Mistakes were Made

[uncorrected] programme
CUHK YIA LT9 (2nd Floor)
Friday May 3, 2024

The program was selected in two stages: the contributions from pre-confirmation candidates in the School of Architecture CUHK (roughly half the presentations), were selected by an internal vote. The Hong Kong wide contributions have been selected by the visiting respondents, and a couple of cases by direct invitation. The result is both an extremely diverse conference, but also one with a pronounced bias towards qualitative and socially driven research. Quantitative research is underrepresented, but perhaps later forums can address this gap.

10==

Opening — Adam Jasper and Cecilia Chu

10.10 Part One==

Re-building Skyscraper Communities – the case study of KongsiKL
Clarissa Lim

In 1991, Vision 2020, a speculative urban imagination for Malaysia, was announced. The vision of modernizing Malaysia (Bunnell, 2022), which includes high- tech transit systems, huge skyscrapers, and flying cards, has left little room for community-driven organizations such as arts collectives to thrive. The lack of adequate cultural urban planning has led embedding arts collective in existing high density commercial spaces is seen as a tactic to maintain a cultural urban common. An arts collective, KongsiKL is currently relocating from a warehouse space undergoing redevelopment to the rooftop of an existing carpark adjacent to a shopping mall in a high-density urban environment. As shopping malls are becoming a quasi-public space, a new relationship between capital and culture emerges as arts spaces relocate into them (Lim 2013). This offers a case study to observe the complicated relationship between arts and capital by mapping a comparative old-new relationships through a series of analytical maps.

How do arts collectives resituate their practice in high density environments in areas planned for commercial and shopping purposes?

By mapping the social production throughout this transitional period using a Lefebvrian (1991) framework of conceived, perceived and lived, the trialectical analysis mapped will offer data to compare before and after the transitional period. Supported with interviews with stakeholders, KongsiKL offers a case study for embedding an arts collective into existing relationships. By elucidating new relationships between everyday spaces of consumption and

chores (Lefebvre 1987) and public arts programming, the tensions of uneven urban planning and densification emerges. The shifting of audience and entanglement of relations means a forming new relationship may not be as easy as it seems. Following the trend of other shopping malls such as Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre embedding into, KongsiKL offers a use-case for testing the entanglement of audiences and building coexisting networks by enriching emerging civic spaces with innovative public programmes.

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"Seascape" through Urbanisation
—A Case Study of the Floating Community in Causeway Bay
Miriam Lee

Hong Kong as a colonial port city is situated in the maritime trade network of the British Empire between India and China. Hongkongers are familiar with the cliches of "the wide and deep Victoria Harbour" and the city's rise "from a fishing village to international economic centre" on the Far East trade route and global financial hub.

For centuries there had been dozens of floating settlements along the coastline of Hong Kong. These inhabitants were mostly Tanka people who dwelled on boats and amphibious structures in the tidal zone. These communities were on the frontline of Hong Kong's maritime history and transformation of coastal land use. Yet very few research has been conducted to examine the use of space on water by these communities, and the changes in the spatial arrangements of these floating dwellings analogous to urbanisation and modernisation of the city happening on land.

This paper discusses the transformation of the floating community in Causeway Bay in parallel to urbanisation on land from late 19th century to 1970s. It reviews the changes in coastal land use and hence the geographical coastline from the sprawling of Victoria City, industrialisation and commercialisation of the district, and drastic metamorphosis of the bay into the fulcrum of major cross-harbour transportation infrastructures. It explores how the sea settlers here interacted with different players through the urbanisation process of the southern coast of Victoria Harbour, and their adaptations in the use of space on water against the geographical, architecture and economic developments on land. The paper aspires to provide an alternative perspective in examining the "seascape" of coastal communities in the framework of spatial planning and evaluating the cultural values of spatial arrangements on the sea.

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Contested urban commons: Navigating community engagement in producing the space of Party-mass Service Centre
Yidan Gong

Community engagement is undoubtedly regarded as a promising method to enable public participation and community empowerment when communities face the forces of urbanisation. The Party-mass Service Centre in China is like a complex community centre connecting the Party and the people while bearing the most peripheral level of governmental management over the community. Following the clue of this specific character, the essence of

community engagement producing its space remains to be critically examined. In this research, I explore the contested entanglements involved in community engagement in producing the space of the Party-mass Service Centre, which is aimed at being the urban commons, considering the appropriation of the notion of urban commons in China, contention of and negotiation among stakes from multiple perspectives, and the implication of actions that appear and dissolve in interactions intertwined.

Specifically, I bring ethnographic attention to examine community engagement involved in the design and construction process of the Mingchangli Party-mass Service Centre in Wuhan, China. This research traces how the essence of urban commons is perceived, transformed, and contested through meetings, negotiations, and actions by participant observation. Further insights are drawn from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders about their reflections from a retrospective point of view.

