! This whimsical hippo is here to help. Hand-carved hippopotamus holds your specs till you need them next.

From Kichaka Poa. Jacaranda wood is a sustainable, fast-growing wood, one of the woods recommended for carvings in Kenya. Kenya is developing a sustainability certification process for jacaranda wood.”

This description too advertises a stereotypical ‘wild’ and ‘dangerous’ animal as cute and gentle, and able to assist the buyer with her everyday, small tasks. The hippo becomes a feminized and domestic decoration: created by a woman, and bought from a woman across the world. The advertisement is clearly geared towards women empowering enterprising women artisans. The website also reminds the buyer that the crafts are sustainable.

### *Kitenge Laptop Sleeve*

This item is described with the caption, “Liven up your laptop with a kicky kitenge cover. Kitenges are African garments similar to the sarong. Made of bold patterned cloth, the kitenge is sometimes used as a headscarf or baby sling. Women wrap the kitenge around their body like a sarong. Men sometimes wear the kitenge around the waist. Kitenge cloth comes in a great variety of colors and patterns, often with religious, tribal or political designs.”

Again, the Masaai warriors of local paintings are replaced with an image of mothers carrying babies and of people who have religious and political parties. This portrayal is far from the warrior at one with nature. This product is branded by turning a traditional, East African fabric style, into a fashionable product for Western women.

### *Rift Valley Maasai Necklace*

This item is described with the caption, “From Kenya’s Great Rift Valley, a web necklace in Maasai beadwork. In Maasai symbolism, any web design signifies unity and the life bonds among all with whom we relate. Beadwork decoration is an important cultural tradition for the Maasai people. Maasai are nomadic people who live in the Great Rift Valley of Kenya. Maasai herders follow the seasons in search of grass and water for their cattle.

Again the art product turns the Maasai, a stereotypically wild and primitive tribe, into a product emphasizing unity and life bonds. The product is advertised in a feminized, caring brand.

On the local scale, in which artists brand their products directly for tourists, they homogenize their culture as ‘wild,’ ‘exotic,’ and ‘close to nature’. On the international

level, companies like Ten Thousand Village take the branding a step further, and they add on to the local brand, such in this case, portraying the previously-branded exotic and wild product as ‘cute’, ‘gentle,’ ‘helpful,’ and ‘fun’. Instead of targeting tourists, the international organizations must target all Westerners; most of who have never been to Africa. Therefore, this second layer of branding is not necessarily trying to present an ‘authentic’ African culture, but is rather taking the initial local products, and adding on a layer of branding that they believe would attract their Western-buyer target groups.

Overall, cultural branding is done as a matter to align with the tourist’s expectations and interests in Africa. For artists, cultural branding is simply business – they produce based on what they believe that tourist is looking for. I have argued that there are two primary types of branding: 1) branding Africa as primitive and wild (i.e. the Maasai paintings); 2) branding Africa as undeveloped, feminized, and in need of help (i.e. Ten Thousand Villages). In both cases, the producers are distorting a cultural brand targeted to *particular* buyers. In the third chapter, I will discuss art tourism from the tourist’s perspective. I will argue that different types of tourists have different interests in tourist art, as well as different ideas of Africa in large.



## **Chapter 3: The Tourist Perspective**

### **WHY VISIT BAGAMOYO/TANZANIA/EAST AFRICA?**

The reasons that bring tourists to East Africa vary immensely, and these reasons impact what the tourist expects (or does not expect) to get from their traveling experience. I have interviewed a variety of tourists, and these tourists largely represent the different categories of tourists that partake in East African tourism: vacation/safari-goers, short-term volunteers, and research/work. Although some tourists may likely visit East Africa for a combination of these categories, there is a strong correlation between where you come across a tourist and the purposes of their visit. For instance, when I came across tourists at national parks, Zanzibar, hiking Mount Kilimanjaro, and at the Moshi airport (which is near many national parks), these tourists almost always informed me that they were in Tanzania as a *vacation* (although I met many people in these areas who came to do volunteer work and then went on a vacation, so categories often overlap). Whereas, in Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam, the areas do not have as large of a reputation for tourism and vacationing, so most tourists that visit are often low-budget travelers/adventurers, graduate students conducting research, volunteers, or employers/employees. That being noted, I have come across tourists in Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam on multiple occasions who were temporarily volunteering or visiting these areas, and who did, or would be, going on safaris in central or northern Tanzania later in their trip, or else were preparing to travel across the ocean to vacation in Zanzibar.

