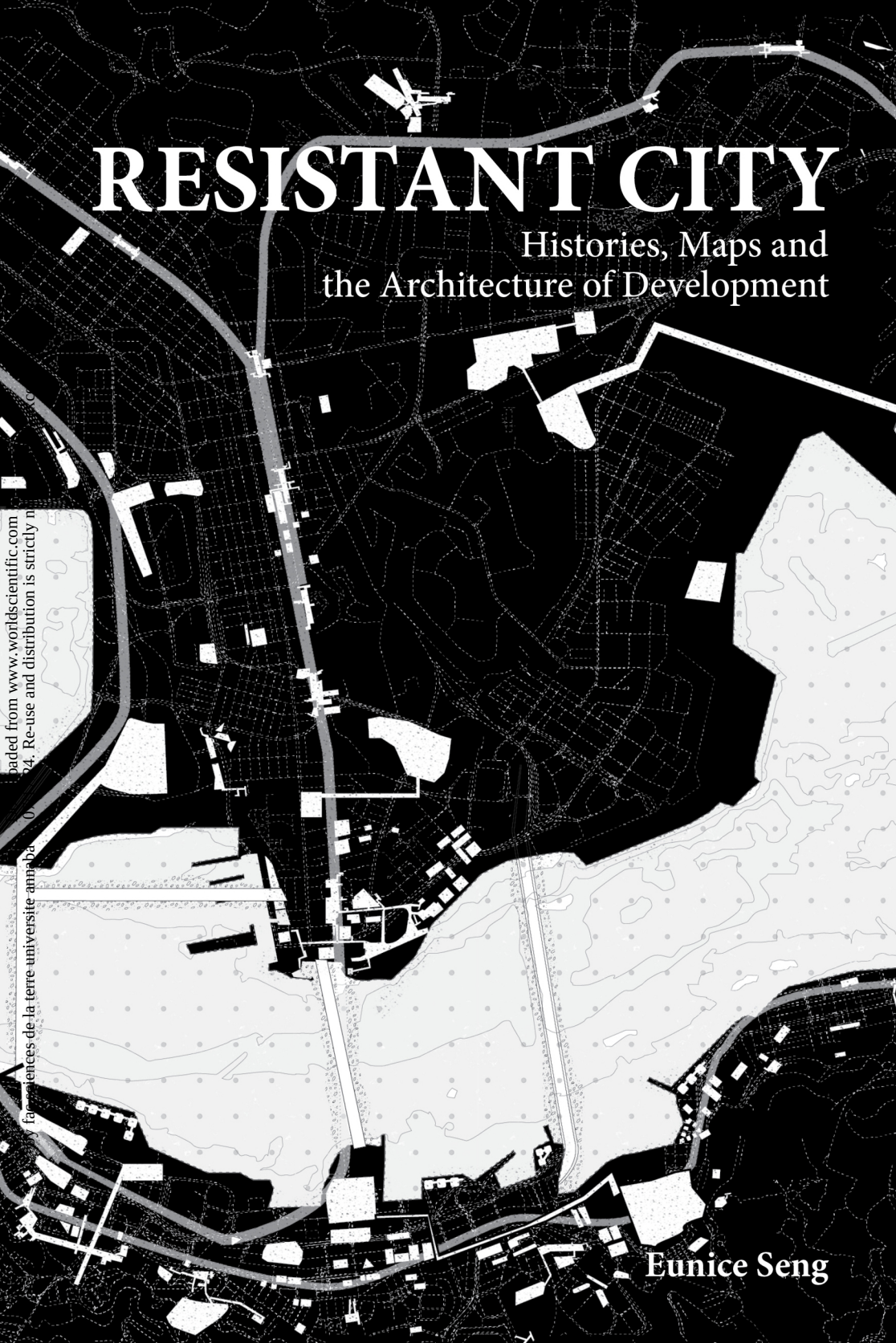


RESISTANT CITY

Histories, Maps and the Architecture of Development

Eunice Seng

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The legendary city of Victoria was like Venus, born from the waves of the sea. It is not known how it disappeared in the end. The legend thus brings us face-to-face with an archaeological question: by what means can we verify a city's existence?

—Dung Kai-cheung, "Mirage: City in the Sea," *Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City,* 1997, 45

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Author's Note

Hong Kong has become a global theater. The backdrop: a stratified skyline of tightly spaced skyscrapers and a labyrinthine network of interiors connected to the underground transport system. The sets: parks, streets, flyovers, bridges, linkways, metro stations, plazas, malls, the airport, and other public spaces in the city. The props: barricades, umbrellas, sticks, shields, hard hats, goggles, masks, laser pointers, phones... Scenes from aerial views to close-ups resemble those in video games set in contemporary and futuristic Hong Kong, as the global spectator watches the precipitation of civic, commercial and infrastructural spaces into urban battlegrounds. For almost three months since the start of the anti-extradition bill protests on June 9, Hong Kong is thoroughly embroiled in contestations of identities, ideologies and mindsets.

The shouts from the streets are inducing new and conflicting emotions. For many, the switch from ambivalence to anger has been swift. For others, shifting between hope and bitterness has become a recurrent condition. Everywhere, people are speculating, commenting and arguing about the present and future fate of the city in hushed tones. The protests in June saw hundreds of thousands of citizens take over the flyovers, streets and plazas in Central, Admiralty and Causeway Bay on Hong Kong Island and elsewhere. Parts of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories are at times filled with the stench of sweat, rain and lachrymator. In the weekends, the throngs of tourists and shoppers in the city's busiest commercial districts have dwindled. Parks, sports fields and plazas are empty. Facades, walls and grounds are increasing covered by banners, posters, post-its, slogans and quotations.

Deep in the city's interiors, "the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted onslaught of outer and inner stimuli" are creating latent psychological conditions that are conceivably lasting. Georg Simmel's prognosis of the metropolitan psyche over a century ago is ever more pronounced and is getting a seriously daunting reboot. The onslaught of images and

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loud cries of aggression is unrelenting. They pervade mobiles, home televisions, office workstations, newsstands, cha chaan tengs (tea cafes) and screens in public spaces. Every day, the citizen confronts the realities of an embattled city, outdoors and in. Existing surfaces are overlaid with new coverings, scaffolds and infrastructures. The destruction and fortification of the city are coetaneous events. Public space is more contested than ever.

From the onset, cities are defensive places. Cities are resistant, with built-in mechanisms for change. The life of public space is a crucial barometer of the health of a city. Historically, protests and strikes are corrective measures. Under present conditions of emergency, public and private spaces are being concurrently reclaimed. The intensified contestations of public space are foregrounding urban inequalities — disparities in income, housing, land and access to labor — that have been unattended for far too long. How then does one write the spatial history of a city that is so intensely still in the making? How does one critically assess the stakes when vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity characterize the current state of affairs? How can the rapid and simultaneous unfolding of events be meaningfully considered through an architectural lens?

With the manuscript already finished three months ago, I agonize over the paradoxical task of completion. Compared to the expeditious acts of resistance, the writing and actual practice of architecture and urban design is a much more protracted process. Acknowledging architecture's integral role in the building of a society and complicity in preservation, it is my sincerest hope that this book can create even the smallest of space for the contemplation on urban praxis and architecture's creative potential to advance equitable inclusive societies.

Eunice Seng, September 12, 2019

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PROLOGUE
Islandness and Resistance

> "Nationhood continues to mean different things to those who still have the means to express their difference."[1]
>
> —Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 1997

This book is an inquiry of the space between the slowness of architectural practice and the speed of the city, between the skyline and the underground. It is about islands as territories of resistance. It is about dense places where multitudes dwell in perennial contestations with the city on every front. It is about the histories, tactics and spaces of everyday survival within the hegemonic sway of global capital and unstoppable development. It is preoccupied with making visible the culture of resistance and architecture's entanglement with it. It is about urban resilience. It is about Hong Kong, where uncertainty is status quo.

The beginnings of this book reach back to late 2011 during one of my weekly Sunday walks in Hong Kong's Central District. Occupy Central protestors had fully occupied the street-level plaza of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Corporation headquarters building (henceforth HSBC Main Building) in Central District, Hong Kong. Typically filled with the city's foreign domestic workers, the colorful tents, ad hoc furniture and other domestic paraphernalia was an unusual sight. Opened in 1985, the building is a symbol of the power of finance. Designed by Foster Associates (now Foster+Partners) and the civil and structural engineering office of Ove Arup & Partners, it stands as the architecture of technological symbolism. On any weekday, the building was mainly occupied by bank employees, customers, shoppers and pedestrians taking a short cut between Queen's Road Central to the south and Des Voeux Road on the north. On Sundays, the plaza transformed into the leisure gathering space for hundreds and thousands of foreign domestic workers employed throughout the island. On October, 15, 2011, this changed. Echoing the global Occupy Central movement, an encampment was set up on the plaza with the aim of creating an ideal community that advocated equality and to see "an exodus from the centers of power."[2] For ten months, the plaza was a commune inhabited by students, young professionals, activists and the homeless.[3]

Promulgated in architectural schools as the exemplary post-war "high tech" building, the incongruence of the domestic "homely"

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aesthetic against the architecture of steel, glass and aluminum was striking. In a city with a chronic shortage of affordable housing, the possibility of making a home in one of the city's many covered privately-owned public spaces (pops) was incomprehensible to anyone who is not a consumer of their services, be it banking, shopping or dining. Pushing the limits of the codes of propriety, the occupiers were demonstrating the possible use of Hong Kong's public space to an extreme, elaborating upon the temporary domestication that had already been occurring every Sunday. What of the space of the foreign domestic workers? Having been displaced from the heart of the plaza under the building, some continued to gather at the building, staying at the unsheltered periphery or sitting on the leftover ground spaces in between the furniture and tents. Others sought sheltered public spaces nearby. As the occupation of one group partially displaced another, what was previously implicit in public discourse was now blatantly visible. The very same financial and developmental logics that produce the city, its architecture and public spaces have turned onto themselves.[4]

In his reflection on the politics of the artistic avant-garde, cultural theorist Raymond Williams recalled that from the beginning, things could go either way: "the new art could find its place either in a new social order or in a culturally transformed but otherwise persistent and recuperated old order."[5] While Williams was referring specifically to the avant-garde art of the 1920s and 1930s, arguably, the form of mass protests staged by the disenfranchised publics that we are now familiar with date no further back than the revolutions of the nineteenth century where barricades were the art form, the streets the canvas. How can histories and representations of architecture be utilized to think, analyze and ask questions about the city and our society? How do maps, film, buildings and other artifacts reveal power relations?

Four and a half years after the official end of Occupy Central in December 2014, we now view the events as history – a history that has been transformed and transmitted in words, images and oral articulations. Chronicles of the seventy-nine days of pro-democracy protests include recorded images that are edited as subjects of photo, television and social media journalism. At the time of this writing, the keywords "Occupy Hong Kong" yield 39,600 hits on the Google search engine alone. Of these, 1,100 are news reports, 2,710 online videos, 1,920 books and journal publications. Even more prolific is the term "Umbrella Movement." With 310,000 entries (19,000 news reports, 18,700 videos, 7,940 books and journal publications), the "Umbrella Movement" has firmly secured its place not just in Hong Kong's history but the global history of resistance. This history is still part of the present and continues to be written in the contemporary. Local news media is commemorating it annually. The civic group

Demosistō, comprising former student activists in the aftermath of the 2014 Occupy protests, continues to campaign for democratic self-determination. To mark the event's four-year anniversary, members led students on its inaugural tour of the Admiralty protest site in September 2018.[6]

Consider the paradoxical state of things. Propped up by the slogan of universal suffrage through nonviolent protests, the eighteen-months-long ostensibly visible planning process that led up to September 2014 appeared to be a demonstration of the brand of governance that the organizers were advocating. Yet, since when are pro-democratic protests planned from the top down? Some early critics had asked. A hasty survey conducted in September 2014 with a number of colleagues, students and graduate architects revealed disparate positions ranging from excitement to ambivalence, with a few expressing skepticism over the potential misdirection of the personal agendas of those involved. Protests are spatial and territorial. They are also inherently utopian, although the "U" word is most certainly what the pro-democracy advocates of Occupy avoided, especially when nostalgia for an egalitarian society is still very much celebrated by Mao's advocates. Notwithstanding, it is precisely the ideological nature of a public event – an explicit act of protest – that is capable of instigating the inventive spark and harnessing creative energies. And for those of us who are concerned with questions of public space, its politics and design, were we not hopeful that the Occupy Movement could bring about spatial reorganization of the city towards greater social equity?[7] Did we not harbor the secret desire that this event could spur productive spatial practices in a city, which of late had been relying mainly on architecture and urbanism biennials to provide a safe platform for re-envisioning urban space in Hong Kong and the Asian city? Despite the present uncertain circumstances, it is timely to reconsider the possibilities of Utopia, even if only provisionally and experimentally.

UTOPIA

Pertaining to the question of Utopia, there is an uncanny resemblance between what is occurring in East Asia and the Southern hemisphere on the whole in the first decade of the 2000s, and the 1960s in Europe and America. Culturally, the 1960s witnessed the reawakening of the Utopian impulse in a plethora of forms, especially in music, visual arts, literature, urban planning, architecture and design. During the Cold War, other parts of the world – the decolonized and the old civilizations such as China and Russia – were embroiled in the geopolitics of nationalism and development. To the extent that the fictional projection of the futurist city was occurring in the "First

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World" which produced the megastructures and visionary schemes familiar to us today, the Communist bloc ("Second World") and the "Third World" were more in the business of building and preoccupied with solving problems of survival and development. There is much evidence to show that Utopia in the Euro-American imagination was but all in a day's work for the construction industry, architects and planners in the developing world. In terms of the rate of building and the provision of habitable space per person, Hong Kong superseded London by the 1960s. Late-sixties Hong Kong saw the intensification of urban development, the expansion of highways, large building complexes, tunnels and reservoirs, and of the manufacturing industry.[8] The decade concluded with the Colony Outline Plan, which outlined strategies to house a million people in low-cost public housing, along with defining tight regulations and guidelines on how to construct among the high-density population. It laid the groundwork for the Ten-year Housing Programme that was launched in 1972.

Urban historians have concurred that in the centers of the West, including Japan, the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s was a passage from spontaneous practice to renewed theoretical reflection. This is as true in the realm of Utopian architectural discourse as it is elsewhere. A number of texts challenged utopian socialism and social revolution of any kind with their own polemical treatises on the city, most notably, Marxist architectural historian-theorist Manfredo Tafuri's *Architecture and Utopia* (published in Italian in 1973 and translated into English in 1976), historian-theorists Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's *Collage City* (1978) and Dutch architect-theorist Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York* (1978). These texts set out to prove the impossibility and unproductivity of architecture, especially in the practice of building and planning, in offering any form of emancipation from the onslaught of capitalist development. The naysayers were sure that the architecture of development and their designers were incapable of criticism. After all, how is an artifact that is produced by capital able to question the very engine that propels it?

For all those who subscribed to these pronouncements of the onset of a decentering world that calls for diverse responses, the turn to the mundane, the everyday, the informal and even the undesirable – the theorizing of terms such as dirty, abject, ugly – made sense in the trajectory of cultural discourses. Synchronously, the region and regional made a comeback as responses against the exuberance of stylistic and historical excess. Conversely, and following this line of thinking, most have assumed and attributed the dearth of architectural and urban theories in Asia during this same period to be a natural consequence of its cities being in the state of transitional development. The earliest postwar manifestos on the city were written by members of the Metabolist group, who elaborated on the high-modernist aesthetic of concrete, glass and

steel in their large-scale urban design proposals.[9]

In the 1980s and 1990s, design theories on and emerging from Asia predominantly extended from Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre's Critical Regionalism, a theory extended and popularized by Kenneth Frampton in his 1983 essay "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance" which he continuously reworked for over two decades.[10] Written in the form of a manifesto and intended to counteract the postmodern kitsch that was being built everywhere, the essay takes an avant-gardist stance. Frampton calls for contemporary architecture to adopt universal progressive qualities but at the same time for that value to be placed on the geographical context of the building – an argument which he integrates into his theory of the tectonic.[11] Following this argument, the architecture and cities of late twentieth century Asia were thus caught between the fervent construction of "postmodern kitsch" and critical regionalist aesthetics without any in-depth theoretical debates. Since the 1990s, this West-to-East understanding of architectural history and practice is increasingly obsolete. It is more meaningful to locate other agents and perpetrators to rethink this otherwise impotent thesis. Even more so, it is pertinent to shift the focus of our reading of the Asian city away from the end product of some static utopian image – one that solidifies the discourses of the 1960s of the West as being more "visionary" and "avant garde" than their Asian counterparts – towards a reflexive observation of a dynamic constellation of countries, borders and island territories.

VERTICALITY

Propitious to this rethinking are two utopian novels, both of which described utopias of "verticality." Whereas Iannis Xenakis's "cosmic vertical city" which accompanied his 1963 drawing of large cyclone-shaped buildings remained a sketch, Paolo Soleri's city of Arcology embodying the fusion of architecture and ecology took concrete form.[12] In his *Arcology: City in the Image of Man* of 1969, the Italian-American architect Soleri proposed a highly integrated and compact three-dimensional urban form to counteract urban sprawl with its inherently wasteful consumption of land, energy resources and time, and tendency to isolate people from each other and the community. "Miniaturization," he proposed, creates the "Urban Effect" – the complex interaction between diverse entities and individuals, which mark healthy systems both in the natural world and in every successful and culturally significant city in history. In 1970, he attempted to realize his theory in the experimental town of Arcosanti in central Arizona, which remains an ongoing project. For the Greek-French composer-architect Xenakis, utopia is an object

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of meditation rather than a mode of narrative. Soleri's utopia is a real place that reveals at once its utopian impossibility – only a tiny fragment of his vision has been built in the past forty years – but that it is still populated verifies its viability in an indefinite far future.

As Xenakis and Soleri were theorizing their high-density vertical structures, massive urban block-size composite buildings were being constructed in Hong Kong, each accommodating between 1,000 and 10,000 people. Built mostly by independent developers during the most intense decades of speculation from the 1960s through the 1980s, they contain a heterogeneous mix of social entities. The still-evolving interior spaces were not the consequence of cooperative action but of contestations. The lives inside share a similarity to those in Robert Silverberg's urban monads (*urbmons*), where the buildings' largeness in size and volume mean that it is possible for them to conduct their daily activities mostly within the capacious interior. While Soleri's arcological city produced by human labor and collaboration is meant to take generations to complete (even to remain purposefully unfinished), Silverberg's sci-fi utopian novel *The World Inside* (1971) provides a detailed account of daily life inside a mega-structure. In the *urbmons*, privacy is no longer a desired commodity. It is eliminated and any desire for travel or the outdoors has been repressed.[13] In contrast, lives within the composite building complex tend towards extreme privatization despite the multifarious uses within the seemingly endless partitioned spaces. The interior spatial logic of the mid-century composite building resembles more the Rubik's cube configuration than the strata hierarchical layers of the *urbmon*. In that regard, the former presents itself as a form of counter-utopia.

Apart from the vertical utopia and counter-utopia, Louis Marin's *Utopiques: Jeux D'Espaces* (*Utopics: Spatial Play*) of 1973 offers no visions or projections but a set of directions for use, prescriptions for reading and instructions for the appropriate application of the utopian text to the real world. It could be summarized as a manual for translating utopian writing into actual spatial experience through the analysis of actual places such as Disneyland in Orange County, Los Angeles. In his analysis of Marin's *Utopics*, cultural theorist Fredric Jameson pointed out that Utopia is an act of disjunction, or exclusion, and the way in which Utopia is narrated is through Utopia itself. Concluding with a quote from Marin, "Utopian discourse accompanies ideological discourse as its converse and designates the still empty place of a scientific theory of society," he argues for the necessary perpetuation of Utopia.[14] It is "precisely our inability to conceive it, our incapacity to produce it as a vision, our failure to project the other of what is" he wrote, that "must once again leave us alone with *this* history."[15] "*This*" refers to Utopia's literary history. What could this mean for a place like Hong Kong, whose 160+ years

of colonial status was a brief fragment of the territory's 2000+ years history, and where the writing of any literary text that resembles utopian discourse would be in a Chinese language differentiated from the present national lingua franca? Does Marin's Disneyland analysis apply to Hong Kong's franchise version that includes the integration of the mass transit rapid train (MTR)? What does a city with little time or space for utopian writing or envisioning reveal about itself through the replication of an American-based global theme park – one now superseded by its newer and larger Shanghai counterpart? China has been building sizeable versions of urban utopias derived from familiar places in Europe, America and its own history, overlaid with oriental tropes and Chinese symbolism.