From this empirical research of urban commons situated in a contested context of urbanisation in China, I argue that community engagement enacted by the government establishes platforms for stakeholders to participate and activates a sense of belonging in communities while under authoritarian control aiming for manageable governance. Meanwhile, this contested process of community engagement facilitates ways stakeholders are both embedded in the normative governance regimes and have the potential to manoeuvre through the mistakes made in these regimes with their tacit knowledge.

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Re-narrating Heritage Landscapes of Chiang Mai
Kanisa Sattayanurak

The paper examines how the livelihood of informal settlements along a polluted canal is becoming a critical part of a new heritage narrative about Chiang Mai that challenges the city's monument-based heritage narrative. Informal settlements along the Mae Kha Canal are the result of tourism-oriented economic development in Chiang Mai city center since the mid-20th century. The government allowed migrants from far-reaching parts of Northern Thailand to settle down along the canal and its adjacent earthen city wall, forming multiethnic communities that served the tourism industry. However, these communities have been living in vulnerable circumstances since the late 20th century. This was due to the National Heritage Conservation Organization of the Fine Arts Department (FAD) identifying the heritage values of city canals and walls as distinctive landscape features that nurtured prehistoric

settlements, leading to the government's decision to evict canalside communities. While the government has yet to relocate all of these communities, the heritage values of the canal and earthen wall have been further increased since "Monuments, Sites, and Cultural Landscape of Chiang Mai, Capital of Lanna" made it to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List in 2015, which positions Mae Kha Canal as a significant cultural heritage site. In response to the friction between livelihood security and heritage conservation along the canal, in 2020, the Chiang Mai Municipality, in partner with architectural and landscape design firms and local NGOs, launched the Mae Kha Canal restoration project. This project enables the formation of a more inclusive governance structure that places an emphasis on community engagement. This project also leads to the downplaying of a monument-based heritage narrative and the emergence of alternative forms of value systems and heritage narratives. This study contributes to our understanding of the politics of heritage and landscapes, particularly how

their interrelated values are continuously shaped and reshaped within the changing sociopolitical contexts.

12 ==Coffee Break

12.15 Part Two ==

From Maoist doctrine to Market Rhetoric: Unsettling the Discourse of Market Reform through a Study of Guangzhou's Fish Markets

Xinhui Chen

This paper traces the political and environmental transformation of Guangzhou in China's

Reform Era through the lens of the city's fish markets. Utilizing the concept of "assemblage", I study these markets by mapping the material flows of fish trades and the rural freshwater fishery landscape in the Pearl River Delta. By understanding how these dynamics have changed over time, this research seeks to provide a different interpretation of the success

story of Guangzhou's early market reform experiments. Rather than seeing such developments as a radical break from the "mistakes" made in the Maoist era, I illustrate the historical continuities between the two periods.

Since 1978, China has launched a series of economic reforms which initially manifested as local experiments of decentralization. Guangzhou pioneered the marketization of foodstuffs in China, starting with the fish trade. The stunning growth of fish production and consumption

represented a success story that highlighted the city's adventurous spirit in breaking with

Maoism. However, by comparing the city's restructured fish trades in the early Reform Era to those in the Maoist days, it is revealed that strong continuities exist between the market reform experiments and the socialist experiments. As I illustrate in the paper, the discourse around the reopened fish trade in 1978 resonates strongly with the ethos of socialist rural

fairs developed after the crisis of the Great Leap Forward. Furthermore, the state's

introduction of the "high- yield technologies" and "responsibility system", which have significantly transformed the landscapes of rural fish farms, resembled the techniques deployed to reorganize the rural communes and boost agricultural production after the

famine. Despite the perceived rejection of the Maoist doctrine in China's market reform

experiments, the moral basis of its associated political and environmental transformation is strongly connected to the ongoing struggles to maintain the Mao-era commitments to reform the countryside and peasantry.

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A Tale of Uncertainty – An ethnographic study of the "shifting" landscape of a Chinese village

Youping Nie

This research contributes to scholarship on the entanglements of technoscience and local cosmology in contemporary rural China, exploring how technocratic and cosmological responses to uncertainty intertwine in place-making. The analysis focuses on contrasting concepts of "uncertainty" manifested in a Chinese village, Hecun, and its market town, Hezhen, situated within the Dongting Lake region of the middle section of the Yangtze River basin. By examining the experiences of the locals, this study traces how uncertainty is perceived and managed, by the state and by villagers. The state's response includes the implementation of technocratic projects, while the villagers rely on local popular cosmological beliefs and practices to navigate uncertainty. Although these responses appear to operate on completely different levels, my study shows the tight connection between state technocratic projects and local beliefs spatially and temporally. The implementation of technocratic projects by the state has brought about a rise in machinery implementation while simultaneously leading to a decline in labor due to ongoing water projects and economic reforms. Unexpectedly, this shift has also created more space for invisible spirits in the field of Hecun and Hezhen. Here, the three main roles in my study - state technocratic projects, locals in Hezhen and Hecun, and popular cosmological practices - are conceptualized as different forms of "power", namely machine power, manpower, and ghost power. Based on the case of Hecun and Hezhen, from the perspective of "power" shift, I discuss the theme of my study- how a place is made in a rural Chinese community.