The means of a tourist's visit usually has an influence on his/her souvenir shopping in Tanzania, as well as his/her perception of African art and its 'authenticity'. Additionally, this influences what they are looking to get from their purchase of African art, and what the art represents to them. In the following chapter, I will first distinguish between 'low-budget tourists' and 'high-budget tourists' in regards to what they are looking for when traveling to Africa, and what they are looking for when purchasing African art in general. Although these two categories are not black and white per se, there is generally a gap between tourists who visit Africa for leisure, and those who visit for volunteering, work, and research. In some cases, 'volunteer tourists' falls in between the two categories, as they may be partially vacationing, and going on safaris/relaxing on the side. Next, I will introduce Edward Bruner's term 'the tourist gaze', which references the degree to which tourists believe what they are seeing is 'authentic' culture. I will use surveys which I have conducted to discuss and analyze correlations between different types of tourists, what art souvenirs they bought, and why they decided to buy these particular art products. The literature on tourism in Africa emphasizes the way tourists look to Africa to embody the primitive, focusing on wild animals and wild people like the Maasai, portrayed in paintings as standing against empty landscapes with their spears. But this literature neglects the substantial number of volunteer tourists who, like the Ten Thousand Villages promotional materials, see Africa as a place of people who are poor and in need of help but are also a source of exotic, but domestic, customs and religions, that the volunteer tourists hope to be included in.

## LOW-BUDGET TOURISTS, VOLUNTEERS, WORK

The following excerpt depicts my interactions with a ‘low-budget tourist’ couple in Mselem’s art shop:

*Soon, a safari car stopped further down the street, and a young couple began to wonder down the three art stores towards MSEBI shop. As they entered Mselem’s carving room, he said “Karibu (welcome)” and “Mambo vipi? (What’s up?)” to them. They clearly did not understand Kiswahili, as they did not respond with basic Swahili responses. I greeted them as well, and as Mselem went into the painting room with the husband (or boyfriend), I had the chance to speak to the wife (or girlfriend). Through our conversation, I learned that they are from Germany, though have been travelling all over for five months now (most recently, in Asia). They will be spending ten days in Tanzania at a hotel that is not in Bagamoyo, so they are only driving through the town. After some small talk, I asked her if they were looking to buy any art in particular here, though she said that they were just looking, and that they don’t have much money to spend because of all of their travelling. She told me that Tanzania is the last stop on their six-month voyage, and after this, they must return to their routine lives in Germany. I asked her how their voyage has been overall, and she said the travelling has been incredible, and that they met a ton of amazing and interesting people throughout it. Just then, her husband came wondering back to the carving room with Mselem close behind. After I gave them directions to the nearest supermarket, they thanked me, and I watched as the car did a U-turn from where they were parked, and followed the directions I gave them (backtracking) down the road. There was someone else who was driving the car as well, though he never came over to Mselem’s shop. After they left, I asked Mselem if the man*

*had bought any art. Mselem claimed that the man was very interested in a particular painting, though had said he does not have enough money to make the purchase.*

Although ‘low-budget tourists’ often differ in their reasons for being in Tanzania, many are traveling around a variety of places for an extensive period of time, and therefore, must be cautious with what they buy (because of both money and space). The couple above appeared very intrigued to grasp Bagamoyo culture in their short stay, and as the wife claimed, they love meeting a variety of interesting people during their travels.

Therefore, because of their extensive travels and quick movement, low-budget tourists/adventurers try to grasp the cultures and peoples whom they come across for a short period of time. They may be less concerned/capable of purchasing art, and therefore, are less interested in art authenticity. These type of travelers (many of whom are considered ‘backpackers’) generally are not in a single region/country for a long period of time, as they are continuously moving around with their small amount of luggage. These types of tourists often look for something different than wildlife and primitive people: instead, they look to build meaningful friendships, and the chance to learn from other people.