By 2030, it is estimated that one billion people will live in China's urban areas. China is building 1,500 new high-rises that are over thirty stories high annually to accommodate these incoming city-dwellers. This means that China is essentially building a new Chicago every year. Meanwhile, Hong Kong is witnessing the amalgamation of its neighbors, nine sprawling cities in the Pearl River Delta, into one giant megacity of 42 million by 2020. Such fervent building activity is matched by a surge of writings and commentaries on China's urban utopias. According to texts and commentaries, Utopia is apparently not impossible anymore, but is commonplace, appearing everywhere rather than nowhere. This places China and its cities in a particular position in the history of Utopia and the city. Whereas there is no city in the world that has not been the consequence of projections or visions, the contemporary Chinese city supersedes content and process at unprecedented scales and speeds. Within popular media, even architectural and urban writing, the word Utopia, translated phonetically as 烏托邦 (*wuduobang* in Chinese pinyin) in Chinese, has been used liberally in popular media and architectural publications.[16] *Ad interim*, there appears to be a form of resurgence in science fiction literature in new-millennium China ranging from Utopia to Dystopia, and from extraterrestrial fantasies to futurist escapades.

The word 烏托邦 first appeared as a translation of Thomas More's *Utopia* (one of the earliest was by a Shanghai publisher in the 1930s). Chinese literary scholar David Der-wei Wang posits that Utopia in Chinese language literature has been interacting and intervening with the dynamics of history and history writing far beyond the Republican era. In his outline of Chinese utopian literature in the past century, Wang traces modern Chinese Science Fiction as a grand literary genre in the late Qing dynasty, playing a meaningful role in a period of political and historical upheavals, but one that became a lesser genre after 1911, and that suddenly disappeared after the May Fourth Movement introduced the notion of Democracy and Science to Chinese intelligentsia. Wang highlights a few works that were inspired by, or that referred to, Western ones,

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such as Liang Qichao's *On the Future of New China* (1902) inspired by Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1889) and Chen Congwen's *A Lisis' Journey to China* (1929), which is an absurdist dystopian experiment inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865). Many others consist of an ideological narration of Chinese society – one of the more well-known novels is Kang Youwei's *Datongshu* ("The Book of Great Unity," written in 1880 but published only in 1935) which contains radical traditional Chinese combined with anarchy and other Western political concepts. After 1949, "science" was controlled by an ideological and political rhetoric and a way of knowledge acquisition, making it inconceivable for many politically correct figures to put together science fiction and science against a certain historical background. Science fiction could only play an auxiliary role under the premises of scientific popularization and study. Writers were not allowed to have imaginative explorations into various utopian and dystopian futures. Science fiction then was limited and became a kind of propaganda literature.[17]

Hong Kong is a witness to, and a participant in, the cultural and political exigencies of the Chinese mainland. Arguably, the ideological connection between *Datongshu* and Mao's people's commune, which began in 1958, would have been a plausible reason why utopian writing did not take the familiar forms as they had in China up to this moment.[18] The late 1950s saw the appearance of novels by Zhejiang-born and Hong Kong-based Louis Cha and Shanghai-born Hong Kong-American Ni Kuang, which in the following decades acquired a massive readership. Cha moved to Hong Kong in 1948; Ni "escaped" to the colony in 1957. Critical of Communism in China, the former created the historical romantic *wuxia* ("martial arts and chivalry") genre whilst the latter formulated a fantasy-cum-supernatural mystery thriller perpetually set in a technologized futuristic city.

By celebrating the figure of the hero (as with the popularization of superheroes in the US at the height of the Cold War) and decentering the focus from morality and ethical questions to those of romance and fantasy, each departed from the strain of 1970s Mainland utopian literature. The anti-Communistic undertones in the narratives are delivered through the fearless heroes and anti-heroes, usually an outcast from a group, a bastard child, a renegade, or a criminal (invariably wrongfully charged) who would then, through some acquisition of immense power, deliver social justice.[19] But the denouement, the final restoration of order, remains far from ideal and usually sees the hero departing on an indefinite journey to a faraway place thus implying the recommencement of the narrative. The territories traversed are perpetually the sites of diasporic habitation, at best.

ISLANDNESS

Utopia is an island. The Peach Blossom Island, the arcadia depicted in Louis Cha's *Condor Trilogy* (1957-61) is based on an actual place in China's Zhoushan Archipelago, currently under the Zhejiang administration. Set within the late Song and Ming Dynasties, the island is characterized by peach blossoms, hence its name, and is home to a martial arts heretic. What appears at first as innocently naturalistic is part of an elaborative stratagem comprising mainly of peach blossom trees to trap any unwanted visitors to the island. Cha's Utopia distinguishes itself from the historical genre of William Morris, the futuristic variety of Edward Bellamy, Xenakis and Silverberg, and the present-day accounts of Thomas More. It is at once an idyllic escape from urban life as well as a pugilistic battleground. Like the others, it is well-concealed, not found on any map and arduous to get to, if one could locate it in the first place. It possesses characteristics that are diametrically opposite to Hong Kong, which was founded largely because of its geographically desirable location for trade and its deep harbor. Nonetheless, Cha's Island shares the same tropic operation as Hong Kong in that they are both separate and isolated from the main land (metaphorically and in reality) yet inviting to the foreigner. The Peach Blossom Island emits a fragrant floral scent that draws its intruders in. 香港 was encompassed under the transliterated name Hong Kong, "Fragrant Harbor" at the 1842 Treaty of Nanking. There is an entire middle-class generation in the Chinese-speaking world that is familiar with Cha's island utopia. Though he did not make explicit its allegorical reference to Hong Kong, Peach Blossom Island as an imagined and actual space serves as a literary refuge for those individuals who either by persecution or personal choice, have, made the colony their home.

The intimation thus to the original question of Utopia is that Hong Kong's *islandness*, both actual and conceptual, warrants a closer examination of its founding narrative based on individual enterprise. There is something going on here, beyond simply the production of derivative discourse. We shall call this, tentatively, process utopia. Separated from the Chinese mainland by the Sham Chun River and the Sha Tau Kok River, the notion of Hong Kong as an island is first and foremost reinforced by the six land-border crossings erected along its northern edge.[20] What appears to be a natural border is the consequence of the Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory in 1898, which stipulated that the Sham Chun River formed part of the limit of the lease of the New Territories. The rapid urbanization of Shenzhen in the last few decades, in contrast to the seeming "wilderness" of the New Territories on the Hong Kong side, has produced a visibly uneven border space and interesting cross-city dynamics. At first analysis, this spatial and demographic discrepancy

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calls the "vertical Hong Kong" trope into question. The population of 10,000 residing in Hong Kong's Frontier Closed Area (FCA) share their habitat with bats, robins, water birds like herons and egrets, seventeen species of freshwater fish and a variety of wetland plants and woodlands.[21] Further analysis reveals very quickly the conclusion established by the British earlier for compactness and the accessibility of the laboring population to the port. Most of Hong Kong exists in walking proximity to mountain and sea.[22]

What we have witnessed since the 19th century and more dramatically in post-World War Two urban development is the intensification of compactness and the extension of the logic of *islandization* throughout the territory. With regard to urban domesticity, three types of *islandization* evolved more or less synchronously with each other, and produced the millennia metropolitan *islandness* of Hong Kong: the autonomous high-rise mass housing type, the urban park and the now often nostalgically-reproduced *tonglau*. The first and third are intrinsically related to the city's own narration of its housing development. The *tonglau* – two- to three-story tenement buildings for residential and commercial use that first emerged in the late 19th century as a typology for the urban merchant class – quickly became the homes for the thousands of petite bourgeoisie and the laboring masses, which exceeded one million by 1950. These came together in the form of government-built satellite towns and private commercial-cum-residential composite buildings in newer centers like Kowloon and along the main thoroughfares like Queens Road and Des Voeux Road.

Since the 1950s, a specific building typology of a hybrid commercial and residential nature borne of the ideologies of density and efficiency has proliferated in the city. Its development over the past sixty years has shaped the city's urbanism to such a degree that it is no longer conceivable to design and plan a new building in the city that does not contain a shopping podium beneath and a housing tower above. Up to the late 1970s, these composite buildings took the form of massive monolithic high-rises that resembled those in Chicago and New York City in the early decades of the 20th century. Subsequent socioeconomic shifts that led to increasing individual speculation and the desirability of privacy over neighbourliness called for defensible measures to safeguard individual property and directly implicated the form of these buildings. The result is the streamlining of the podium-tower configuration: taller, narrower, discreet units and clearly defined property lines within. Since the 1980s, Hong Kong's real estate and land acquisition models have been studied for adaptive implementation in the Chinese mainland. Its high-rise public housing estates and buildings are references for public housing efforts in Greater China, though it is soon to be completely surpassed by Singapore and Shenzhen and Guangzhou.

Could this urban housing euphoria be harboring a latent form of Utopia, as it did momentarily in 1960s Hong Kong?

The riots between the pro-Communists and the colonial government began in May 1967 and died down only at the end of the year.[23] A number of buildings in Central and North Point were implicated.[24] The Bank of China building in Central District was temporarily deployed as a broadcasting post for pro-Communist propaganda. Two composite buildings in North Point were sites of hostile confrontation. Cha, then Chairman of *Ming Pao Daily News*, was amongst the prominent media figures who voiced opposition to the riots and was threatened, which led to him leaving Hong Kong for almost a year before returning.[25] By the 1980s, Cha was supportive of the government's implementation of large-scale urban projects such as the Cross-Harbour Tunnel. In an editorial on August 10, 1983, he highlighted The Bank of China's purchase of an open-space car park for a new multi-story headquarters building in the Central District as a political move that saw a fall in the stock market, and the reduction of land and property prices.[26] In another piece on January 6, 1984, he expressed support for the implementation of major urban redevelopment schemes in Hong Kong, which he felt would inspire confidence in the territory.[27] But editorials on architecture and urban development were far and few compared to the many on Hong Kong's future and economic sustainability. The editorial of July 22, 1982 under the heading, "We Invite Everyone to Discuss Hong Kong's Future," was evidence of Hong Kong's fledging pro-democracy movement in the late 1980s.[28]

RESISTANCE

The intersection of the city of surveillance and the inequitable housing situation manifested itself through the protests via the street occupation known collectively as the Umbrella Movement that began in late September 2014 and officially ended in mid-December with the arrests of over 900 individuals. Like many of my colleagues at the University, and in other institutions across Hong Kong, I heard the battle cries and persistence of the students in staking their claims to their own future and the future of their city. As more and more took to the streets of Central, marking their spots along Connaught Road, Harcourt Road and the feeder streets, they were joined by tens of thousands of others who shared and supported their cause.

As the protests escalated, I was on my way back from the Docomomo Conference in Seoul where I had presented a paper titled "City in a Building, Hong Kong 1956–." Amongst other things, the historical analysis is an appeal to pause, question and rethink the present approach to urban development in the city. It looks

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back to a moment when crisis and speculation has directed, and is still directing a society in transition. Yet whereas speculation as a process persists and defines the city that has thrived on it, it has been pursued from a singular vantage point. The postcard scenes of Hong Kong taken from the water towards Victoria Harbour or from the Peak, of the dense agglomeration of skyscrapers, each bearing the sign of a multi-national company, testify to the modus operandi of a city that has only begun to look back at its own urbanism and its urban history very recently.

Reinforced by the Symphony of Lights, a light and sound show staged at 8pm daily and involving more than forty buildings that flank the Harbor, this is the way in which Hong Kong has presented itself and is represented to its global audience, to the extent that even recent government efforts on conservation are focused mainly on buildings and building complexes. Architecture, it seems, can be delineated from the political and the social. And if it does intermingle, it typically does so within the rubric of the past, relegated to the historical and pulled out from the dusty shelves of the archive to access a project or a plan for a transaction. Though historically and politically produced, architecture and urbanism are undergoing a constant process of depoliticization and repoliticization. In many instances, architecture is consumed as an independent symbol of development, prosperity, sustainability and even sociability, such as in the case of the mandatory provision of communal space in privately owned properties. There are multiple complex forces and powers at play that have been keeping the buildings, the academy and the profession apart from actual and meaningful engagement with the political lived experiences of the street.

On Sunday, September 28, 2014, another urbanism began to emerge and is still shaping itself. It takes place on the street – a space which has long lost its ground as a place for the people of this city.[29] The street has been designated as infrastructure and for vehicular circulation. As the student protestors occupied Connaught Road Central, Chater Road, Des Voeux Road and Harcourt Road, the street was transformed. Within the short span of a few days, the familiar image of Hong Kong conveyed through its building skyline that was constructed in the last half a century was replaced by protest crowds on the ground, on the street that encompasses the flyover.[30] Instead of the building height and façade, the focus was shifted to the ground surface; and what and who were occupying it. The streets and the flyover formed an urban park network. This provisional public space, like the others that are spontaneously activated on weekends, is neither centrally allocated nor zoned as such. It was not part of the city's master plan or urban design. The infrastructure of mobility was hijacked. For seventy-nine days, the city was modified as the occupied ground was transformed. The density of people

on the streets increased when ninety percent wheeled vehicular movement gave way to hundred percent pedestrian traffic. When vehicular speed was reduced to that of walking, the details of the city became magnified. When movement on the streets and the flyover slowed down from occupation to settlement, circulation space became dwelling place. When the territory became more comprehensible in plan than in section, the buildings receded and the ground underneath and around them came into focus. There is indeed, recalling Milan Kundera's meditation on modernity, "a secret bond between slowness and memory, between speed and forgetting."[31] As the crowds reclaimed public space from transport infrastructure, the flyover was enfolded into the urbanism of walkers.[32]

SPATIAL PRACTICE

In Hong Kong, Utopia occurs as a retroactive plan that is continually reshaped by spatial practices of resistance. Does a territory like Hong Kong with its multiple consumerist islands of verticality offer a variant, an alternative Utopia – one that only exists satirically or as a counter-example within the all-encompassing narrative of the Chinese mainland? In Marin's analysis, Disneyland as Utopia in plan is reiterated through spatial experience; and Silverberg's Utopia is a depiction of an idealized form of experience in vertical section. This contingent Utopia, dependent on multifarious agencies, has been subjected to Foucauldian analysis and in many instances, observed as *heterotopic* space. Such a reading has been popularized and accepted since the 1990s, following the burst of interest in this territory led by a few notable cultural figures such as the filmmaker Wong Kar Wai and cultural theorist Ackbar Abbas. Abbas used the term *Deja Disparu* to describe Hong Kong's urbanism that he observed is contingent on the simultaneous erasure-demolition and construction-reconstruction of its cultural and physical environment. Wong's films are central to Abbas's analysis as they represent places produced by diasporic identities whose everyday life consists of resistance inscribed in spatial terms, against the planned, the intended and the prescribed. Places and narratives are montaged and jump-cut in stylized ways to highlight the everyday and the putridness of the mundane as spectacles of cultural worth. Following this Asian cultural turn, we see heterotopic Hong Kong reappearing in Mamoru Oshii's animated version of *Ghost In the Shell* (1995) and part of the futuristic environment of William Gibson – the Kowloon Walled City appears as a cyberspace construct in *Idoru* (1996) – often juxtaposed with another Asian metropolis like Tokyo or Bangkok.

For many, the historical and now-enigmatic Walled City provides a necessary opposition to the tendencies towards the generic

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city theorized by Rem Koolhaas in the mid-nineties. Leo Ou-fan Lee, in his book *City Between Worlds* (2008), attributed the "new wave of 'disappearance'" in the millennial to the accelerated pace of urban renewal and increased land reclamation at the Victoria Harbour.[33] This in turn has sparked new work on issues concerning heritage and the informal as well as a renewed interest in the rediscovery of the Walled City and Chungking Mansions, and affirmed the renewed search for identity in post-British Hong Kong, particularly in light of the physical and spatial "disappearance" that is threatening the city. In the first two instances, *islandness* is re-inscribed through the reclamation of Victoria Harbour, whilst the "thinness" of the border between Hong Kong and Shenzhen is reinforced by the multiple border crossings traversed daily by the commuting multitudes. The building of satellite towns in the New Territories, which began in the 1970s, manifests the accepted ideology of self-containment and localization. Further vertical segregation and functionality are being planned and built in place of the heterogeneous composite nature of functions and activities, creating more islands. Architecture, on the scale of large skyscraper complexes, is complicit in this *islandization*. After half a century of unbridled construction of composite buildings, each housing hundreds, even thousands of people, the city witnessed the completion of Elements – a transport hub, a mall with a 1,500-seat cinema and a private housing development all in one inter-connected, integrated complex.

MAPPING TERRITORIES OF RESISTANCE

> "These maps [maps that are produced collectively by different agencies] bring into being the territory *as we know it* to an extraordinary degree, for maps happen to be unrivaled as vehicles for the creation and conveyance of authority about and over territory."
>
> —Denis Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, 2010

This book maps contested spaces in Hong Kong. It explores places and identities that are intentionally and unintentionally created in tandem with the territory's urban development. Comprising research and analytical maps and texts, design studies and theories on specific spaces in Hong Kong, it is an attempt to visualize the energies, tenacity and caprice of the people as manifest in their daily life, social and professional networks and the urban spaces that they inhabit and move within. If taking on Utopia as spatial practice, as critique and resistance against the sway of development, poses a necessary counterpoint to the homogeneity of contemporary existence, then this book is a search for where it is located and

how it is manifest. The re-imagining of familiar places in terms of critical physical and cultural geographies brings forth the diverse simultaneous occurrences of the continuing struggles and aspirations of urban habitation. Acknowledging and reflecting the multi-disciplinary nature of the subject, the research utilizes a combination of archival materials and publicly accessible data sources, field observations, documentation and analytical drawings, maps and design constructions.

Utopian in spirit and heteropian in practice, the subjects and spaces in each chapter beg for a pause to situate Hong Kong's present status quo – that of relentless development and the inevitability of its future – in its global contexts. The first four chapters examine the social and cultural histories of four types of urban artifacts in Hong Kong: maps, noir films, office towers, and composite buildings. From territorial mapping to reviewing film space to analysing office space and domestic and commercial space, each artefact is a representation and narration of particular spatial confrontations between powers, ideologies, ideas, development and everyday existence. 1 MAPS: Territories of Contestation, excavates the spatial and ideological formation of Hong Kong as territory through cartographic narratives. Based on the study of over a hundred maps and depictions of Hong Kong, the drawing adaptations reveal that long before the Sino-British bilateral treaty, Hong Kong as a territory was a contested space and idea. 2 NOIRS: The City, the Woman and Other Spaces, investigates how the women lead protagonists in Hong Kong's post-war melodrama and the noir thriller film genres were mobilized in the construction of an aspirational yet volatile identity during the tumultuous sixties.

3 TOWERS: Technologies, Jardine House and Metropolitan Visions, probes the intersecting contexts and visions that produce the city's speculative urbanism by examining the reciprocal relationship between films and the technologies of the building and how they are complicit in the narration of modern Hong Kong. Central to the analysis is the office tower as the inception of the elevated pedestrian network, which instantly became a public gathering place. 4 COMPOSITES: The City in a Building, examines how the pressures of development and contestations in everyday life shape the spaces in mixed-used buildings – defined as composite buildings in Hong Kong's regulations – and how they in turn, characterize the urban environment. In examining the brief social history of a commonplace building in Hong Kong, the chapter seeks an alternative framework to understand the precarious limits between the urban and the domestic. Extending the historical analysis of the composite building, 5 NARRATIVES: Composite Building Studies, foregrounds the buildings as agents in the city's social history and cultural landscape through visual narration. Combining field documentation, visual

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analyses, ethnographic observations, mapping and orthographic drawing, in-depth studies of five composite buildings reveal how they are deeply connected to the geopolitics and economics of the city and the region.

6 MANUALS: Resistance in Praxis, examines the resistances in everyday practices through a collection of ten "how-to" essays.[34] Interwoven with stories of public toilets in Hong Kong and an excursus, each essay focuses on a specific space and place. Each presupposes the very act of inhabiting and moving about in the city as a potentially creative endeavor. Each attempts to map the spatial ramifications of such creative acts of resistance – self-conscious, hyper-conscious, or subconscious – through particular narrative techniques, ranging from the fictional, semi-fictional, documentary and instructional. In "How to Reclaim Urban Space Subconsciously," Choi Kit Wang advocates the collaboration between the energies of community and the forces of nature as an antithesis against market-driven development. In a Latourian effort to recognize the ficus tree as an agent equal if not more powerful than an individual activist, he advocates for the harnessing of its aggressive potential and invasive nature as an obstruction to land acquisition and the indiscriminate yet rationalized demolition of places. Juliana Kei's "How to Create Space without Building" defends the little store against the current one-stop big store model for public housing estates by proposing a scalar system of stores in a store, a district and the city.

Propounding on the under-class as pertinent agencies for metropolitan development, Dannes Kok, in "How to Re-Occupy the Street" argues for the creative role of the hawkers as "space stealers" and proposes to learn, from their way of occupying the ground space, a viable strategy for re-occupying the street – a space of the commons. My essay "How to Measure Space in a Private Complex" is a calculated narration of an actual attempt to document the interior space of Chungking Mansions, well-known as the home of multiple nationalities, and more recently, as the "ghetto at the center of the world," using the technique of unrhymed poetry. Underlying the semi-fictional documentary is a belief in the very act of habitation as having a direct meaningful impact on the existing spaces of the building complex that warrants systematic analysis and provides the trigger for creative design. The objects that move in and out of the stores and circulate within and out of the building form a network that could in turn map the larger narrative of Kowloon and Hong Kong.