1330==Lunch

1430 Part Three===
[Re]framing the Narrative
Shinnosuke Wasswa

Kampala, the heartbeat of Uganda's economy, has driven rural-urban migration over the years as people travel in search of better opportunities (Namwanje, 2022). This has led to rapid urbanisation and unprecedented growth of the informal sector that extends beyond the city's geographical confines. The city region, acting as a spatial extension of the city, has served as a productive landscape supporting its bustling informal economy and the livelihoods of city dwellers. To meet the ever increasing demand for forest resources in the city, large expanses of uncultivated land and natural forests have been replaced with monocultural commercial forests causing widespread socio-ecological degradation beyond Kampala.

While studying past and current trends in Uganda's forest governance, as well as the socio-cultural relations between people and forests, the study brings to light the social, spatial and epistemic injustices of exclusionary forestry policies and practices towards indigenous peoples. Storytelling is used not only as an investigative tool to understand the lives of the Batwa forest people, but also as an approach to document local knowledges and envision an alternative future outside the realm of western technocratic approaches. Counter-storytelling operates as activism, transcending oppression while fostering emanication and transformation of the Batwa community. In so doing, the project seeks to achieve their self-determination for a just forest economy in Kampala's city region.

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Revisiting Quality and Experience in Walking Accessibility to Amenities: A 15-Minute City Perspective from Hong Kong's New Towns

Qiwei Song

Recognising the critical role of access to amenities in enhancing the Quality of Life (QoL) within Hong Kong's densely populated New Town development, this study addresses an often- overlooked aspect that has been long overlooked: the quality of amenities and the walking experience to these destinations. Such oversight on quality and design, particularly in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods—remains largely under-addressed, warranting timely re-evaluation of current condition from a spatial equity perspective under the proximity-based planning framework. First, the research integrates novel data, including housing estate advertisements, to develop a comprehensive understanding of walking accessibility to various categories of non-work-related amenities (e.g., recreational) as highlighted in the 15-minute city concept. This method particularly considers residents' accessibility to private amenities in private estates, offering a granular evaluation of intra-city heterogeneity among different block groups. It further explores the amenity mix by examining the co-location of facilities within reach of different neighbourhoods to identify unique spatial distribution characteristics. Second, leveraging social media data and Natural Language Processing technique, the research will compare amenity accessibility with QoL perceptions focused on understudied amenity aspects. It seeks to uncover spatial mismatch patterns, shedding light on spatial variations and intra-city heterogeneity at a granular level, with an emphasis on underserved social groups. Complementary in-depth interviews in the identified neighbourhoods will further enrich the data-driven insights. Lastly, the study aims to employ Street View Images to proxy perceived design qualities, decipher spatial structures of urban perceptions along routes to amenities within walking distance constraints. Such investigations focus on pedestrian-oriented infrastructure and design qualities, depicting a roadmap to create physically enticing environment to facilitate truly walkable neighbourhoods to access amenities. This research endeavours to contribute to urban transformations through design that truly resonate with residents' future needs for better QoL, promoting equitable and liveable neighbourhoods.

1545==Coffee Break

1600==

Keep me! Interstitial Space – A Gesture as Interruption

Xing Dominic Chen

"The irreducible gap between the subject and its 'background,' the fact that a subject is never fully adapted to/embedded in its environment, defines subjectivity." - (Žižek 2006, 45)

This article explores the transformative potential of this irreducible gap within architectural discourse to address current social dilemmas, by unfolding around two synonyms of the gap:

interstice and interruption. Both nominalised words share a common Latin etymology, inter, meaning in-between, but differ in their Latin affixes, with stare (to stand, a standing still) and rumpere (to break) describing two different subject states within. If these two are seen as a complete process, 'to stand-a standing still-to break' presenting a state from action to stillness to action again, then the oscillating three is also hidden in between. Additionally, nominalisation serves as a metaphorical representation of adjectival properties and verb processes (Halliday 1994). Concerning properties, the interstitial space is seen as a surplus gap between the skin and structure of architectural reality (Žižek 2009), or more precisely, between representational appearance and utilitarian function (Novakovic 2013), where the surplus in reality is presented as excess by the symbolic appearance. In terms of processes, interruption emphasizes the actions or counteractions that emerge within the oscillating gap hidden beneath unity, continuity, and authority, aiming to challenge established norms and pave new paths (Bernath 2021). Žižek presents a universal, inherent gap across physical and metaphysical realms, where transformative potential depends on how actively subjects shifting their position and perspective to reveal, then appropriate and represent this symbol-hidden gap.