Short-term volunteers and research students generally have a higher budget than long-term travelers, and are able to buy more during their stay in Bagamoyo because they have more space to bring back souvenirs (though they do not have as high as a budget as safari-goers/vacationers). Many of the volunteers/research students I spoke with found the Tanzanian people as their favorite part of their short-term trip. When asked about her favorite part of her time in Tanzania, an American medical graduate student who was working and researching at Bagamoyo District Hospital answered: “I enjoyed the people

the most. Everyone was very hospitable and welcoming, especially during religious traditions. I think the most valuable part of my trip was the interactions I had with local people and getting a glimpse of the Islamic culture and religious traditions.” In response to the same question, another American graduate student responded: “I enjoyed meeting tons of new people and learning about local customs, eating new foods and seeing new places.” Lastly, in response to the same question, a college student who traveled to Tanzania for a three-week volunteer trip, answered:

I enjoyed working with the same kids every day and being able to build relationships with them over the time we spent there. It was also really interesting watching the exchange between American and Tanzania children in their skype meetings. One of the most eye opening experiences was when the kids were discussing the differences between the cultures and customs of their homelands. A young Tanzanian girl brought up the issue of female circumcision- an issue that none of the American students had ever heard of or had worried about.

Bagamoyo volunteers and research students (who typically are relatively young) found a great pleasure in interacting and building relationships with Tanzanian people firsthand. In addition, they also enjoyed immersing themselves in the culture, and found it valuable to see and experience cultural norms that are completely different from their own. Therefore, what these tourists intrigued by is the cultural differences, and witnessing/becoming a part of these differences. To them, there is great value in being able to interact and become close with people who live under very contrasting cultural conditions, values, beliefs, and lifestyles. Therefore, volunteer/research student tourists

were less inclined to look for ‘wild’ and ‘exotic’ Africa, but rather looked for creating meaningful relationships with people who are culturally different, yet shared some similarities.

The short-term volunteers and research students often prided themselves on the buying art products *locally*. Just as they sought to form individual relations with Africans, they wanted to consume crafts that expressed the unique individuality of the artist. They saw Africans as people somewhat like themselves, and so they wanted to buy souvenirs that seemed to be authentic expressions of a unique personality. They saw themselves as getting past a slick and insincere surface that most tourists just accepted, and they prided themselves in their beliefs that they were partially overcoming ‘the tourist gaze’ the ‘tourist bubble’ (van Beek & Schmidt 2012b: 177). A graduate student who spent over two months researching in Bagamoyo/Tanzania claimed: “I mostly bought art from local artists in Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam. I purchased paintings and wood carvings. I picked these because I felt they were unique and quality art. I also felt that it was cool to buy something that I would not be able to normally get at an airport or gift shop.”

Another graduate student doing research in Bagamoyo had a similar response to what souvenirs she bought and where she bought them: “I bought mainly paintings and a couple of bracelets (a couple were gifts too) and I got them all from small markets in Bagamoyo. Nothing from any other parts of Tanzania. Oh, I actually bought a couple of paintings from Mselem. There was this one of a lion "couple" that was an engagement present for my brother and his fiancé.” In response to why she chose to buy these particular souvenirs, she replied: “I liked the art that I felt most accurately depicted the beauty of the country and the people. I also liked to buy art from artists that I knew and

could meet beforehand so they could tell me more about the piece and therefore make it slightly more meaningful of a purchase.” Lastly, an English medical student who spent three months researching in Bagamoyo and Zanzibar claimed: “I bought a ton of things as I travelled around, almost all of it from local shops and markets. I made a real effort to buy things that were made locally whenever possible. The main things I remember buying were quite a few paintings, several kangas, coffee, spices, and some hand carved wooden boxes.” When asked what she liked about these particular souvenirs, she answered: “The fact that they were all so unique and different from anything I can buy at home! I wanted things that would remind me of the trip and also make exciting gifts for people. Getting things that were more authentic and made by local people made the souvenirs more special, as well as (cheesy as it may sound) making me feel like I was putting something back into the community.”