Lam Lai Shun's "How to Negotiate for a Cultural District with the City," unpacks the "culture" behind the West Kowloon Cultural District by excavating the histories and meanings of the cultural district in Hong Kong. From the government-built cultural sites in the 1970s to the earlier aborted plans for the area for the setting

up of the WKCDA and the international competition won by Foster+Partners, he interrogates the site as anything but "cultural" in the sense that it puts forward a generic understanding and aesthetic for an Asian world city. Sam Cheng's satirical "How to Create a City for Superheroes" reconsiders the contemporary function of the spectacle as a departure from Debord's idea, in terms of the post-colonial frame and the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region, as well as a global trend in eschewing what he and others call the "true true," which alludes to actual authentic experience. Renée, in her other essay, "How to Play Cyclically," observes how some public transitional spaces or spaces awaiting development are creatively "hijacked" for play and cultural activities by individuals or groups who are otherwise not included in the present or future plans for these sites. She identifies these temporary occupations as a welcome relief from the otherwise routine planned cycles of the city.

Picking up on another mode of temporary occupation, Zhang Jingjing's "How to set up a Beauty Salon Quickly" examines the reciprocal relationship between the subjugated class of foreign domestic helpers and the private-owned public spaces that they occupy for their own social-cum-domestic activities on weekends. Finally, Steve Chen's "How to Discover New Neighborhoods" challenges the urban dweller to re-engage their city using the very devices and instruments that they are familiar with, such as the iPhone and smart phone, in their everyday lives. Finally, my essay with Renée Kwok, "How to Demolish a District," turns back to the antagonistic history of the Kowloon Walled City to create space to contemplate, to imagine what a once vibrant but now decrepit place could have been. By foregrounding the history of the Walled City as one of contestations between government and civilian stakeholders, the essay raises the question of unrelenting redevelopment by government and private interests in carrying out resettlement, demolition and park building without considering other possibilities for creative urban use. Lastly, the book concludes by contemplating the dynamics of occupation and domestication during the 2014 Occupy Movement. Through close-up descriptions of the artifacts and the tactics of making a home on the flyover, we return to the beginning of this architectural rumination.

These descriptions of urban resilience accentuate the richness of the city as archive and as historical and creative space. Using the theoretical and actual premise of the practices of everyday life as resistance, this interdisciplinary collection of writings, maps and drawings is an appeal for an understanding of the deep structures and organizational systems that shape architecture and city. As the city further consolidates its reputation as an affluent metropolitan financial center of East Asia, top-down actions are implemented (by the Urban Authority, Tourism Board, etc.) that utilize, uncannily,

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similar instruments of persuasion used in cinema – those tending towards nostalgia, aspiration and everyday life. The actual and cinematic have never been this close, or so interchangeable. Beyond the facades of neon and laser lights, contestations of a social and political nature continue to play out, a situation succinctly described by Stephanie H. Donald in her essay "The Idea of Hong Kong," that "the ideal cityscape is picture-perfect not because its emotions are undeveloped or inelegant but because it is so very composed – poised on a seemingly endless cusp of dramatic change."[35]

Apropos, the descriptions of Hong Kong as contested space through the assemblage of historical narratives, graphical and analytical maps, drawings and manuals share a common platform. Each description acknowledges that the emergence and development of Hong Kong as a metropolis has been and is based on historical contingency rather than plan. With an urbanism predicated on contingency, and a status quo maintained by political and socioeconomic geographies, there has never been another moment when the idea of the private, of private property and privacy, are so desired and immensely valued. The practice of everyday life is necessarily one of resistance as it imposes onto space, public or private, urban or domestic. Inhabitants of Hong Kong practice various degrees of resistance towards the city. Their daily routine acts of habitation contest containment by continually improvising upon it and reconfiguring its boundaries. Anyone that participates in the idea of Hong Kong is already subconsciously implanted with a mechanism that impels him or her to seek out spaces within the various scales of islands for occupation. To dwell in a city, to call it home, requires the architectural practitioner to respond to the city critically and creatively; and in so doing, open up spaces for others to participate in urban development in crucial ways. To imagine the future for the reconstitution of society is a meaningful form of resistance for the present. If, to recall Arundhati Roy, "fiction and non-fiction are only different techniques of story-telling," then drawing and mapping is the critical method.

Eunice Seng, June 16, 2019

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The term "territory" has never been a simple and neutral indication of a place but implies by necessity occupation, subordination, and administration, all of which carry connotations of a master-servant power relation. It demonstrates how an authority legitimizes its possession of a place, and how the process of legitimization is inevitably implemented through the production of maps.

—Dung Kai-cheung, "Extraterritoriality," *Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City*, 1997, 16

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MAPS:
Territories of Contestation

Hong Kong is a contested territory. Contemporary Hong Kong comprises the Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories, Lantau Island, and over 200 other islands. Throughout its known existence, it has been an appendage, physically, politically and allegorically. Hong Kong's contested territoriality reaches back beyond the current framework of the Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and beyond its British colonial experience. But beyond Sino-British imagination, when does the idea of "Hong Kong" as an island territory on China's southern coast became fully ingrained in the minds of the Chinese and global thinkers?

Hong Kong is a territorial construct. Although already an area with a thriving salt production industry during the early southern Song dynasty, Hong Kong was not a visible world entity until the fifteenth century when an island then identified as Lantau appeared in the 1425 navigation map of the Ming fleet admiral and court eunuch Zheng He. In the early 1500s, the Portuguese depicted Hong Kong as part of their network of trading routes. Until the mid-1700s, Ming and Qing naval officers depicted Hong Kong as a village-size naval base located in the southwest corner of the main island. Could the mismatch of the depiction of Hong Kong by the Chinese and by the British and Europeans compel new insights and alternative narratives?

In 1842, Hong Kong Island came into British possession. The southern peninsula of Kowloon and Stonecutters Island were added in 1860. On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong was handed over to China. But to describe the handover as a return is to overlook the multifarious identities involved in Hong Kong's territorial struggles. Instead, a representation of the simultaneity and intersection of events is necessary. A longitudinal analysis of the territory of Hong Kong resituates the common understanding of the Special Administrative Region as a place on "borrowed time."

Taking Hong Kong as a discursive structure and cultural construct, the sixteen episodes examine the spatial and ideological formation of the territory through the lenses of cartographic narratives. The drawing adaptations are based on the study of over a hundred maps produced by diverse entities from geographers and hydrographers to trading and military enterprises to artists and publishers to colonial and nationalist governments.

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1 MARITIME EMPIRES

according to Ming Chinese and Portuguese navigators

Before the cluster of peninsula and islands were consolidated as a single entity known as "Hong Kong," the area was home to salt production villages, mountains, a harbor and a naval base. **DAXISHAN**, present-day Lantau, appeared in the navigational map of Ming naval admiral **ZHENG HE**.



Zheng He, Map of the World, 1418



Zheng He, Navigation Map, 1425-30

In **1521**, the **MING NAVY** defeated the **PORTUGUESE** at the **BATTLE OF TUNMEN** and again at the **BATTLE OF SHANCAOWAN**. The Portuguese tried to establish trade with China by illegally smuggling with pirates on the offshore islands off the coast of Zhejiang and Fujian, but were driven away by the Ming navy in the **1540s**.



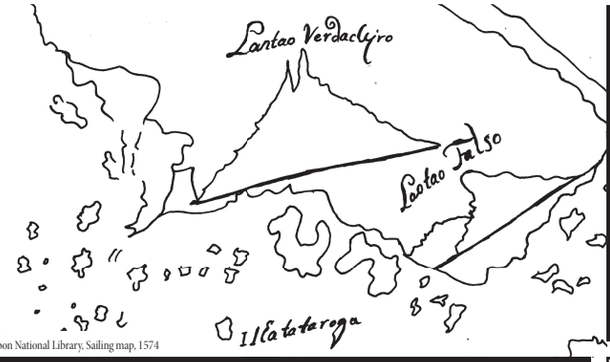
Fernao Vaz Dourade, Far East Sailing Map, 1570



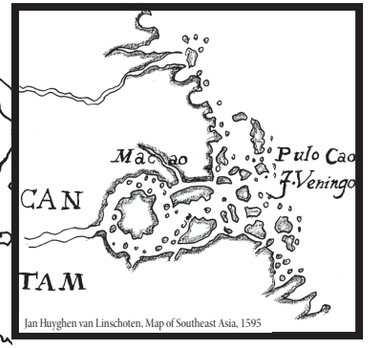
Rodrigue , Map of Route from Lantau to Guangzhou, 1512

In **1557**, **CHINA LEASED MACAU TO THE PORTUGUESE** for a place to dry the goods they transported on their ships. The Portuguese had by then established a lucrative maritime empire in the Indian Ocean and meant to monopolize the spice trade.

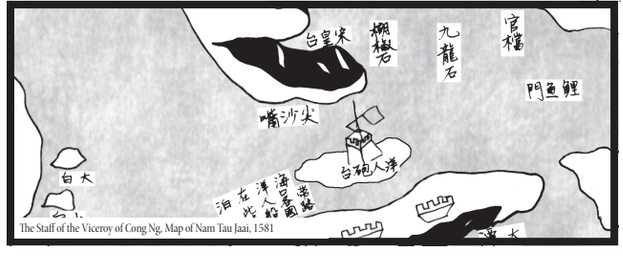
Lantao Verdadeiro



Lisbon National Library, Sailing map, 1574



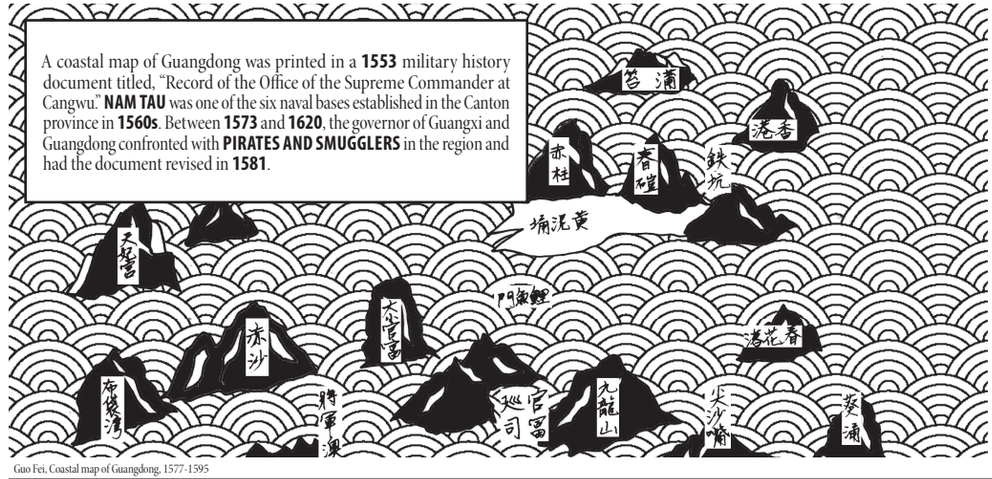
Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, Map of Southeast Asia, 1595



The Staff of the Viceroy of Cong Ng, Map of Nam Tau Jaai, 1581

Between **1522** and **1566**, the Ministry of Military Affairs was responsible for the **GENERAL MILITARY AFFAIRS OF GUANGXI AND GUANGDONG**. Despite the presence of a magistracy, the Guangdong coast comprising the Kowloon Peninsula, present day Hong Kong Island and Lamma Island, was not deemed of political or military important to require substantial frontier defense.

A coastal map of Guangdong was printed in a **1553** military history document titled, "Record of the Office of the Supreme Commander at Cangwu." **NAM TAU** was one of the six naval bases established in the Canton province in **1560s**. Between **1573** and **1620**, the governor of Guangxi and Guangdong confronted with **PIRATES AND SMUGGLERS** in the region and had the document revised in **1581**.



Guo Fei, Coastal map of Guangdong, 1577-1595

"HONG KONG" was mentioned for the first time in the coastal map of Guangdong by Ming officer Guo Fei included in his thirty-two volume monograph (**1577-1595**), which covered local events, characteristics, achievements, provisions and political affairs. It is one of the earliest comprehensive maps of the territory. Kowloon and New Territories on the north are at the bottom. On the right is the island of **"FALLEN SPRING BLOSSOMS,"** now Tsing Yi. The cluster of places in the middle is present day Hong Kong Island. The location marked **"HONG KONG"** referred to **AP LEI CHÂU**, with Wong Chuk Hang on the lower left and Po Toi Island further left. On the upper right is Dangan Island, which is now part of the Wanshan Archipelago (formerly known as the Ladrones - "thieves" - Islands), a 104-island archipelago that is now under the governance of Zhuhai in Guangdong Province of the People's Republic of China.



First Mention of Hong Kong

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2 WALLED VILLAGE NAVAL BASE

according to the Qing Chinese, Dutch East India Company and French cartographers



During their unsuccessful attempts to take Macao from the **PORTUGUESE** in the **17th century**, the **DUTCH** gained knowledge of the geography of the Pearl River, although the coastal information was rather inaccurate. In the **1655** map used by the Dutch ambassador for his visit to the Qing emperor, from Canton to **XAN TSUI** (Sanshui) up north to Peking (Beijing), **LAMTAU** (Lantau) was depicted as a peninsula of Canton and Macao as an offshore island in the South China Sea. The places inland, however, were documented in detail.



Dutch East India Company, Map of China, 1655

Lamtau

The realtive indifference towards Hong Kong by the **DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY** seems to persisted throughout the 17th century. In its **1689** map of the East Indies, only Quang Tung (Guangdong) was called out, with a cluster of unnamed islands south of its peninsula. Presumably, these included Lantau, Hong Kong and other islands.

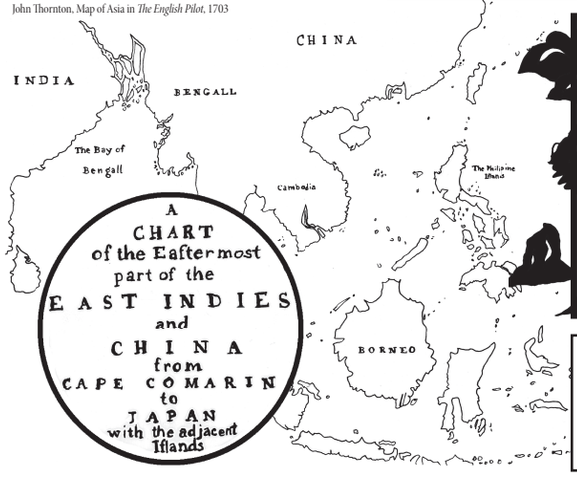


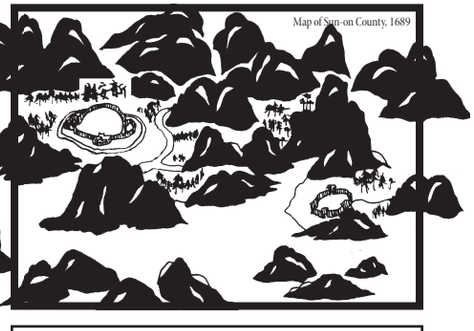
Johannes van Keulen, New Map of East Indies, 1689

Peter Schenk, Map of China, 1700

By the **17th century**, maps produced by the Guangdong prefecture of the Qing government were oriented north-south from top to bottom. In the **1685** Map of **SUN-ON COUNTY** (now Baoan county), the region appears to be guarded by the Xinan Fortress and the Dapeng Fortress. Both were walled villages.

John Thornton, Map of Asia in *The English Pilot*, 1703





Map of Sun-on County, 1689

Subsequent maps up till **1729** showed the proliferation of walled fortresses in the region. A **1692** Map of **THE CANTON PROVINCE** presents a coastal network of waterways, walled village fortresses, mountain and island cantonments.

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紅香爐港

Ching Government, Map of Canton Province, 1692

In the **1700s**, **"MACOA" (MACAU)** was marked in all the maps in the region. **LANTAU** and **LAMMA** appeared in the English maps. French cartographer Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville's maps of China and Canton in the **1730s** contained coastal articulation and topographic characteristics such as mountain ranges, peaks and cliffs and articulation that showed improved standards of accuracy in map making. Present day Hong Kong, including Lantau and Lamma, being not on the Portuguese marine trade network, was unnamed.



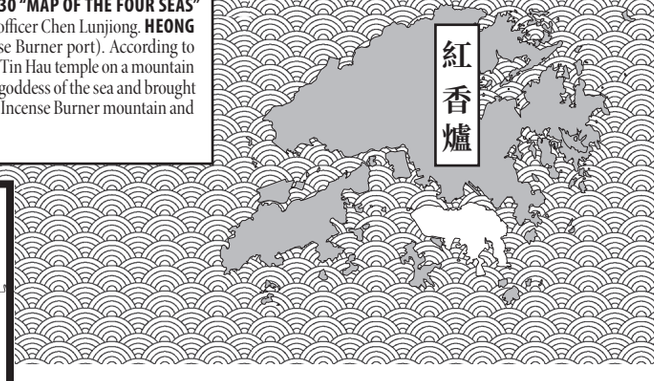
Chen Lun-Jiong , Map of the Four Seas, 1730

In the **18th century**, Paris-based geographers processed reports and cartographic material supplied by mostly French Jesuit teams traveling across the Qing Empire. The most important of these publications was **DESCRIPTION DE LA CHINE ET DE LA TARTARIE CHINOISE** edited by Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (**1736**), which contained maps by Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville.

The walled cantonment Hong Heong Lou appeared in a **1730 "MAP OF THE FOUR SEAS"** in the Records on the Coastal Countries compiled by Qing officer Chen Lunjiong. **HEONG KONG** is short for **HONG HEONG LOU KONG** (Red Incense Burner port). According to legend, a red incense burner was floating in the sea near the Tin Hau temple on a mountain in present Tai Hang. The villagers believed it embodied the goddess of the sea and brought it into the temple. The mountain became known as the Red Incense Burner mountain and the place **RED INCENSE BURNER PORT**.



Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville, Province De Quang-Tong, 1737



3 A CANTON PENINSULA

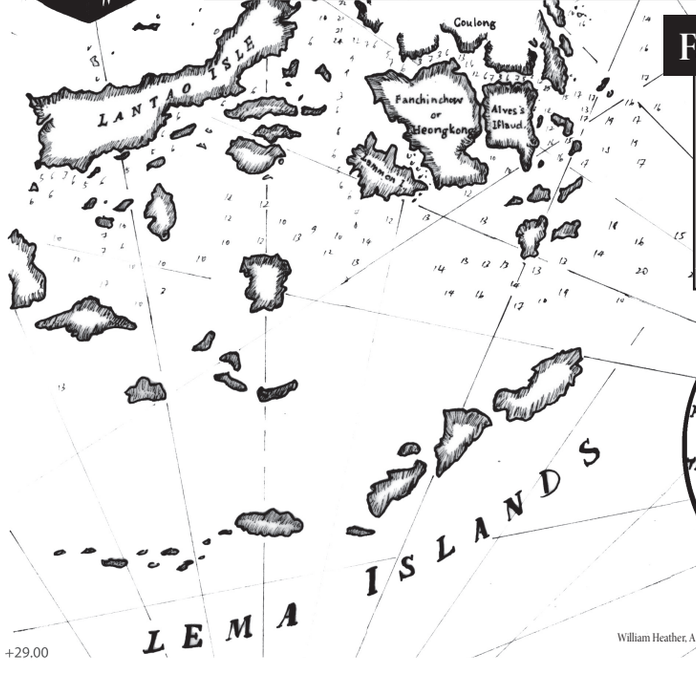
according to the Scottish and French navy hydrographers…



Alexander Dalrymple, An Account of the Discoveries Made in the South Pacific Previous to 1764

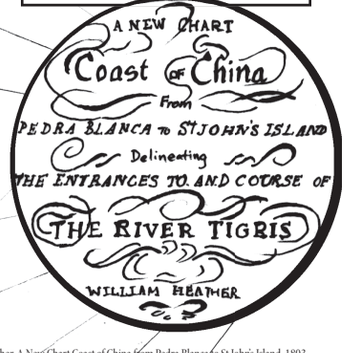


FANCHIN CHOW was the name of Hong Kong Island in Alexander Dalrymple's **1764** Map of **A PART OF CHINA** and surrounding islands, published in An Account of the Discoveries Made in the South Pacific. The Scottish geographer and hydrographer of the British Admiralty made the map based on his observations of the region in **1759** and **1760**. The map contains **HYDROGRAPHIC DATA** on depths and obstructions of the region for the first time. In contrast to the more detailed nautical information is the blank interior, including portions of the coastline that were left incomplete.



Fanchin Chow

In the rest of the **18th century**, when Hong Kong Island was named, it would be identified as the single-word **FANCHINCHOW** or in other similar spelling like **FANCHINCHOU** or **FAN-CHIN-CHEO**. The depiction of Hong Kong was inconsistent in the French maps of the **1780s**.