For nearly two decades, the convergence of the built environment and highly visual social media has created an interstitial space that constantly oscillates in the gaps between the offline and online, physical and virtual, private and public. In which our offline physical participation consistently coincides and intersects with curated online virtual self-presentation to display identity and socio-spatial position. Attempting to cover up the irreducible surplus by overly aestheticising the spatial selfie, anchoring the illusion of becoming the ideal self in the eternal moment of the image. Our subjectivity is deeply shaped by the irreducible gap between symbolic identity appearance and everyday life in the built environment. With this comes the spread of new narratives of alienation, isolationism and homogenization. This article will focus on three states of subjects in interstitial spaces—'to stand' (illusion action), 'a standing still' (action without action), and 'to break' (authentic action)—by discussing interruption moments constituted by architectural and artistic events or forms to elucidate the transformative potential of the gap. References & Bibliographic Sources:

1630==Dance Interlude

1645 Part Four===

Bangladesh Country Report Habitat II & III: A Review of Climate-responsive Urban Housing

Yasmin Dilruba

This paper examines the implications of the United Nations' backing of Bangladesh's urban development and national urban governance on climate-responsive housing architecture. It analyzes the Bangladesh Country Report Habitat II (1996) and Habitat III (2016), focusing on Purbachal New Model Town and Basila Garden City in Dhaka, the Building Construction Rules (2008), and the Dhaka

Metropolitan Development Plan (1996). The 1996 Bangladesh Country Report emphasizes clearing more land for housing and planning satellite towns. It identifies low-lying terrain as a "constraint" for land development, "destruction" of human settlement, and cause of "homelessness." Dhaka's population doubled from 8.7 million to 18.2 million between 1996 and 2016. The built-up area increased by 39%, while the amount of green space and water bodies fell by 33% between 1991 and 2016. Data on land use, flood zones, maximum ground coverage for housing, and floor-area ratio reveal that existing climate-response design approaches encouraging active design solutions are environmentally detrimental, producing increased heat and waterlogging. Habitat III report's proposal for compact townships and water-centric development of the urban periphery and Dhaka Detail Area Plan 2022 put greater pressure on the land, demanding a critical reexamination of present and past design approaches. This study is part of the dissertation project on how changing attitudes and responses to climate have shaped urban housing development in Dhaka since 1947.

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A Reframing Perspective on Torii: Adapting to Terrain and Transforming Architectural Space

Nan Tian

During my experience assisting in studio teaching at CUHK, I discovered that the two Japanese timber frame cases, the 16th century bridge and the contemporary stage, could be interchanged through model making due to their consistent frame units. These frame units could be transformed into a traditional Japanese torii (鳥居) without any modifications to material, components, joints, or tectonics. The torii functions as a gate, marking the entrance to the scared area typically found in Shinto shrines. Existing studies primarily interpret torii as territorialized ritual objects within the boundaries of torii's function and Shinto religion that are disconnected from audiences outside of Japanese culture, However, the finding in my teaching experience highlights the potential of the torii-type frame as a fundamental construction unit in architecture. How can the exploration of Japanese torii generate valuable knowledge for a cross-cultural audience through the lens of design and construction?

To address this, this thesis aims to decontextualize Japanese torii gates from the original context and explore the relationship between the primary frame of torii gates and traditional Japanese frame constructions, including kakezukuri (懸造り), wagoya (和小屋), and other built cases associated with the torii-type frame. Through case studies across various periods in Japan, the research examines the constructional versatility of the torii-type frame unit as a foundational framing system capable of adapting to diverse terrains and as a roof framing system that promotes spatial transformation within traditional architecture. Furthermore, it compares Japanese timber architecture with Chinese cases and explores the development paths influenced by the torii-type frame, which diverge from the construction system in China. The research materials extend beyond torii literature and investigate multi-facet materials, such as on-site surveys, interviews, and digital and physical model making for case

studies. At the same time, the data for case studies, including on-site measurements, will be systematically organized by utilizing
the FileMaker software.

The thesis introduces a new research framework that facilitates the understanding of traditional constructions for outsiders by decontextualizing them from their original contexts. It challenges the dominant authority of local researchers in studying traditional constructions and advocates for cross-cultural learning and understanding in architecture. Additionally, it discusses the potential for self-discovery within Chinese timber frame construction through comprehending Japanese timber frame construction with Chinese origins.

1800==End

1900====Restaurant