Graduate students (who were generally in Bagamoyo for two to four months) placed great importance in the actual *exchange* of the art souvenirs: who they bought it from, and whether it was bought locally. For them, a primary reason for buying art was supporting local artists on the area in which they researched/worked, but also was building meaningful relationships with the artists (and people) themselves. The act of buying locally, in which the tourist interacts firsthand with the buyer themselves, and is therefore able to get a brief understanding of the artist as a person, and the artist’s perspective of their produced art souvenir, is essential. Generally, these types of tourists did not assume ‘authenticity’ of an art souvenir: instead, they found the artist’s *own* interpretations of their art as valuable. These tourists bought art that they believed they could only buy locally in Tanzania, and they bought art based on how they perceived the

exchange relationship between themselves and the buyers. In terms of *what* art they bought, they occasionally bought art that they believed portrayed Tanzania and its people accurately. Additionally, they bought art as gifts: not which portrayed Bagamoyo culture necessarily, but art that was created by local artists, and portrayed the perspectives of tourist-viewed Tanzania in broad. Similar to the advertisement-importance of the buyer-seller relationship, graduate students placed great importance of the actual person buyer-seller exchange. Unlike other types of tourists, graduate students are often much more interested in seeing the artists as people themselves, and this largely influences their exchange.

Short-term volunteers had very similar reasons for selecting the art souvenirs that they chose to buy. Because they were usually not in Tanzania as long as researching and working tourists, they generally had less of an informed perspective and interpretation of Tanzania. One volunteer who was in Bagamoyo for three weeks said: “I bought a blanket and a backpack from a local seamstress (Pili), but the majority of my gifts were made of wood and came from the local shops and the market. I liked that they were from Africa. They were all were well made and had a Tanzanian quality to them.” Although this particular volunteer values the act of buying locally, her reasons for buying the specific art souvenirs were a little more vague: because they ‘were from Africa’ and they had ‘Tanzania quality’. Another volunteer who was in Bagamoyo for the same duration of time claimed:

I bought a Maasai blanket from the hotel that we were staying at during our trip to the Ngorongoro Crater. I also bought a lot of art from the local artists [in Bagamoyo] for myself, family, and friends. The souvenirs were unique because



they all had so much culture intertwined in them. The Maasai blanket was interesting because it was what the Maasai people had to wear in order to deter the wild animals in the crater. The paintings illustrated the Maasai people, and the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape.

This volunteer based her purchases on what she assumed to be cultural authenticity, although her views were quite similar in fact to the generic paintings/artwork illustrating primitive Africans sold to tourists. Because of the shorter time period in which most volunteers are in Tanzania, their typical perspectives of Africa are less informed, and are closer to the stereotypes that they had been previously exposed to in the West. She believes that the paintings are souvenirs she bought accurately portrayed the Maasai people's everyday lives, and likely because she does not know much about Tanzania, so she has an 'outside' perspective of the Maasai as tribal. Additionally, she went on a safari, in which the Maasai in the area (especially those selling art themselves) often aligned more with these outside stereotypes. In the Ngorongoro Crater, Maasai were generally agro-pastoralists, in which they can be seen herding their cows in close proximity to the many 'wild', safari animals in the crater. Lastly, some volunteers did not care as much as the portrayal of the Maasai/Tanzanian life in the art, but rather were concerned with the style and the aesthetic pleasure of the art. One volunteer claimed: "I love the variety of painting styles that were available in the art market I went to [in Dar es Salaam]. The different painting styles seem much more clearly defined than what I've seen in the past. Most of the paintings are made very specifically in a pre-selected style. The style I like best involves the use of silhouettes, with the majority of the color coming from the scenery of the painting and in the sky." This answer displays the degree to

which the buyer cares about the ‘authenticity’ and ‘cultural representation’ of the art souvenir varies drastically.

Overall, long-term adventurers, volunteers, and research students often bought art souvenirs due to the ‘uniqueness,’ the degree to which they believed it represented the beauty of Tanzania and its people, and for the simple act of supporting local artists, whom they often purchased based on the genuineness and their perception of the artist him/herself. As the above answers display, the degree to which artists care about ‘authenticity’ of representation within the art souvenir varies, and does how much of this authenticity is based on their own perception of Tanzania. Additionally, the timeframe of how long a tourist is in Tanzania influences what they buy, and why they buy it: a tourist who is Tanzania for a long time is most likely more interested in building human relationships. Their purpose of visiting also has an influence, as volunteers/research students tend to want to support people and promote sustainable development, so they are more likely to support local. When tourists base the cultural authenticity of the art on their own perceptions of Tanzania, their definition of Tanzanian authentic culture tends to merge between the outside, stereotypical views of Tanzania and what the tourist has actually seen Tanzanian culture to be like. This merge varies, depending on how long the tourist has been in Tanzania, whether they have only traveled to tourist-popular locations or more ‘rural’, ‘local’ areas, and how eager they are to get a true grasp of Tanzanian culture that may go against the Western stereotypes of Africa that they have been previously exposed to.