William Heather, A New Chart Coast of China from Pedra Blanca to St John's Island, 1803

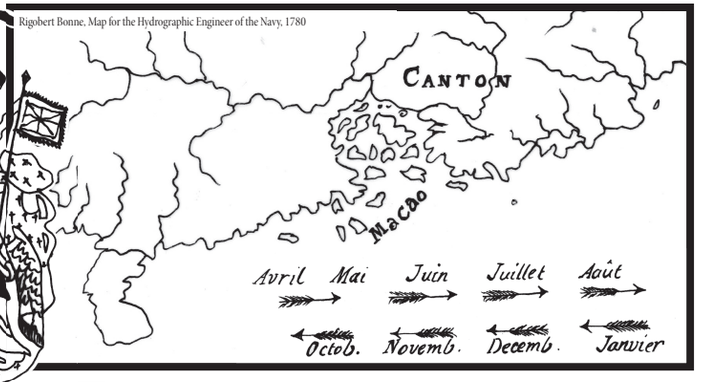
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Only Macau was named in French cartographer Rigobert Bonne's **1780** Map for **THE HYDROGRAPHIC ENGINEER OF THE NAVY**. In the **1787 MAP ON THE SEAS OF CHINA AND TARTARY** used by the French frigates, Fanchincheo was drawn as a peninsula. It was not named in Johann Christian Hüttner's Map of China in his **1799** book, **JOURNEY INTO THE INTERIOR OF CHINA AND TARTARY** made in the years **1792**, **1793** and **1794** by Lord Macartney.

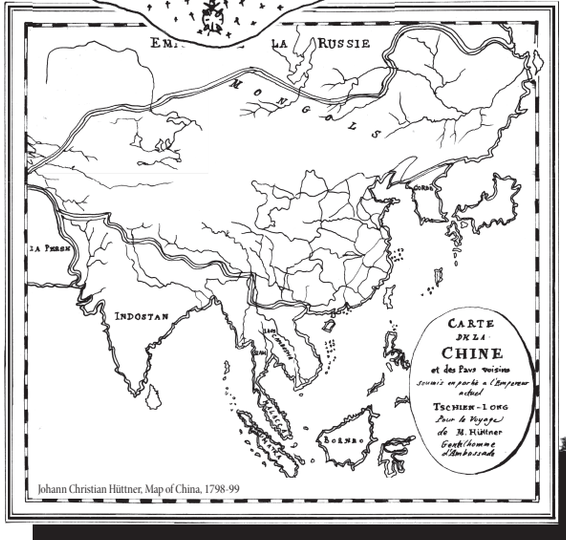


D'Apres de Mannevillette, Le Neptune Oriental, 1775





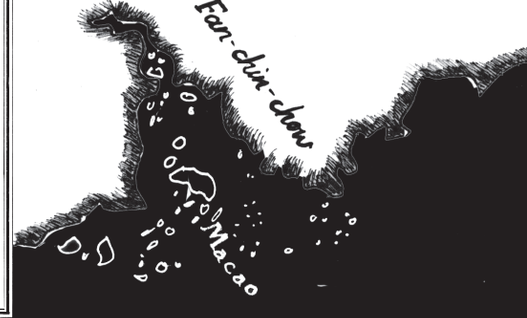
Rigobert Bonne, Map for the Hydrographic Engineer of the Navy, 1780



Johann Christian Hüttner, Map of China, 1798-99

Given such naming inconsistencies, it was not surprising that in "A New Chart of the Coast of China," which presented a more accurate depiction of the mouth of the Pearl River Delta, British cartographer William Heather named the island **"FANCHIN CHOW OR HEONG-KONG."**

Jean-François de Galaup, Seas of China and Tartary, 1787



Fanchin chow or Heong-kong



It was the first time in many decades that a European map containing hydrographic data and tracks currents and prevailing winds, depicts **FANCHINCHOW** and **FORT ALVES** (Tung Chung) Island as two offshore islands separated by a waterway. The two islands which constitute present day Hong Kong Island are separated from the hinterland – the peninsula name **COULONG** (Kowloon) – by another waterway named Alves Passage. **LAMMON** (Lamma) Island lies on the southwest and the larger Lantau Island further west.

4 COASTAL ISLANDS

according to the Qing Chinese navy, the British East India Company and American cartographers

In the early **19th century**, **HONGHEONGLOU** remained present in the **QING NAVAL DEFENSE** maps of its eastern coastline. The present Hong Kong Island was acknowledged as its own island entity in a **1822** map by Ruan Yuan, a prominent scholar and governor of Kwangtung and Kwangsi between **1817** and **1826**. In the 124th volume of his Canton Annals, the map of the "Keongchow part Kwangtung's inner and outer seas" identified the southwestern exposed waters of the island as the outer seas of **HONG KONG** and the northeastern waters as the inner sea of **LEI YUN MUN**.

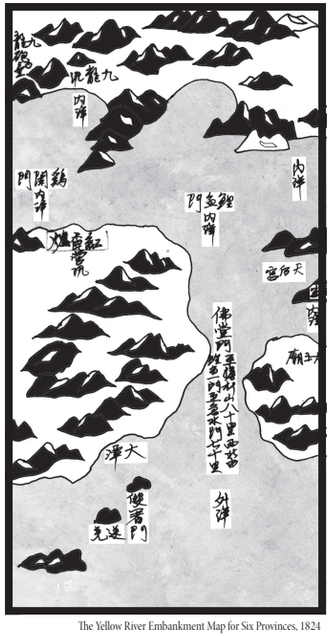
Qing Guangzhou Prefecture Government, Sun-on Naval Defense Map, 1819



In the **QING COASTAL DEFENSE** maps up to **1820s**, the location and proportions of the islands were inaccurate, and the shape of the Kowloon peninsula was a very rough approximate. The map shows towns, forests, boats and camps. **HONGHEONGLOU** (today in Causeway Bay District) was the name commonly associated with present day Hong Kong Island.

Ruan Yuan, Map of Coastal Defense, 1822





The Yellow River Embankment Map for Six Provinces, 1824



Ross Daniel, Survey of Part of the China Coast, 1813



Meanwhile, the **BRITISH** and **AMERICAN** maps of China, its provinces and coasts present an increased geographical understanding of the region. General atlases began to be produced for public consumption.

While early **1800s** maps of China identified Macao in the Pearl River Delta, the **BRITISH** survey maps of the China coast of the period reveal a systematic progression of the Empire's territorial ambition. Captain Daniel Ross, hydrographer of the **EAST INDIA COMPANY**, made a series of survey maps based on the coastal surveys between **1806** and **1820**.

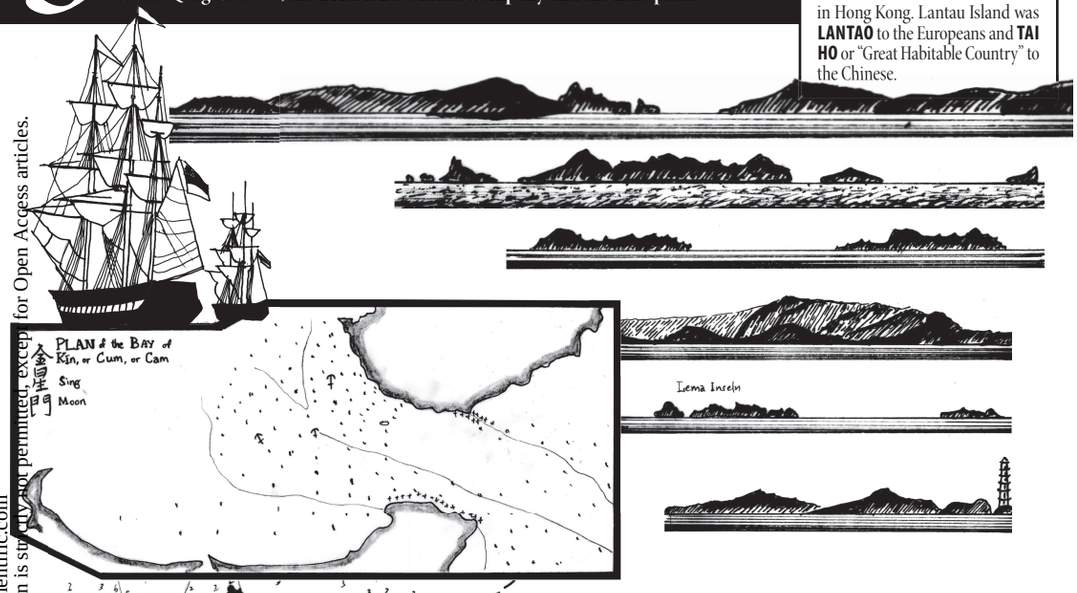


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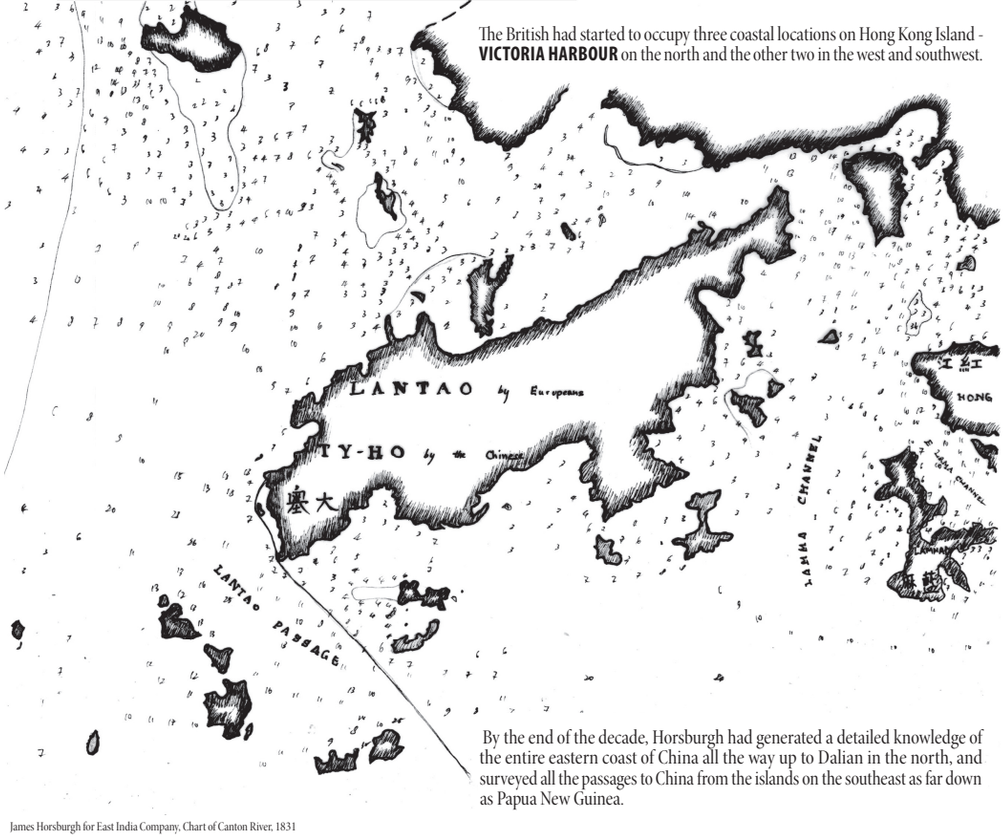
5 ROUTES, CHECKPOINTS AND PLACES

of the Qing Chinese, the British East India Company and the Europeans

James Horsburgh's maps in the **1830s** for the **EAST INDIA COMPANY** provided a window into the territorial division of the islands in Hong Kong. Lantau Island was **LANTAO** to the Europeans and **TAI HO** or "Great Habitable Country" to the Chinese.



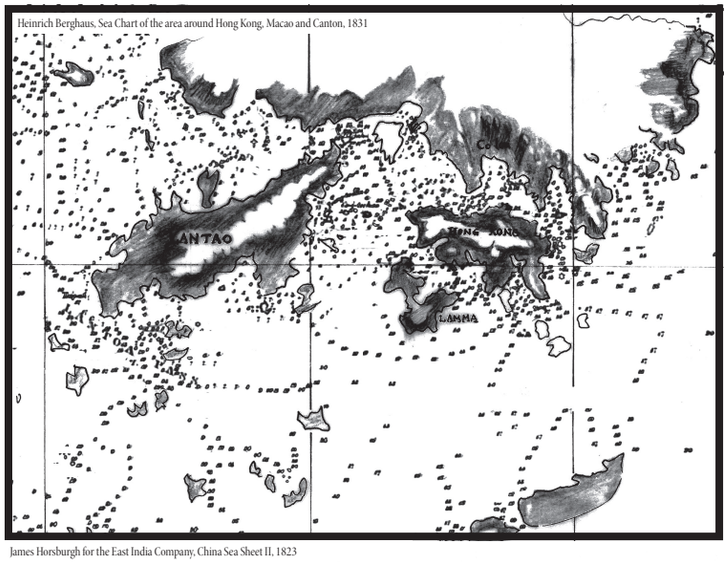
The British had started to occupy three coastal locations on Hong Kong Island - **VICTORIA HARBOUR** on the north and the other two in the west and southwest.



James Horsburgh for East India Company, Chart of Canton River, 1831

By the end of the decade, Horsburgh had generated a detailed knowledge of the entire eastern coast of China all the way up to Dalian in the north, and surveyed all the passages to China from the islands on the southeast as far down as Papua New Guinea.

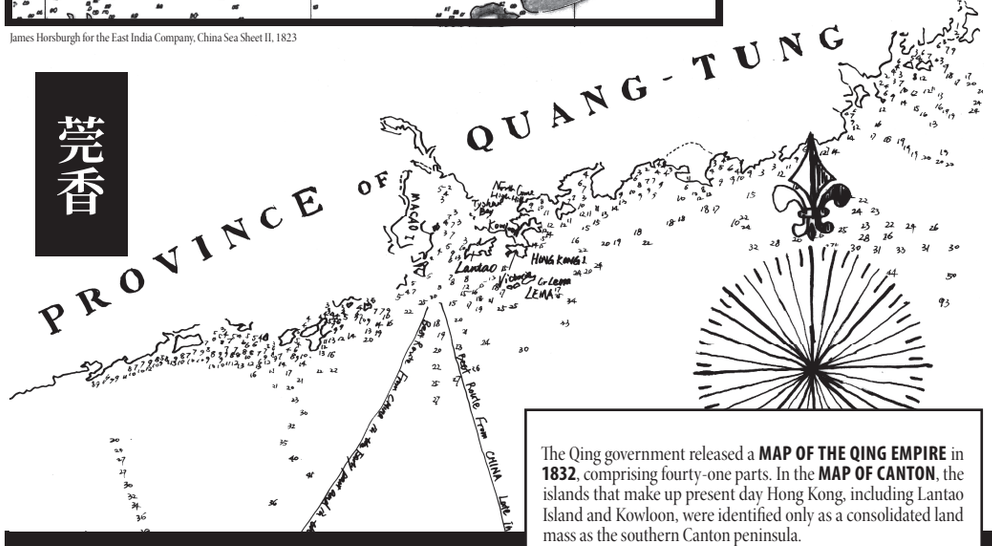
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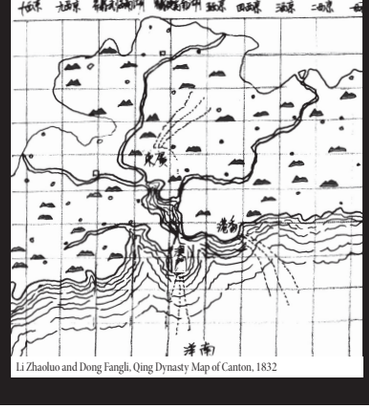
Heinrich Berghaus, Sea Chart of the area around Hong Kong, Macao and Canton, 1831

Maps by European hydrographers in the **1830s** showed the increased visibility of **HONG KONG ISLAND** and corresponding details of the nautical data of its immediate surrounding waters. With the exception of the **BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY** maps, the others such as Heinrich Berghaus' **SEA CHART OF THE CANTON REGION** included more information on Macao and Lantao Island. This was not surprising, given the British increasing presence on Hong Kong Island. The pictorial inserts in Berghaus' **1831** map showed an urban coastal settlement in Macao, whereas Lantao with its scraggy peaks appeared unoccupied.

James Horsburgh for the East India Company, China Sea Sheet II, 1823



The Qing government released a **MAP OF THE QING EMPIRE** in **1832**, comprising fourty-one parts. In the **MAP OF CANTON**, the islands that make up present day Hong Kong, including Lantao Island and Kowloon, were identified only as a consolidated land mass as the southern Canton peninsula.



Li Zhaoluo and Dong Fangli, Qing Dynasty Map of Canton, 1832



6 FROM WALLED VILLAGE TO HONG KONG ISLAND

becoming a British colonial possession

During his negotiations with the **BRITISH** rear admiral George Elliot at the **CONVENTION OF CHUENPI** in January **1841**, **QING** official Qishan, suggested that in exchange for the return of the Fumen Fort in Canton (in present Dongguan City), the British would be allowed to settle in **HEONGKONG**. The priority was to reinforce its gateways to prevent further encroachment by foreign forces into the Mainland interior. Qi was originally referring to the southwest corner of the island, present day Aberdeen, rather than the entire Island. The negotiation concluded preliminarily with the **CESSATION OF HONG KONG ISLAND AND ITS HARBOR** to the British Crown. Elliot saw Hong Kong's harbor as a valuable base for the British trading community in Canton.

Possession Point



Captain Sir Edward Belcher of Royal Navy Hong Kong Map, 1841



Li Min Fei, Map of Trading Route Passing Hong Kong, 1842



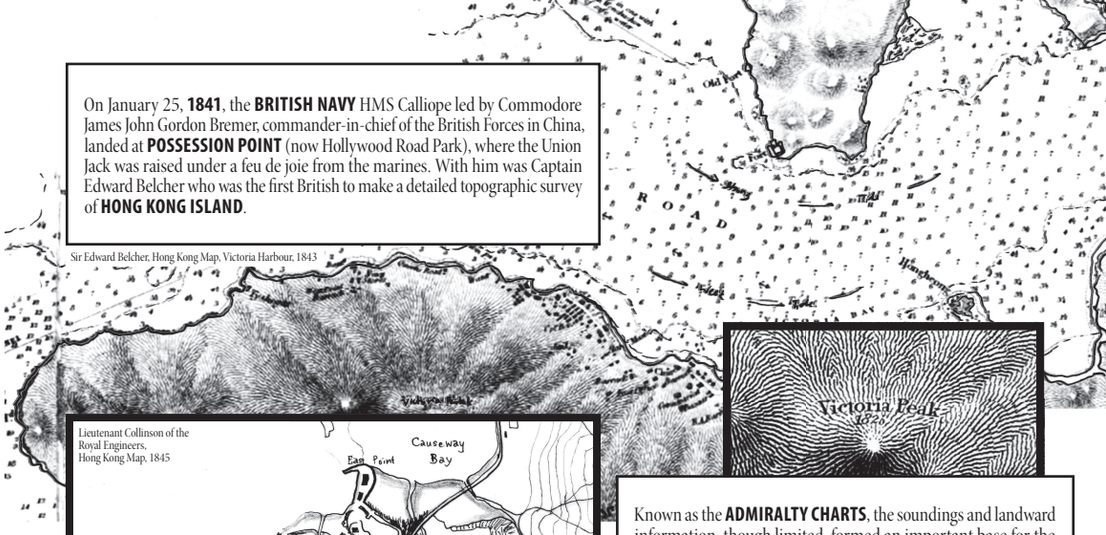
Thomas Bernard Collinson, Victoria Harbour Annotation, 1845



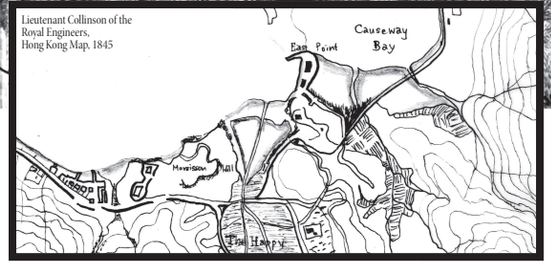
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On January 25, **1841**, the **BRITISH NAVY** HMS Calliope led by Commodore James John Gordon Bremer, commander-in-chief of the British Forces in China, landed at **POSSESSION POINT** (now Hollywood Road Park), where the Union Jack was raised under a feu de joie from the marines. With him was Captain Edward Belcher who was the first British to make a detailed topographic survey of **HONG KONG ISLAND**.

