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From Campur to Champuru: Southeast Asian Influences in Okinawan Culture

Performance

Okinawan culture is a harmonious blend of East and Southeast Asian elements. From the 14th to 16th centuries, the Okinawan Ryukyu kingdom engaged in trade with the Javanese Majapahit empire. Many intangible influences from Southeast Asia also came along with material goods, which were adapted in Okinawa and remains today in the culture, a mixture known as “champuru” in Okinawa and “campur” in Java. This presentation is a visual survey of these art forms, followed by a performance of the presenter’s “Oki-Jawa” dances that fuse together Okinawan and Javanese dance styles, showing their similarities and historical connections. One of these dances was presented in 2008 in the alumni talent show during the EWCA conference in Bali.