## HIGH-BUDGET TOURISTS, VACATIONERS, SAFARI-GOERS

Although it is less common to come across ‘high-budget tourists’ in Bagamoyo as it is not a prominent vacation destination (and there are not national parks nearby), the following excerpt displays my interaction with two presumably ‘high-budget tourists’ as I attempted to lure them into Mselem’s shop:

*A minute or two after arriving, two tourists (I presume a man and his daughter) walked by. The man looked to be about sixty, and the woman between twenty-five and thirty. We waved to them as they walked on the stone road, and the man stopped and yelled in English (to Jack and I): ‘Are you guys selling or buying?’ I joked and yelled back that we were selling, and he laughed and began to walk over with the younger woman. He joked: ‘You look like you are from here!.’ I became conscious of my image: I have been hanging out with Mselem in his shop wearing hiking boots, gym shorts, a beat-up tank top, a sweaty bandana under my hair, and many bracelets around my wrists that I purchased in Bagamoyo. My brother and I began a conversation with the two as they stood on the curb of the stone road: while doing so, the man lit up a wooden pipe of tobacco. He wore a safari hat, and mostly tan clothes. The man asked my brother and I what we were doing in Bagamoyo, and after informing him that we were volunteering with a NGO, we tried to lure them into the shop by introducing them to Mselem. Unfortunately, they instead stayed their ground and waved, and soon after, continued their walk on the road.*

Although it is not completely fair to assume that they were high-end tourists based on the man's safari gear, this interaction generally illustrates that of some high-end tourists who are less interested in immersing in local culture. High-end tourists in broad terms are in Tanzania for a vacation: to relax in what they may or may not perceive to be an 'exotic', 'wild' place. Most high-end tourists are not looking for the same African experience described by many low-budget adventurers, volunteers, and research students: meeting and building relationships with the Tanzanian people, and immersing in the local cultural norms. For high-end, vacation-going tourists, they often only want to experience Africa from the safety of what Bruner calls 'the tourist gaze' (although there are many exceptions); many are less interested in Africans than in beaches, mountains, and wild animals.

While hiking Mount Kilimanjaro, I came across many high-end tourists who generally had the same plans for their time in Tanzania after hiking (which almost appeared to be a 'tourist travel package'). After the hike, many of these tourists planned to safari at the Ngorongoro Crater, Serengeti, etc., and some had planned trips to relax in Zanzibar at expensive resorts. Most of these tourists booked their Kilimanjaro hike through foreign agents, and most also had well-paid, stable jobs in their home country. One couple I spoke with from England talked about how much they were looking forward to, after the Kilimanjaro hike, sitting and relaxing with beers on the beaches of Zanzibar for an 'all expenses paid' seven-day vacation. It turns out that the couple my brother and I roomed with throughout our hike, a German couple on their honeymoon, were planning to stay in the same hotel in Zanzibar. For these tourists, their visit to Africa was a vacation, and this influenced what they wanted to (and did not want to) experience

while visiting. They experienced Africa from what Wijnsgaarden calls the ‘tourist bubble’: and they wanted a relaxing experience in Africa full of beaches, safari animals, and mountains. To these tourists, Africa was a vacation spot, and they therefore were oblivious/uninterested in immersing in local (and less tourist-prevalent) Tanzanian culture

Often, what high-end, vacation and safari-going tourists purchased were simply souvenirs to remember their trip. Much of these souvenirs were purchased in gift shops inside of safari lodges and airports, or else stands that Maasai ‘sellers’ set up at the lodge (which is clearly organized by the lodge itself). Therefore, their buying experience is much different than those who buy art products locally, and from the artists themselves (in which the buyer goes to the artist’s local shop). Generally, because of their ‘vacation’ reasons of being in Tanzania, they are less concerned with authenticity of the souvenirs, as well as the artists (or distributors) who sell them. To these tourists, their souvenirs represent a memory, and as they usually do not have as much of a yearning to immerse in, and grasp, true, diverse Tanzanian culture, the experience of buying the art is not as important, nor is the cultural authenticity of what that art is portraying. Because high-end tourists often come to Tanzania to vacation and safari, their perspectives of Tanzanian culture may not change much (unless they leave the tourist-safe and distorted ‘zones’), so neither would their questionings of authenticity. Instead, high-end tourists often buy souvenirs that replicate their Tanzanian safari experience – fake; hiding authentic, real Tanzania culture; and distorted to align with the tourist’s yearning to view Africa as a wild, exotic, vacation-based land.