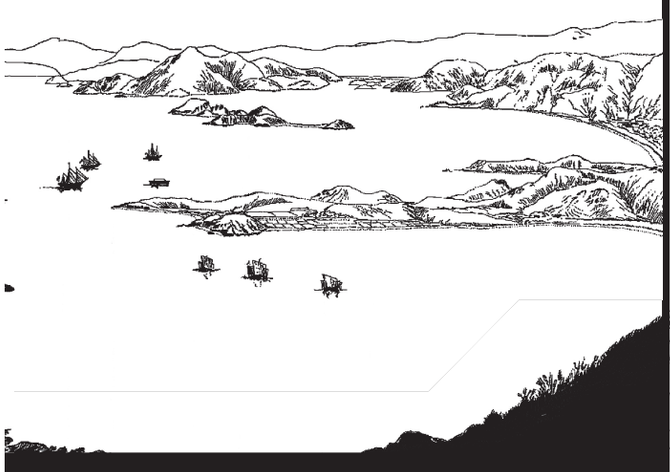
Sir Edward Belcher, Hong Kong Map, Victoria Harbour, 1843



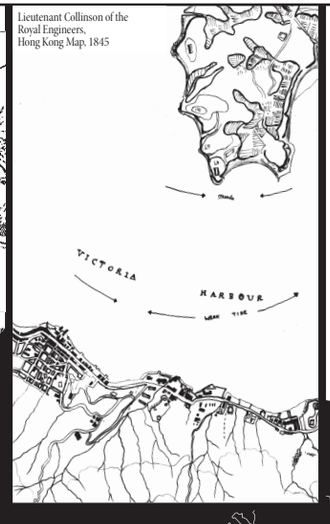
Lieutenant Collinson of the Royal Engineers, Hong Kong Map, 1845



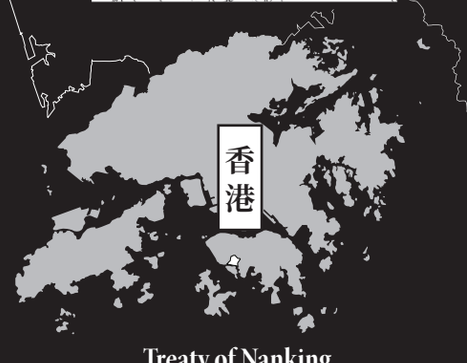
Known as the **ADMIRALTY CHARTS**, the soundings and landward information, though limited, formed an important base for the map surveyed by Lieutenant Thomas B. Collinson of the Royal Engineers in **1845**. All of his place names were checked by the then Governor of Hong-Kong, Sir John Francis Davis. Collinson carried out the earliest **BRITISH SURVEYS** and produced early detailed **SKETCHES** of Hong Kong.



Lieutenant Collinson of the Royal Engineers, Hong Kong Map, 1845



THE TREATY OF NANKING was signed on August 29, **1842**. Hong Kong Island, including Green Island and Ap Lei Chau, was officially ceded to the British. It was established as a Crown colony after ratification was exchanged on June 26, **1843**. From **1841** onwards, the British maps of Hong Kong showed the Anglicization of existing place names and the naming of new places that were not identified on earlier maps. The earliest of these include **VICTORIA HARBOUR** and **VICTORIA PEAK.**

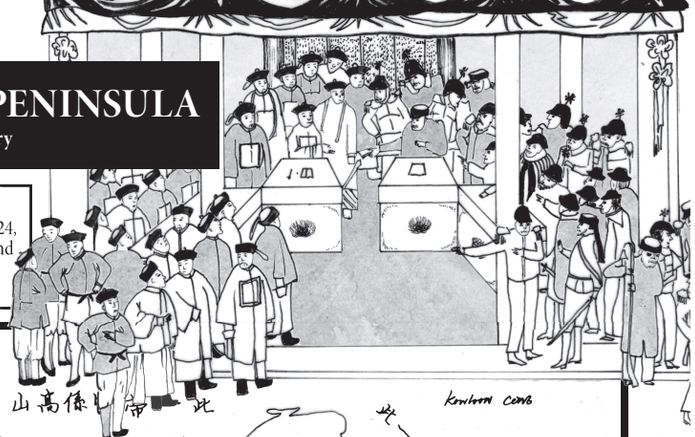


Treaty of Nanking

7 ISLANDS AND PENINSULA

expanding British colonial territory

The **CONVENTION OF PEKING** was signed on October 24, **1860**. The Kowloon Peninsula and Stonecutters Island (Ngong Shuen Chau) were **CEDED TO THE BRITISH**.



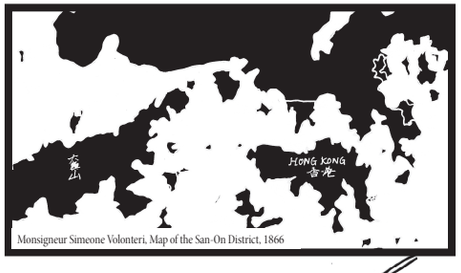


Treaty of Peking was signed on October 24, 1860.
South Kowloon Peninsula and Stonecutter Island were leased to the British.

The Convention of Peking

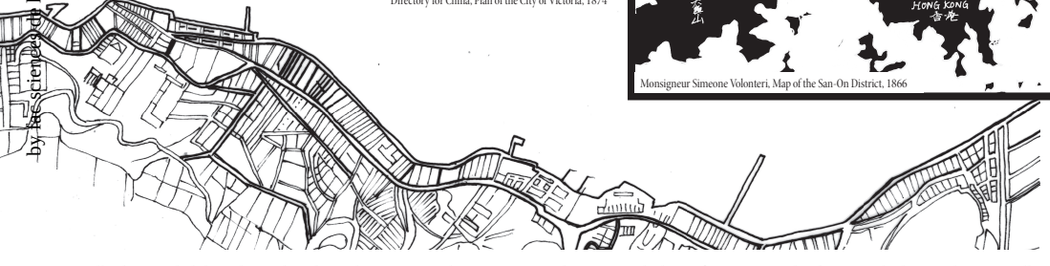
Second Opium War, Looting of the Qing Imperial Palace in Beijing, 1860

On March 24, **1860**, the *Hongkong Gazette* included an excerpt of the lease, which included "that part of **KOWLOON PENINSULA** lying south of a line drawn from a point near to but south of the Kowloon Fort to the northernmost point of Stonecutter's Island, together with that Island." The lease was replaced by **ARTICLE VI OF THE CONVENTION OF PEKING**, which ceded the same area to Britain in perpetuity. The stated reason for the cession of Kowloon in the Convention of Peking was "the maintenance of **LAW AND ORDER** in and about the **HARBOR OF HONGKONG**." In short, the British intended it as a **BUFFER ZONE** for protecting the main island.



Monsigneur Simeone Volonteri, Map of the San-On District, 1866

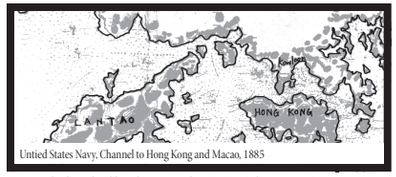
Directory for China, Plan of the City of Victoria, 1874



Initially, the British did not do much with Kowloon. By a proclamation on March 28, **1861**, the laws of Hong Kong Island were applied to Kowloon. Initially, the British used the **STONECUTTERS ISLAND** for quarrying. In **1863**,the Governor of Hong Kong, Hercules George Robert Robinson, decided to build a prison on the island to relieve the overcrowding situation in Victoria Prison.

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New dock facilities were established at Aberdeen and Kowloon, along with the **RECLAMATION** of the shallow lagoon at the entrance to Happy Valley. The ongoing problem of water supply to the island was also addressed. At the completion of the **POK FU LAM RESERVOIR** in **1863**, it was found to hold insufficient freshwater supply for the whole colony. Work then commenced on the Tai Tam Reservoirs, which were completed between **1883** and **1917**.

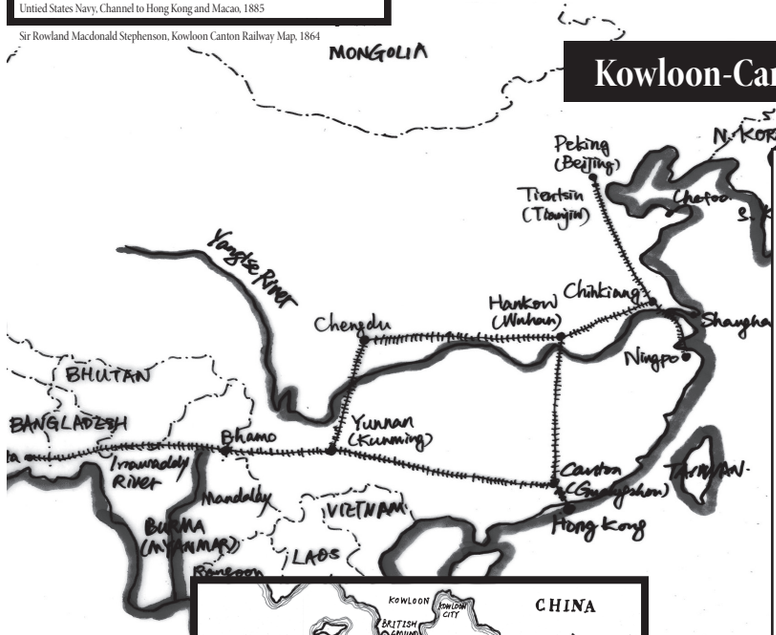


United States Navy, Channel to Hong Kong and Macao, 1885

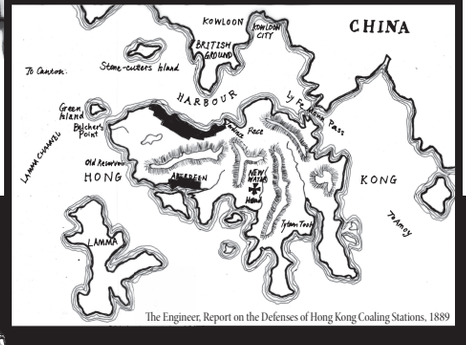
At the end of the **19th century,** the colonial powerspowers – the western Europe and the United States of America – were all trying to expand their spheres of influence in China. The approach of the British was to use Hong Kong as a marine trading hub, enhanced with the provision of a railway network to extend the Colony's commercial reach into the Chinese hinterland and connect with other railways that were planned by Germany, Belgium and the United States. This was the motivation behind the **KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY**.

Sir Rowland Macdonald Stephenson, Kowloon Canton Railway Map, 1864

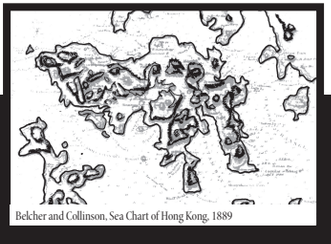
Kowloon-Canton Railway



The idea of connecting Hong Kong and China with a railway was first proposed to prominent Hong Kong businessmen in March **1864** by a British railway engineer, Sir Rowland MacDonald Stephenson, who had considerable experience of developing railways in India. But this idea was not supported by the businessmen as they wanted to protect their investments in the established shipping companies that were enjoying a monopoly on the carriage of passengers and goods into and out of China.



The Engineer, Report on the Defenses of Hong Kong Coaling Stations, 1889



Belcher and Collinson, Sea Chart of Hong Kong, 1889



Hong Kong

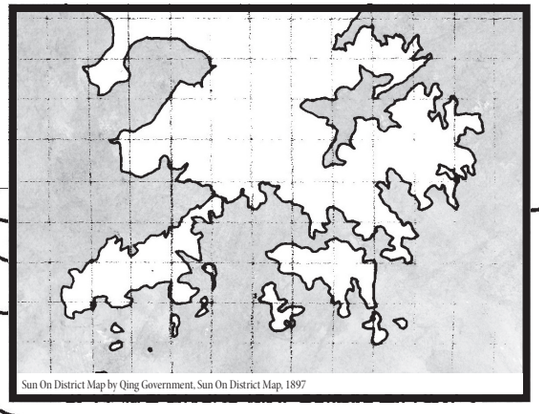
A January **1889** report in *The Engineer* entitled, **"DEFENSE OF OUR COALING STATIONS. NO 1 HONG KONG"**, provided an overview of the defense situation of Hong Kong. It stated that Hong Kong had an annual trade of GBP20 million. The harbor was used by hundreds of steam ships and sailing vessels in the harbor daily and in **1840**, was busier than the Port of London. With **8,000 EUROPEANS** among a population of **180,000**, the territory had commenced on upgrading the batteries with fixed gun in-placements.



8 EXPANDED TERRITORY

extending into Kowloon and 230 other islands

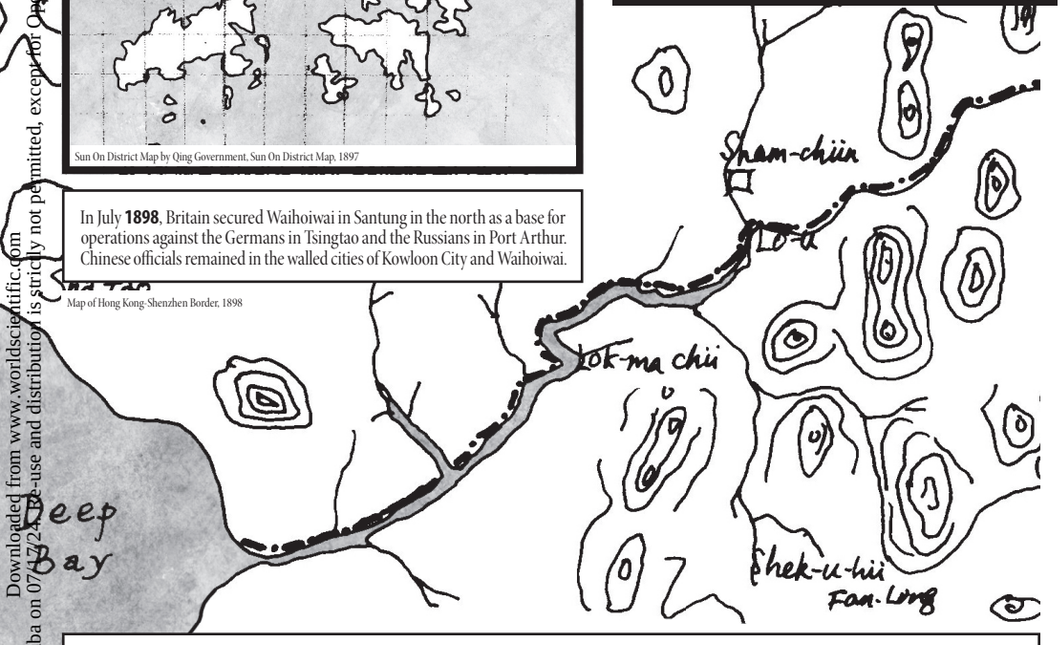
Fearing the encroachment of other European powers in China and the security of Hong Kong, Britain used"most favored nation" clause that it had **NEGOTIATED WITH PEKING** in **1843**, to demand the extension of Kowloon to counter the influence of France in southern China. The **SECOND CONVENTION OF PEKING** was signed on June 9, **1898** in Peking leasing the rest of Kowloon south of the Shenzhen River, which became known as the **NEW TERRITORIES**, and 230 other islands, for ninety-nine years till June 30, **1997**. The additional land was estimated to be 365 square miles or twelve times the size of then Colonial Hong Kong.



Sun On District Map by Qing Government, Sun On District Map, 1897

Second Convention of Peking

In July **1898**, Britain secured Waihoiwai in Santung in the north as a base for operations against the Germans in Tsingtao and the Russians in Port Arthur. Chinese officials remained in the walled cities of Kowloon City and Waihoiwai.

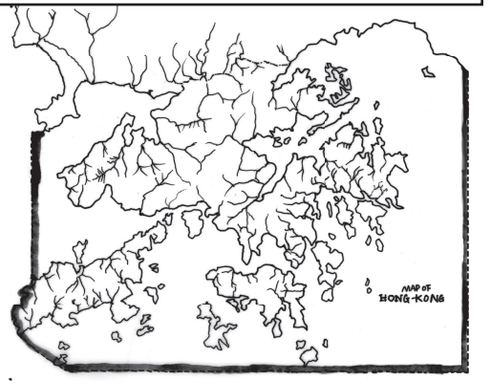


Map of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Border, 1898

Later in **1898**, concession was granted to the **BRITISH AND CHINESE CORPORATION LTD.,** a joint venture formed between the trading company of **JARDINE MATHESON AND CO.** and the **HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI BANK**, for the right to build and operate a railway from Kowloon to Canton that would link to the Peking-Hankow-Canton line.



Hong Kong, Kau-Lung (Kowloon), and Adjacent Territories, 1900



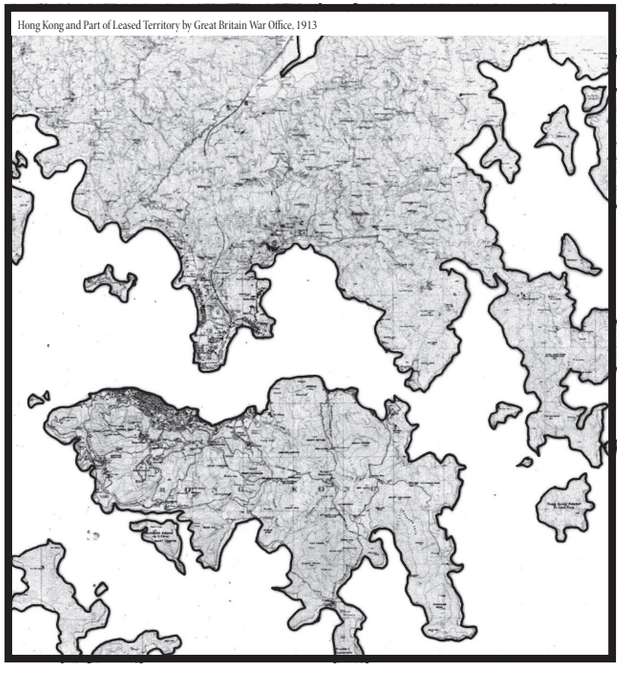
Map of Hong Kong: Signed at Peking on June 9, 1898

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In **1899**, the British and Chinese Corporation undertook a preliminary survey of the proposed route of the line. The financial uncertainties created by the **BOXER REBELLION** in China **(1899–1901)** and the Boer War (**1899**–**1902**) in South Africa made it difficult for the Corporation to raise funds for the project. However, by the beginning of the **20th century**, the Hong Kong Government led by the governor, Sir Henry Blake, decided that urgent action was required. Under royal order and the Governor's proclamation, **THE LAWS OF HONG KONG** were applied to the New Territories with effect from April 17, **1899**.



Map of Mirs Bay by Qing government, 1909



Hong Kong and Part of Leased Territory by Great Britain War Office, 1913

The early **1900s** maps with grid coordinates were compiled from existing intelligence division maps of **HONG KONG**, Admiralty Charts and **COLONIAL GOVERNMENT** survey maps, a contrast to the maps of Hong Kong by the **QING AUTHORITIES**, which were considerably sparse in information.

Open Door Policy

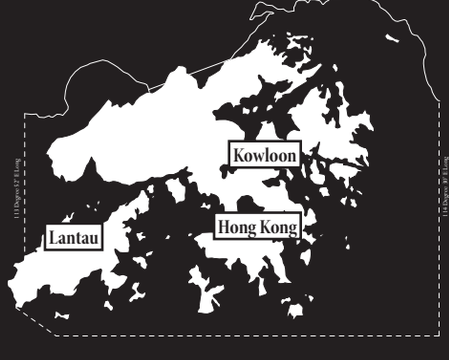
A **1913** Map of **HONG KONG ISLAND AND THE SOUTHERN TIP OF KOWLOON AND** surrounds showed transportation, water features, rice paddies, religious buildings, built-up areas and populated places. Topographic relief was notated by contours, hachures, spot heights and bathymetric tints. The date of the survey is not indicated but likely to have been some years earlier, as a note above the margin on sheet one states that "the exact course of the railway ... has not yet been ascertained." The **RAILWAY** was in fact completed in **1910**.



Map of Canton and Hong Kong by Qing Government, 1909

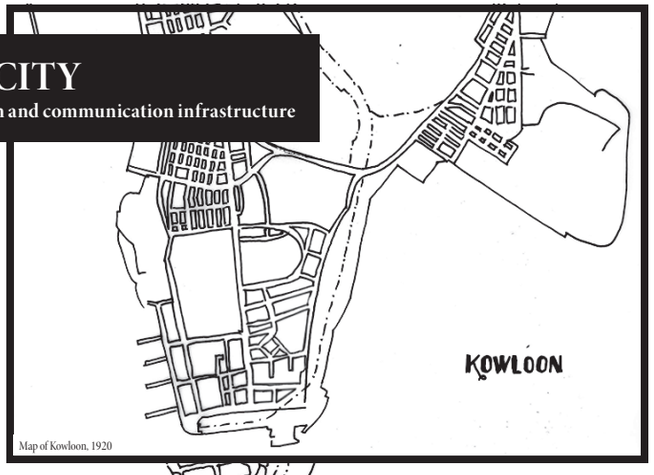
晉港奮

The Wuchang Uprising on October 11, **1911**, led to the Xinhai Revolution which overthrew the Qing dynasty. The last emperor of China abdicated his throne on February 12, **1912** and the Republic of China was established.



9 DEVELOPING CITY

building marine, transportation and communication infrastructure

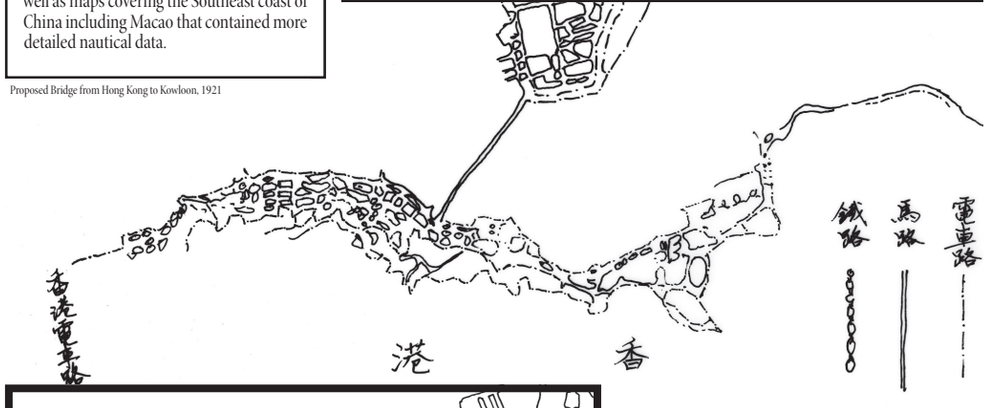


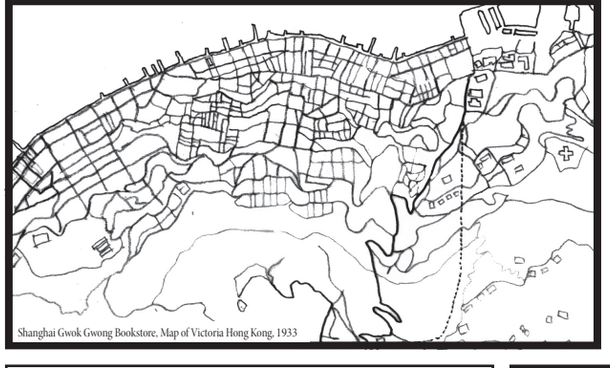
Map of Kowloon, 1920

MAP OF HONGKONG
Drawn for Crow's
HANDBOOK FOR CHINA

Maps of Hong Kong in the **1920s** present a city undergoing building and **INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT**, particularly in marine and land communication. Colony-wide maps of roads and hills detailed road maps of Kowloon and Hong Kong were produced, as well as maps covering the Southeast coast of China including Macao that contained more detailed nautical data.

Proposed Bridge from Hong Kong to Kowloon, 1921



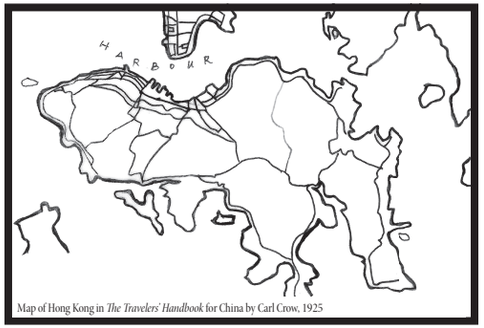


Shanghai Gwok Gwong Bookstore, Map of Victoria Hong Kong, 1933

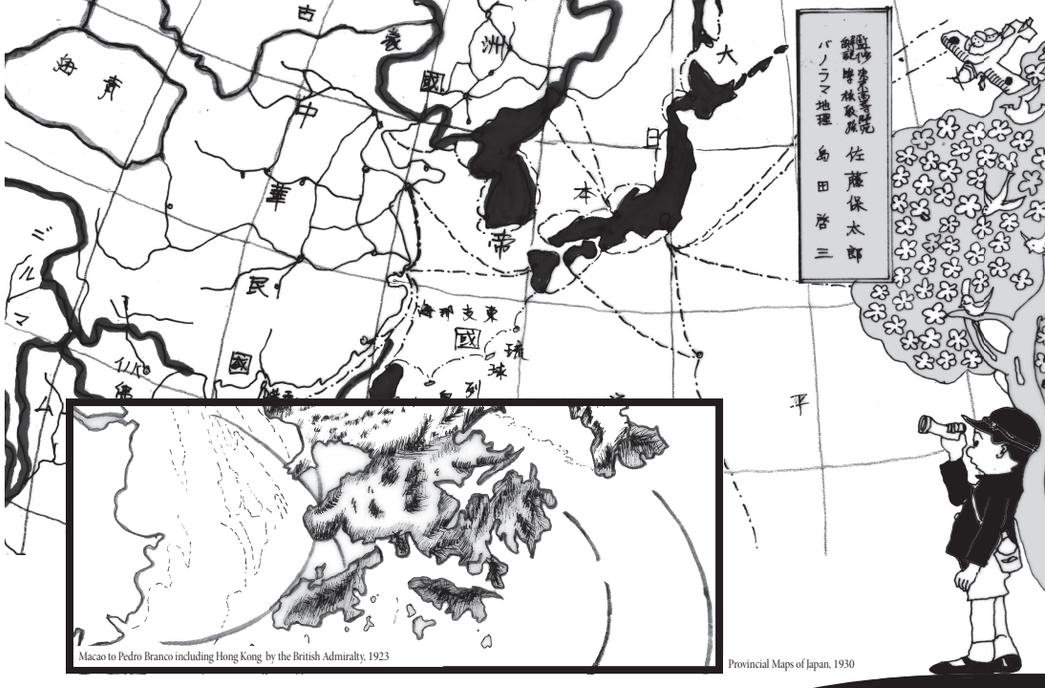
Victoria Hong Kong

A **1921 CHINA MAIL** special supplement showed a proposed bridge linking Hong Kong Island to Tsim Sha Tsui in Kowloon. First proposed by the harbor master office in **1902**, the **CROSS-HARBOUR BRIDGE** was later proposed again by different parties in **1956** and **1961** and finally rejected by the Hong Kong government in **1963** due to concern of the safety for aircraft landing in Kai Tak.

The **1933** street map of Victoria Hong Kong published by a **SHANGHAI BOOKSTORE**, oriented south at the top, described part of the northern shore of Hong Kong Island, running from the Victoria Barracks and Wellington Barracks in the West, to the China Merchants Wharf and The University of Hong Kong. The urban areas were detailed, with every street named and the major buildings and facilities outlined. Fronting the Victoria Harbour, we see the outlines of numerous important public buildings, including Government House, City Hall, and the Murray Barracks, and the great private mansions on the mid levels above the town. Victoria Peak is shown rising above the city. Immediately to the east of Victoria, beyond the Cricket Ground, is the Royal Navy Yard, and the headquarters of the British navy in East Asia.



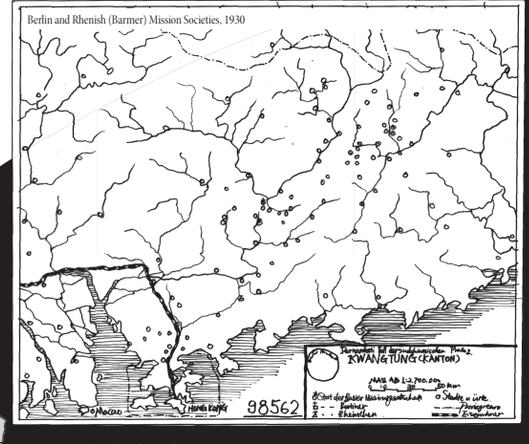
Map of Hong Kong in *The Travelers' Handbook* for China by Carl Crow, 1925



Macao to Pedro Branco including Hong Kong by the British Admiralty, 1923

Provincial Maps of Japan, 1930

Maps in the **1930s** present various **IMPERIAL NETWORKS** including the air transport networks of **BRITAIN** and **FRANCE**, as well as the mission stations of the Basel, Berlin and Rhenish (Barmer) on the northeastern part of the southern Chinese province Kwang Tung. Imperial Airways was the early British commercial long range air transport company, operating from **1924 to 1939** and serving parts of Europe but especially the Empire routes to **SOUTH AFRICA**, **INDIA** and the **FAR EAST**, including **MALAYA** and **HONG KONG**.



Berlin and Rhenish (Barmer) Mission Societies, 1930

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS



Proposed Bridge (1902)
Ferry services (1900)
Railway (1910)
Tram (1904)





AIR FRANCE was established on October 7, **1933**, and the carrier's first flight to Hong Kong arrived on August 10, **1938**. The twelve-seater plane had taken off from the French port of Marseilles on August 4, and reached Hong Kong via North Africa, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia and French Indochina, stopping at Hanoi.

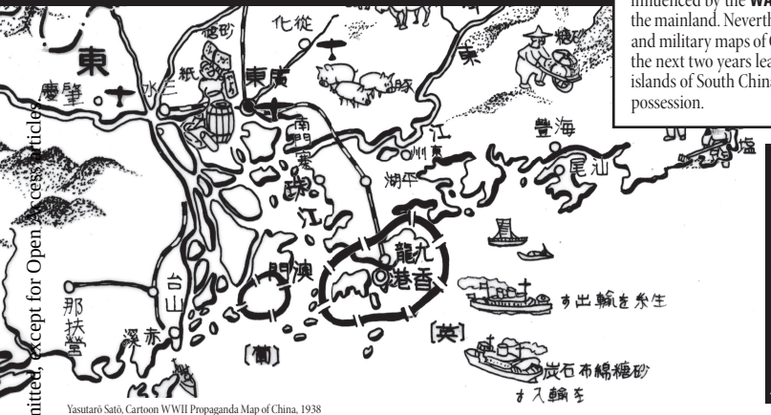
Imperial Airways Commercial Poster, 1937

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10 OCCUPIED TERRITORY

war spoils and empire resources

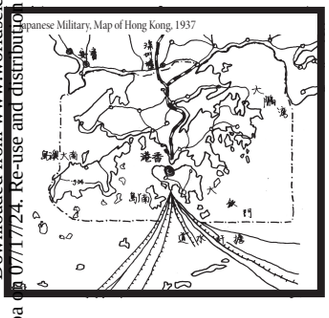
When the **IMPERIAL JAPANESE MILITARY** invaded China in **1937**, British Hong Kong was not under attack although it was influenced by the **WAR IN CHINA** due to to its proximity to the mainland. Nevertheless, it was obvious in the propaganda and military maps of China produced by the Japanese during the next two years leading up to World War that the coastal islands of South China were within the Empire's scrutiny for possession.



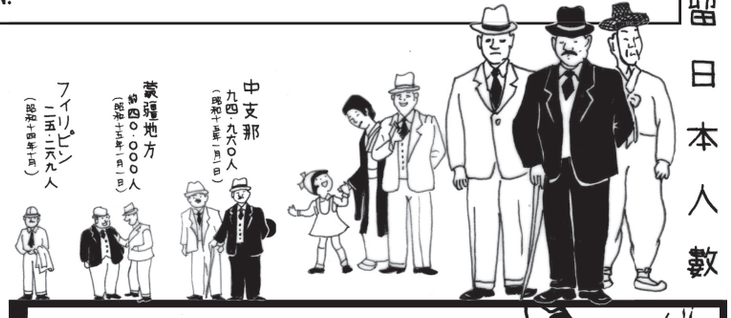
Yasutarō Satō, Cartoon WWII Propaganda Map of China, 1938



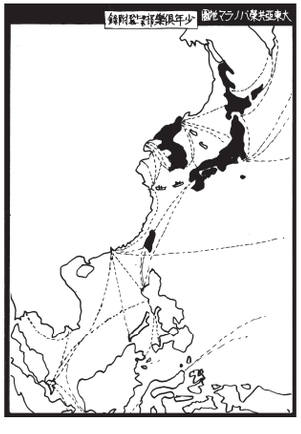
A **1938** Showa 13 manga style propaganda map of China by Kato Takashiro published for the Japanese Youth Club, illustrates Chinese workers engaged in a variety of tasks. It also illustrates shipping and transportation networks throughout China. The map with some seventy-two manga illustrations is designed to glorify Japanese achievements during the **1837-1838** invasion of China. **MANCHURIA** is colored in pink, indicating Japanese dominance, while **KOREA**, **TAIWAN**, the conquered Manchurian port of Dalian, and Japan itself is dark red, indicating that these areas were fully integrated into **IMPERIAL JAPAN.**



Japanese Military, Map of Hong Kong, 1937



The references cover the period between the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (Lugouqiao) on July 7, **1937** and the **JAPANESE OCCUPATION** of Xuzhou on May 19, **1938**.

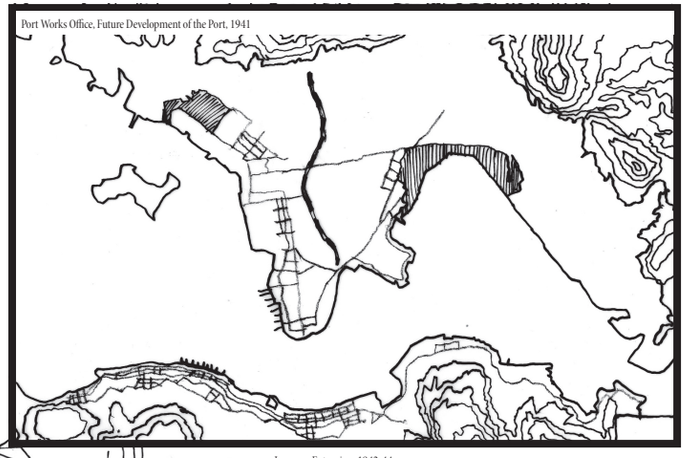




Yasutarō Satō, Showa 15 Japanese Youth Manga Map of East Asia and Southeast Asia, 1940

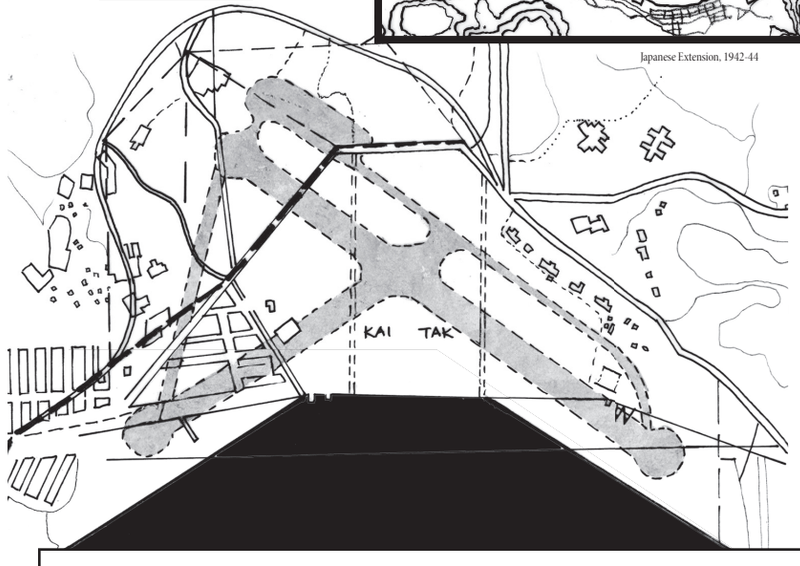
Another map by Takashiro under the direction of Yasutarō Satō illustrates all of **EAST ASIA**, **SOUTHEAST ASIA**, and the **EAST INDIES**, extending from Mongolia to Australia and from Burma to the Philippines and New Guinea. Published by the Japanese Youth Club in January **1940**, the map employs cartoon figures to celebrate Japanese expansionism throughout the region and highlights the grand vision of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. At the time of its publication, Japan had successfully expanded into **KOREA**, **TAIWAN**, **MANCHURIA**, and parts of **CHINA**. The map presents a vast network of shipping and resources for the service of the Empire.

In February **1941**, a report by **SIR DAVID J. OWEN** on the future control and development of the Port of Hong Kong contained a Map of Hong Kong, which showed the harbor and its foreshores, including proposed developments in Kowloon - at Tsun Wan, Sham Shui Po, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon City and Tsim Sha Tsui. A cross-harbor vehicular ferry was also proposed. None of these proposals was implemented before the outbreak of war in December **1941**.



Port Works Office, Future Development of the Port, 1941

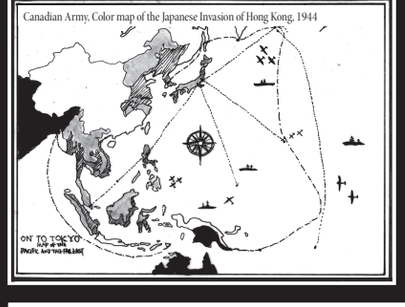
WWII



Japanese Extension, 1942-44

On December 7, **1941**, Japan suddenly launched a broad offensive across the Pacific and Southeast Asia, attacking the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor and American-ruled Philippines, and invading Thailand and British Malaya. On December 8, **1941**, the Japanese forces led by Sakai Takashi **INVADED HONG KONG**. The British, Canadians, Indians and the Hong Kong Volunteer Defense Forces resisted the Japanese but after eighteen days of fierce fighting, British colonial officials headed by the Governor of Hong Kong, Mark Aitchison Young, surrendered on December 25, **1941**. The day was referred to as **BLACK CHRISTMAS** as Hong Kong came under the occupation of the Japanese.

Japanese maps of **HONG KONG** in **1941** covered intelligence on **MILITARY DEFENSE POSITIONS** and upon occupation. Between **1941** and **1945**, British Army Aid Group (BAAG) reports and sketches contained maps detailing building development plans geared towards air and marine transportation infrastructure appeared, notably the Japanese plans to expand **KAI TAK AIRPORT**. The map showed residential buildings in the vicinity were demolished, agricultural land cleared and a nearby hill removed to extend the air field by four times its existing size.



Canadian Army, Color map of the Japanese Invasion of Hong Kong, 1944

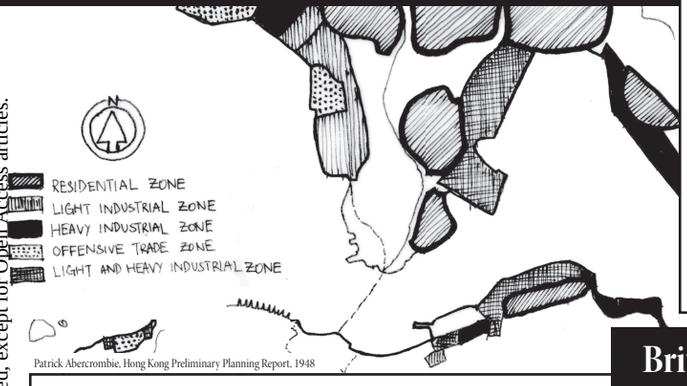


The occupation lasted 3 years and eight months. **JAPAN SURRENDERED** on 15 August **1945** and **BRITAIN REGAINED CONTROL** of Hong Kong on 30 August **1945**.

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11 POSTWAR URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Industrialization, land use planning and aviation ambitions



Patrick Abercrombie, Hong Kong Preliminary Planning Report, 1948

In **1945**, Britain War Office updated the **SURVEY MAP OF HONG KONG**, covering the entire British Hong Kong Territory. The third edition of the survey map series by the **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT** - the first in **1930** and the second in **1936** - included international boundaries, transportation, communications, topographic contours, ground and water features, religious and public buildings, built-up areas and other populated places. It set the base for the subsequent land use plans that were to follow starting with the **PRELIMINARY PLANNING REPORT** by **PATRICK ABERCROMBIE** in **1948**.

British Crown Colony

Abercrombie's proposal encompasses the **FIRST STRATEGIC PLAN** for the territory of Hong Kong as a British Crown Colony, funded by the Colonial office under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme of **1945** intended to assist the Hong Kong government in its post-war administration. The construction of the **CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL** connecting Central District in Hong Kong Island to Yau Ma Tei in Kowloon, the relocation of the rail terminus and a new airport are captured in the plan. His preliminary study of land use for housing and industry in the city also led to the proposal for new towns in the new territories.

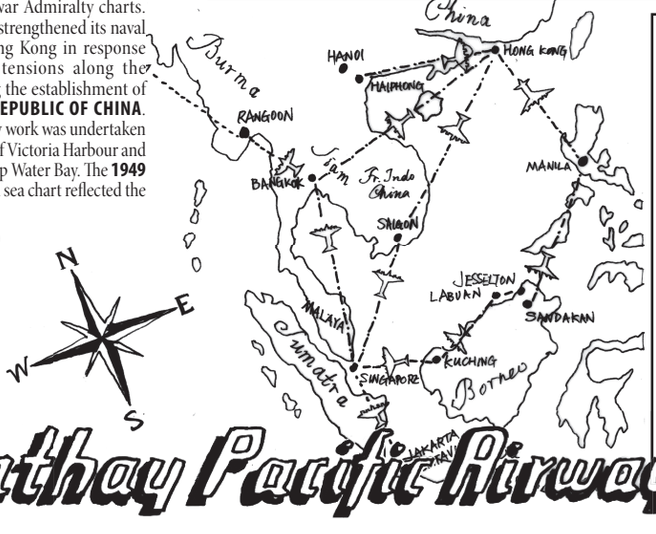




Royal Geographical Society, Hong Kong Land Use, 1949

In **1945**, a special **HONG KONG SURVEYING UNIT** was set up to obtain local sounding data to upgrade and update the pre-war Admiralty charts. In **1949**, Britain strengthened its naval presence in Hong Kong in response to heightened tensions along the border following the establishment of the **PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**. Additional survey work was undertaken at the entrances of Victoria Harbour and the border of Deep Water Bay. The **1949** land use map and sea chart reflected the additional data.