Therefore, I have argued that the types of tourists (although they do not fit perfectly within each category) often influences their perception of Africa, and what they look for when buying tourist art. For low budget, or volunteer/research tourists, they are generally in Africa for a longer duration than vacationers/safari-goers, and they often immerse in the actual culture more. Their experiences of buying art are often influenced by their desires for person-to-person interactions, and relationships with locals. They largely want to support local artists. In contrast, for vacationers/safari-goers, they often view Africa as their relaxing destination – they are not there to immerse in the culture nor meet locals, but rather to enjoy the tourist-distorted version of Africa they are presented (safaris full of wild animals, witnessing ‘tribal’, ‘primitive’ traditional dances from the comfort of expensive tourist resorts, etc.). They experience much more separation from the real culture that surrounds them.

## Epilogue

It has been six months since I have been to Tanzania, and since I have last seen Mselem. We have stayed in touch as I expected – we frequently use Facebook to either ‘message’ or to actually speak on the phone, which Mselem claims does not cost him much if done through Facebook. Since I last saw him, Mselem has gone through a couple of rough times with being low on money, has considered opening a barber shop, and more recently, has considered to begin agricultural production for profit. He has frequently sent me photographs of his new paintings through Facebook Messenger, with the hopes that I could find friends who would want him to ship them one.

As I argued within my paper, artists often look for other side-employment on top of being an artist, as it is difficult to maintain a living through just tourist art, which is dependent on tourist seasons. This is often part of the artist’s strategy when he tries to tie relationships with NGOs and volunteers – to gain more connections, and more reliable/constant profit. For Mselem, his act of getting close with members of a particular NGO worked out for him – recently, he was offered a side job for teaching pre-school students painting in a recently-opened NGO-funded preschool. Although this is a part-time opportunity, this could help Mselem get through the gaps between tourist seasons.

Although Mselem has no clear intent to stop producing tourist art, he is, and has been, constantly looking for new opportunities to earn a reliable living (in addition to painting). While looking for other part-time employment opportunities or self-innovating ways to make money on the side, Mselem will continue to mass-produce branded

paintings. While he continues to produce art, he will teach his students the same set of steps.



## Works Cited

- Bruner, Edward M. *Culture on Tour*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. Print.
- Comaroff, John L. and Jean. *Ethnicity, Inc*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2009. Print.
- Hodgson, Dorothy L. *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World*. Indiana University Press, 2011. Web.
- “Introduction to Part II: From Tribe to Ethnicity: Kinship and Social Organization.” In *Perspectives on Africa, Second Edition: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*, edited by Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher B. Steiner, 64-70. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010. Print.
- Lewellen, Ted C. *The Anthropology of Globalization*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc, 2002. Print.
- Picard, Michel, and Wood, Robert E. *Tourism, Ethnicity and the State in Asian and Pacific Societies*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997. Web.
- Price, Sally. *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd, 1989. Print
- Ranger, Terence. “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa.” In *Perspectives on Africa, Second Edition: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*, edited by Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher B. Steiner, 450-461. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010. Print.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. United States: Pantheon Books, 1978. Print.

- Southall, Aidan W. "The Illusion of Tribe." In *Perspectives on Africa, Second Edition: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*, edited by Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher B. Steiner, 83-94. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010. Print.
- Ten Thousand Villages*. <http://www.tenthousandvillages.com/>. 15 March 2016.
- Wijngaarden, Vanessa. "Cosmopolitan Savages: The Challenging Art of Selling African Culture to Tourists." *Etnofoor* Vol. 22, No. 2 (2010): 98-125. Web.
- Wijngaarden, Vanessa. "'The lion has become a cow': The Maasai hunting paradox." In *African Hosts & their Guests: Cultural Dynamics of Tourism*, edited by Walter Van Beek and Annette Schmidt, 176-200. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Inc, 2012. Web.
- Van Beek, Walter, and Annette Schmidt. "African dynamics of cultural tourism." In *African Hosts & their Guests: Cultural Dynamics of Tourism*, edited by Walter Van Beek and Annette Schmidt, 176-200. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Inc, 2012. Web.