Cathay Pacific Airway, 1950



The **1950s** saw the production of maps undertaken by the emerging commercial airline industry and publishing companies. **CATHAY PACIFIC AIRWAYS**, founded in **1946**, flew routes between Hong Kong, Sydney, Manila, Singapore, Shanghai, Saigon and Bangkok on its maiden flight. By **1950**, its network included **FOURTEEN CITIES** in the region, the furthermost northern and southern cities were Calcutta and Jakarta respectively.

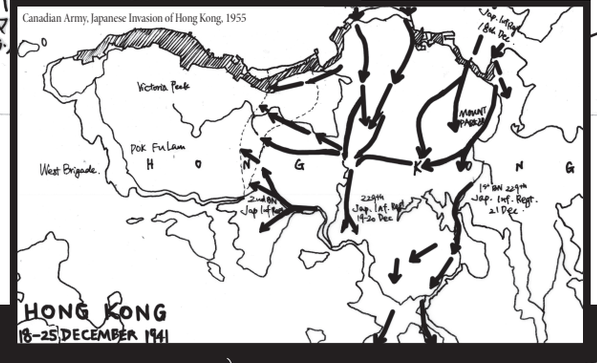
Cathay Pacific Airways

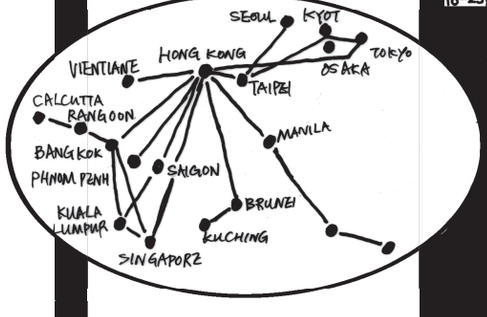
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South East Asia by Koudan-Sha, 1951

The colorful pictorial maps published by Japanese publishing house Kodansha in the **1950s** present a more densely populated, cheery and culturally vibrant South China coast compared to the ones in the **1930**s. **1950**s **JAPAN HAD BECOME A DEMOCRACY**. Its economy and education system underwent reorganization and rebuilding and it began to find its economic footing as a manufacturer consumer devices and electronics.





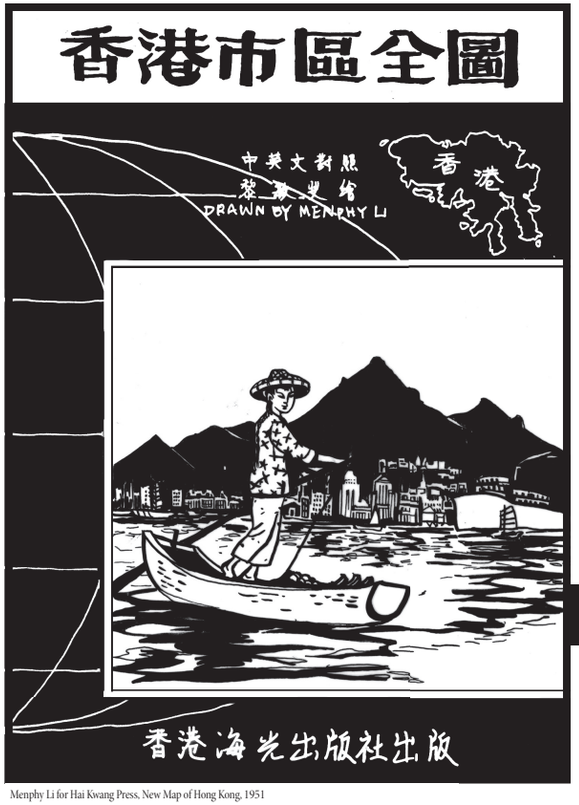
By **1960**, Cathay Pacific was the **LARGEST AIRLINE IN ASIA**. It expanded its flight services to cities in Japan and to Seoul in Korea.

Cathay Pacific, British Airline with British Pilots, 1960

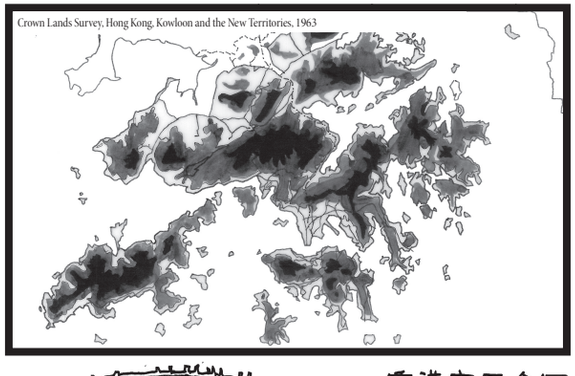


12 URBAN NETWORKS
territorial connections and regional tourism

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Menphy Li for Hai Kwang Press, New Map of Hong Kong, 1951



Crown Lands Survey, Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories, 1963

By the late **1950**s, in response to the city and the region's developing tourism - the **HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION** was established in **1957** - publishing companies in Hong Kong began producing colored street maps with indexes and tourists atlases in the English and Chinese language showing main roads, railways and tourist information and important commercial buildings in the **CENTRAL DISTRICT**. For the first time, the relationships between the natural topography, ground vegetation and the built environment became foregrounded in these maps.

Crown Lands Survey, Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories, 1963



Hong Kong Tourist Association



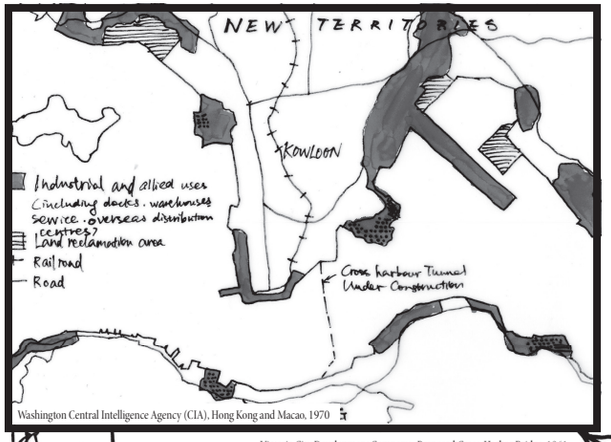
Menphy Li for Hai Kwang Press, New Map of Hong Kong, 1957

In the **1960s**, the government publications bureau released a **NUMBER OF MAPS** conducted by the Survey Office covering Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories that included updated transportation information including ferry routes. These publications were also available in other British stations.



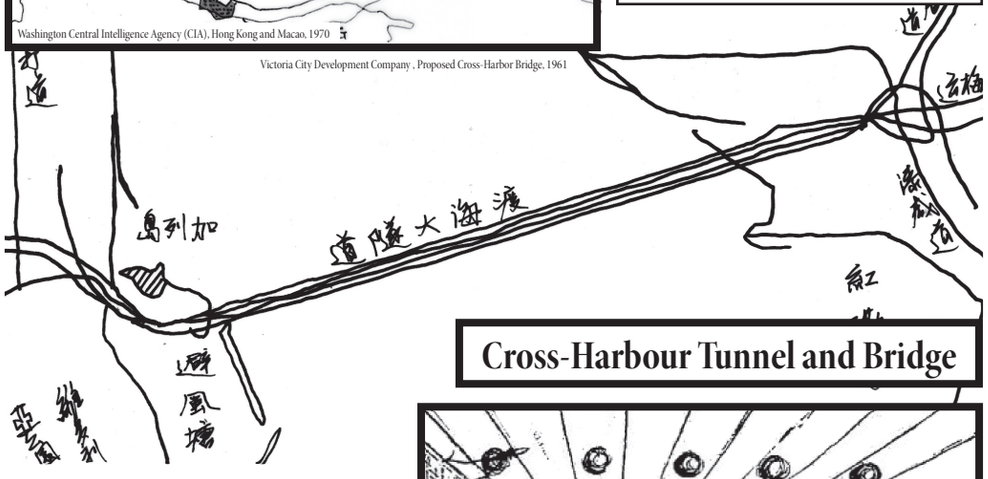
Menphy Li for Hai Kwang Press, New Map of Hong Kong, 1957

By the end of the **1960**s Hong Kong was already **AN INDUSTRIAL HUB** but the making of the industrial population en masse led to social discontent that escalated into the **RIOTS IN 1967**.



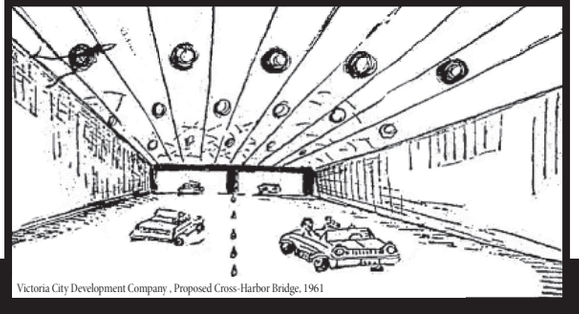
Washington Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Hong Kong and Macao, 1970

In **1961**, the chairman of **VICTORIA URBAN DEVELOPMENT CO.**, also chairman of Harriman Management Services Ltd., proposed a new **CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BRIDGE**. Both of them require landfill in Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter and Hung Hom. **1970** land utilization and urban area maps by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) showed the extent of industrial and urban development in Hong Kong. The population had grown to over 3.9 million, a far cry from the 600,000 at the end of War in **1945**. The Hong Kong Tourist Association and the Hong Kong Hotels Association published a **HONG KONG GUIDEBOOK** in **1968**.



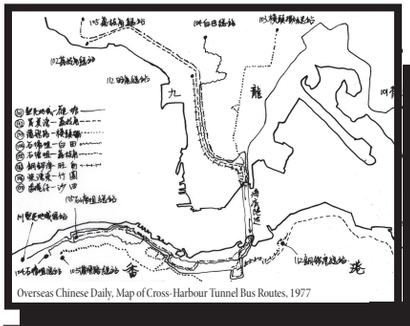
Victoria City Development Company , Proposed Cross-Harbor Bridge, 1961

Cross-Harbour Tunnel and Bridge

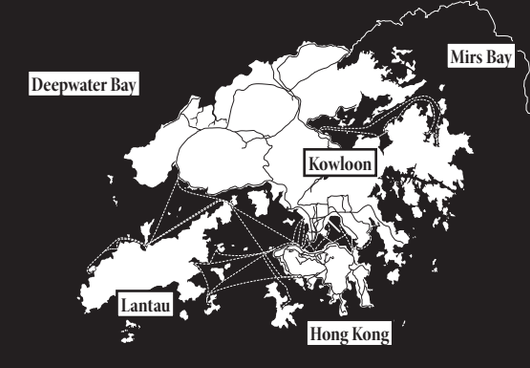


Victoria City Development Company , Proposed Cross-Harbor Bridge, 1961

In the **1970s**, newspapers like Overseas Chinese Daily News and Sun Sun published **DETAILED STREET MAPS** for their readers, many of whom were residing outside Hong Kong. The former published a **MAP OF BUS ROUTES** in **1977** that included the journey across the Cross-Harbour Tunnel.



Overseas Chinese Daily, Map of Cross-Harbour Tunnel Bus Routes, 1977



Under the Community Involvement Plan, launched in the early **1970**s, Hong Kong and Kowloon were divided into **SEVENTY-FOUR AREAS**, each of around 45,000 people, administered by an area committee of twenty appointed members from all sectors of the local community led by an unofficial member of the **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**.

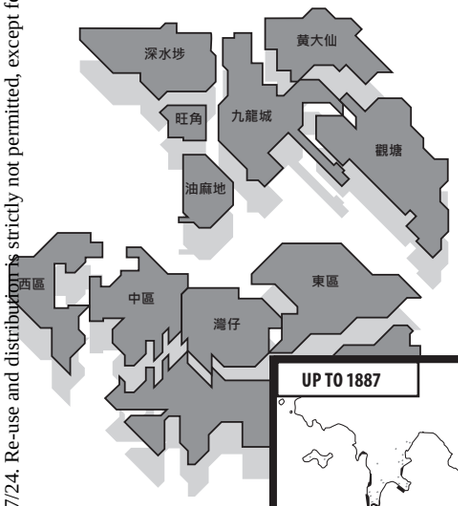
13 EIGHTEEN DISTRICTS

port, airport development and monitoring the grassroots

On December 19, **1984**, a **SINO–BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION** was signed between the People's Republic of China and the United Kingdom. It stipulates the sovereign and administrative arrangement over **HONG KONG AFTER July 1, 1997**, when the lease of the New Territories was set to expire according to the Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory. The bilateral treaty was signed based on the "one country, two systems" principle agreed between the two nations that the capitalist system and way of life in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) would remain unchanged until **2047**. The **1984** CIA map of Hong Kong and Macau visualizes the international boundary of the SAR and also the rail and road connections with the mainland.



Washington CIA, Hong Kong and Macau, 1984



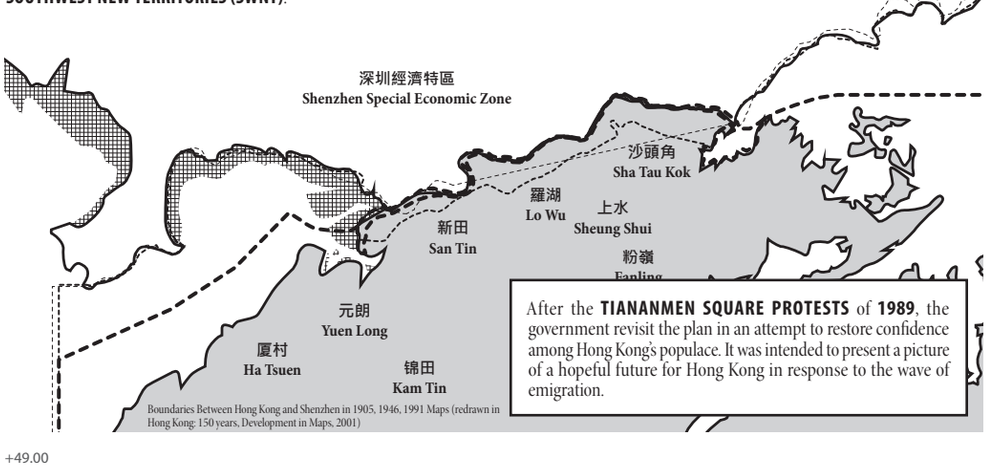
District Board, 1982

The **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME** commenced in **1982** with the establishment of a District Board and a **DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DMC)** in each of the districts in Hong Kong. The aim of the scheme is to achieve a more effective coordination of government activities in the provision of services and facilities at the district level, ensure that the government is responsive to district needs and problems and promote public participation in district affairs. It was also to monitor the grassroots, following the **1967** riots. In **1988** Tsuen Wan district is separated in to Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing. In **1994**, Mong Kok and Yau Tsim merged to become **YAU TSIM MONG** District.



Survey and Mapping Office, Reclamation and Development in Hong Kong, 1996

In the early **1980s**, the Hong Kong Government in anticipation of the **INCAPABILITY OF THE EXISTING AIRPORT** and container port to keep up with the growth of Hong Kong had blueprints drawn up for a new airport and container port. The plan was postponed owing to the uncertainty of Hong Kong's future. In October **1986**, the Hong Kong government Development Progress Committee (DPC) adopted the first sub-regional development strategy the **SOUTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES (SWNT)**.

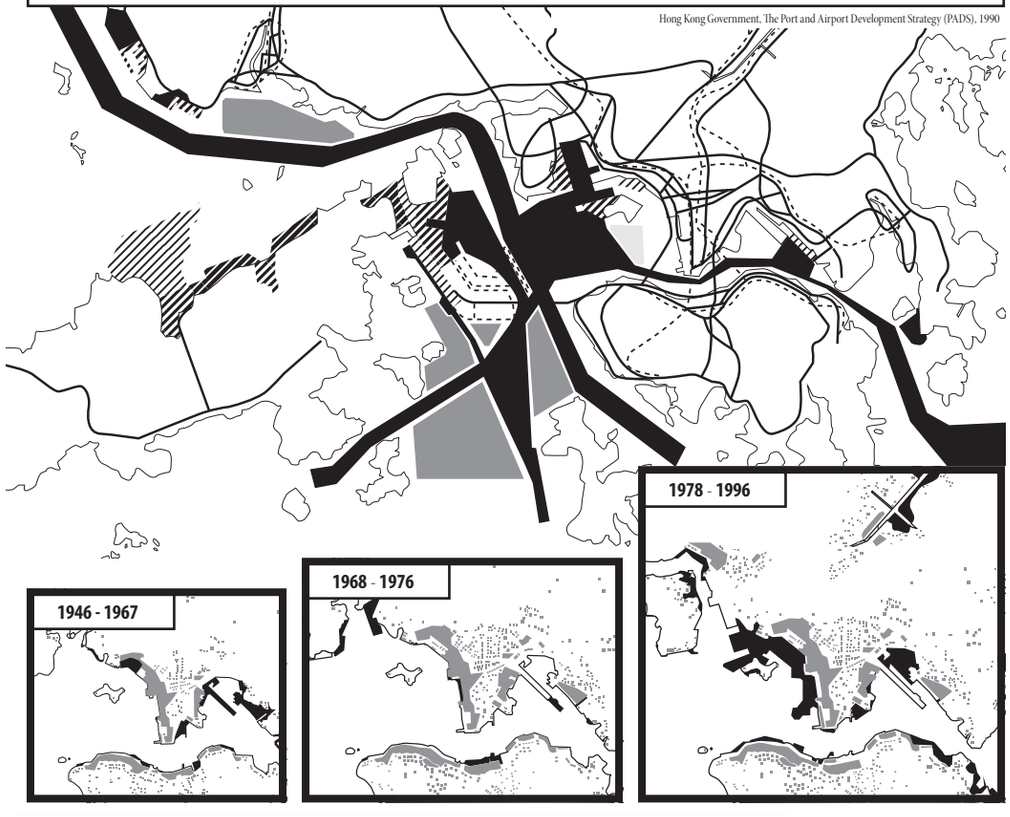


Boundaries Between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in 1905, 1946, 1991 Maps (redrawn in Hong Kong: 150 years, Development in Maps, 2001)

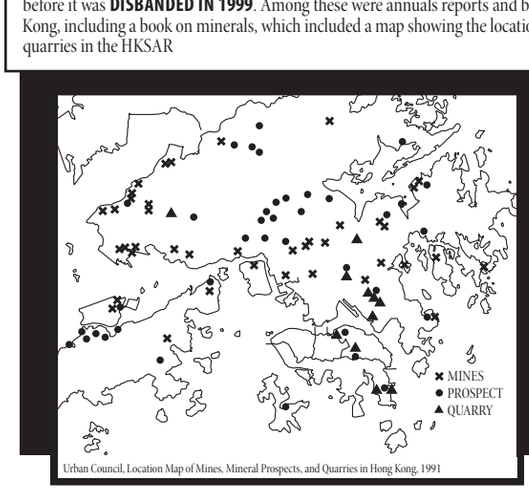
After the **TIANANMEN SQUARE PROTESTS** of **1989**, the government revisit the plan in an attempt to restore confidence among Hong Kong's populace. It was intended to present a picture of a hopeful future for Hong Kong in response to the wave of emigration.

Following the completion of the integrated **POST AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (PADS)** better known as the Rose Garden Project in **1989**, a series of major infrastructure projects in relation to the new Airport and port expansion were announced. In **1990**, the **TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW (TDSR)** was introduced to review the strategic planning framework for the whole of Hong Kong. Concurrently, the **SWNT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW (SWNT DRS)** was initiated to review the planning proposals and to devise an updated long-term, integrated land use transport environment plan for the sub-region.

Hong Kong Government, The Port and Airport Development Strategy (PADS), 1990



The **HONG KONG URBAN COUNCIL** (first established in **1883** as the Sanitary Board), which was responsible for municipal services in Hong Kong and Kowloon, published thirty-three titles of books (twenty-one in English) before it was **DISBANDED IN 1999**. Among these were annuals reports and books on the flora and fauna of Hong Kong, including a book on minerals, which included a map showing the locations of mines, mineral prospects, and quarries in the HKSAR



Urban Council, Location Map of Mines, Mineral Prospects, and Quarries in Hong Kong, 1991



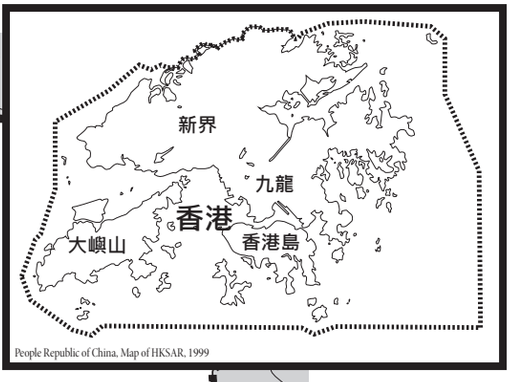
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14 RE-NEGOTIATING BORDER

from British Hong Kong to Hong Kong Special Adminstrative Region

On **July 1, 1997**, Britain handed Hong Kong over to the People's Republic of China. The boundary between the SAR and Shenzhen was modified.

Hong Kong And Vicinity by Washington CIA, Map of Hong Kong, showing SAR Boundary and Shenzhen, 1998



People Republic of China, Map of HKSAR, 1999

In **1898**, the **QING GOVERNMENT** set the border to be the shortest line between Deep Bay and Mirs Bay including the two bays. There was no border control then and the Chinese from the mainland were free to cross the border at any time. After **1949**, the end of China's civil war, the British established the **FRONTIER CLOSED AREA** - a restricted area to secure the border and control border movement. The area was expanded in **1962** and was modified in **1997**. It remained the same until **2013** when the Hong Kong Government reduced it in three stages.

Shenzhen
Nantou
Lo Wu
Tai Pang Wan (Mirs Bay)
Hau Hoi Wan (Deep Bay)
Shekou
Plover Cove Reservoir
Zhu Jiang Kou
Hoi Ha
Tolo, Harbor
New Territories
High Island Reservoir
Tai Lam Chung Reservoir
Chek Lap Kok Airport (opens 2 July 1998)
Kau Sai Chau
Stonecutters Island
Hong Kong Island
Lantau Island
Aberdeen
West Lamma Channel
Stanley
Cheung Chau
Lamma Island
Soko Islands
Po Toi Islands

Hong Kong Special Adminstrative Zone

Since **2006**, the Hong Kong Government began proposing to **REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE RESTRICTED AREA**, from 2800 square kilometers to 400 square kilometers in three stages in **2012**, **2013** and **2016**. The exercise seeks to reduce the Frontier Closed Area to the minimum necessary for the protection of public order and border security, obviating the need for local residents and visitors alike to obtain Closed Area Permits to access the area.

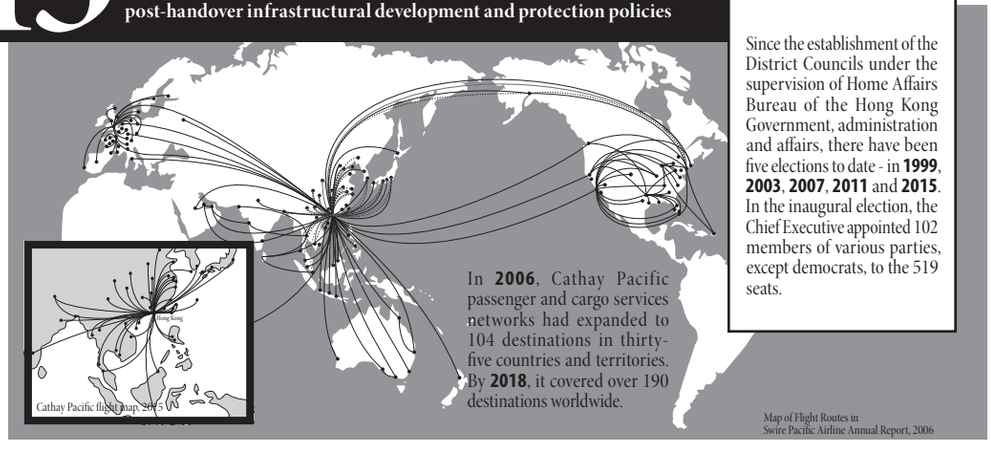


From July 1, **1997** to December 31, **1999**, the former district boards were replaced by provisional district boards. These were in turn replaced with eighteen district councils on January 1, **2000**.

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15 EXPANDING GLOBAL NETWORKS

post-handover infrastructural development and protection policies



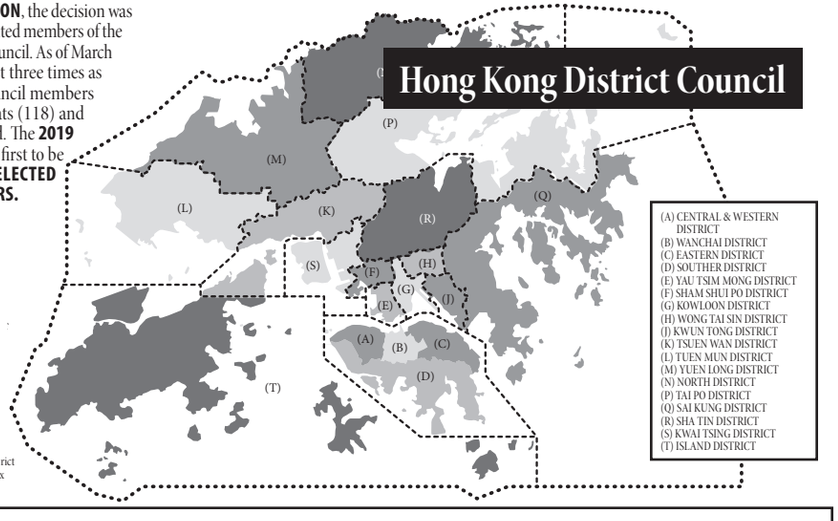
In **2006**, Cathay Pacific passenger and cargo services networks had expanded to 104 destinations in thirty-five countries and territories. By **2018**, it covered over 190 destinations worldwide.

Map of Flight Routes in Swire Pacific Airline Annual Report, 2006

Since the establishment of the District Councils under the supervision of Home Affairs Bureau of the Hong Kong Government, administration and affairs, there have been five elections to date - in **1999**, **2003**, **2007**, **2011** and **2015**. In the inaugural election, the Chief Executive appointed 102 members of various parties, except democrats, to the 519 seats.

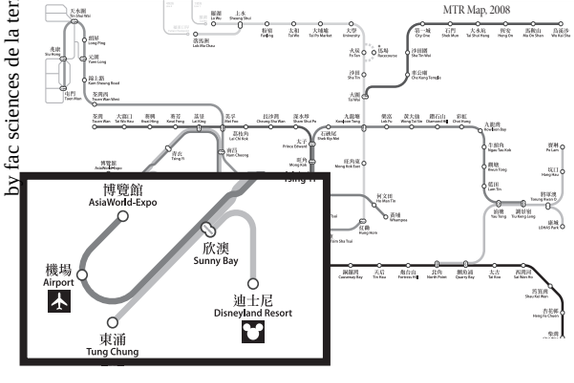
Hong Kong District Council

After the **2015 ELECTION**, the decision was made to abolish appointed members of the Hong Kong District Council. As of March **2019**, there are almost three times as many pro-Beijing council members (327) as pro-democrats (118) and localists (6) combined. The **2019 ELECTION** will be the first to be conducted with only **ELECTED DISTRICT COUNCILORS.**



Electoral Affairs Commission, District Council Electoral Boundaries Index Map, 2011

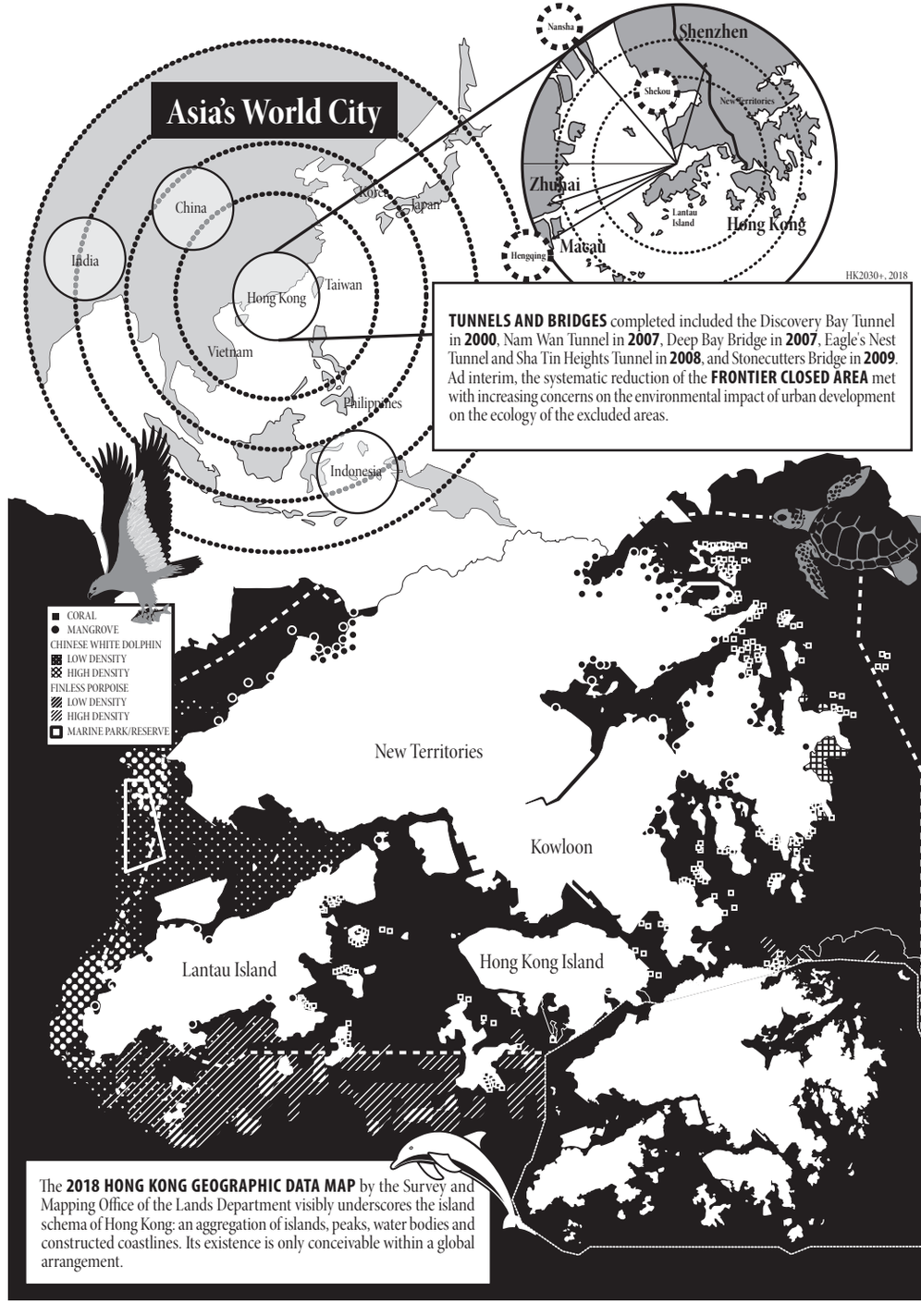
DISNEYLAND HONG KONG opened on Lantau Island in **2005**. It was the fifth Disneyland to open in the world and the second in Asia after Disneyland Tokyo. The theme park and the purpose-built MTR Disneyland Resort Line are among many major infrastructure projects completed in the first decade of the Handover.





These include the completion of MTR Tseung Kwan O Line in **2002**, KCR West Rail in **2003**, KCR Ma On Shan Rail in **2004**, the extension of the Airport Express to AsiaWorld-Expo in **2005**, KCR Lok Ma Chau Spur Line in **2007**, and MTR Kowloon Southern Link between East Rail Line and West Rail Line from Hung Hom Station to Nam Cheong Station via East Tsim Sha Tsui Station and Austin Station in **2009**.

Updated maps incorporating the infrastructural developments present HKSAR as a highly networked **"ASIA'S WORLD CITY"** – a label that the government proffered since **2001**. In **2017**, the **DEVELOPMENT BUREAU AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT** released a series of maps showing the centrality and convenience of Hong Kong. Each major hub in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) such as Shekou, Nansha and Hengqin in Zhuhai was within a 2 hour reach by ground transportation from the city. Every city of Asia is within a five-hour flight duration.



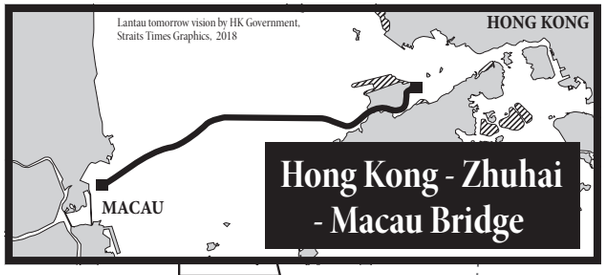
TUNNELS AND BRIDGES completed included the Discovery Bay Tunnel in **2000**, Nam Wan Tunnel in **2007**, Deep Bay Bridge in **2007**, Eagle's Nest Tunnel and Sha Tin Heights Tunnel in **2008**, and Stonecutters Bridge in **2009**. Ad interim, the systematic reduction of the **FRONTIER CLOSED AREA** met with increasing concerns on the environmental impact of urban development on the ecology of the excluded areas.

The **2018 HONG KONG GEOGRAPHIC DATA MAP** by the Survey and Mapping Office of the Lands Department visibly underscores the island schema of Hong Kong: an aggregation of islands, peaks, water bodies and constructed coastlines. Its existence is only conceivable within a global arrangement.

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16 REGIONAL IMAGINATIONS

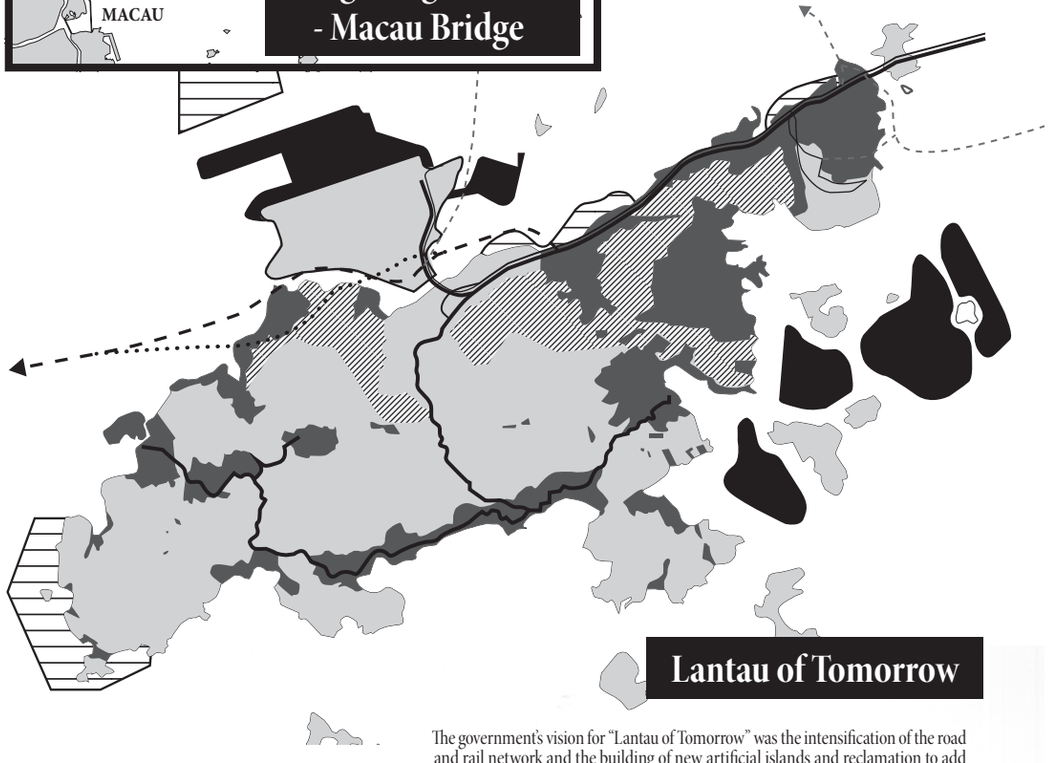
from Pearl River Delta to Greater Bay Area and environmental consequences



Hong Kong - Zhuhai - Macau Bridge

Hong Kong is strategizing its future, at least up till **2030**. With the completion of the **HONG KONG-ZHUHAI-MACAO BRIDGE** in **2018**, the cities of the Greater Bay Area will be directly linked to the city via Lantau Island.

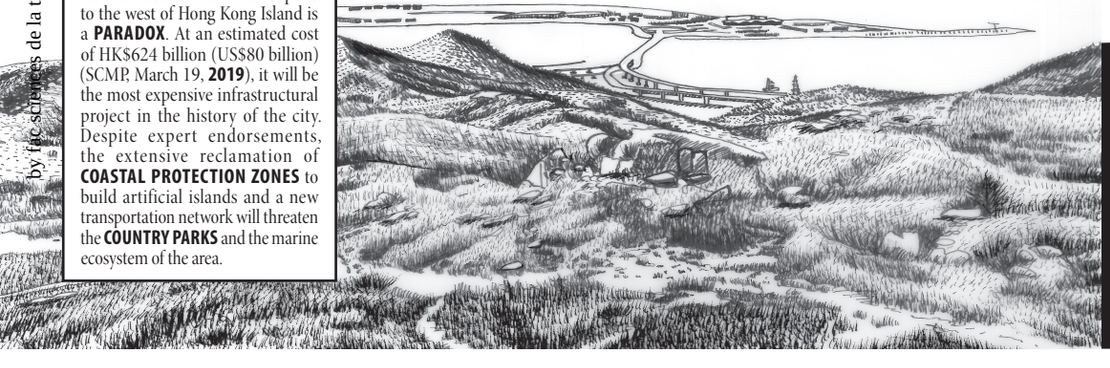
Lantau tomorrow vision by HK Government, 2018



Lantau of Tomorrow

The government's vision for "Lantau of Tomorrow" was the intensification of the road and rail network and the building of new artificial islands and reclamation to add **WW HECTARES OF LAND** to accommodate a ten-fold increase in population from its existing **2018** population of 124,000.

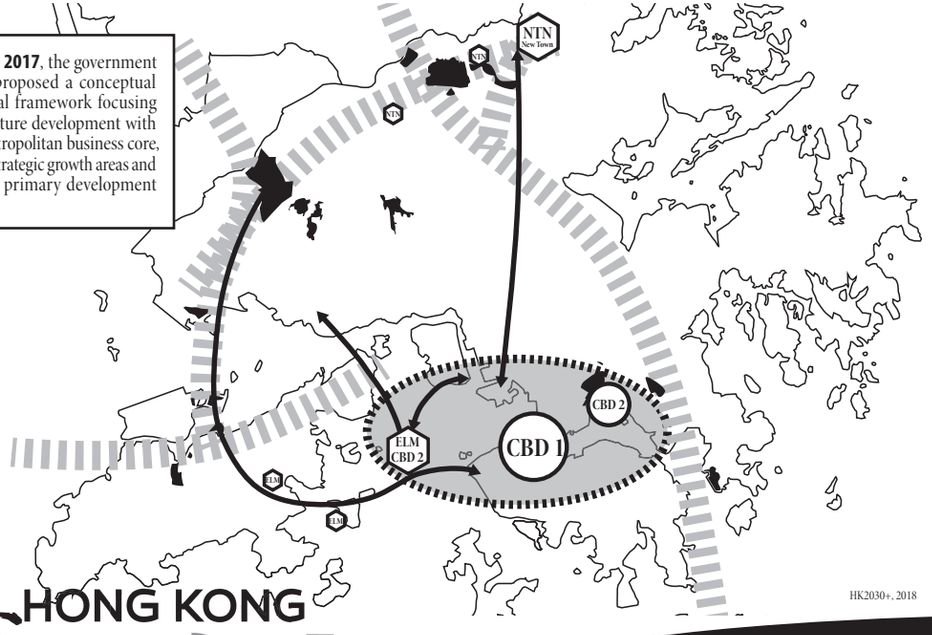
The creation of a new metropolis to the west of Hong Kong Island is a **PARADOX**. At an estimated cost of HK$624 billion (US$80 billion) (SCMP, March 19, **2019**), it will be the most expensive infrastructural project in the history of the city. Despite expert endorsements, the extensive reclamation of **COASTAL PROTECTION ZONES** to build artificial islands and a new transportation network will threaten the **COUNTRY PARKS** and the marine ecosystem of the area.



In **2030**, built development will take up **28% OF THE TOTAL LAND AREA**. This is an increase of over 16% from the **2018** coverage. The **METRO AREA** will be expanded to 76.2% from 58.8% in **2018**. "Active design considerations" will be incorporated in the "planning for a **LIVABLE HIGH-DENSITY CITY.**" Considerations include, green and blue space planning, rejuvenating the urban fabric - 326,000 private housing units will be aged seventy and above by **2046** - providing adequate land and space for economic growth, creating development capacity for **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH** by considering land supply and supporting transport network.



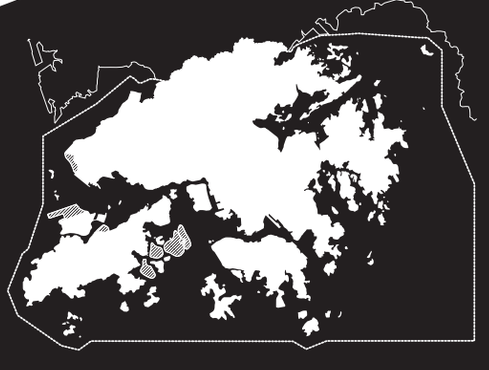
From **2017**, the government has proposed a conceptual spatial framework focusing on future development with a metropolitan business core, two strategic growth areas and three primary development axes.



HK2030+, 2018

香港 HONG KONG 2030+

Hong Kong **2030**+ is foregrounded as a **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT** exercise. Underneath the colorful optimism lies a clear sense of the inevitable, that is, any public opinions and impact can only be understood within the time frame of the present to **2046**. The contests between empires, colonies, nations, states, cities, districts, nature, artifice, communities have come full circle in that a new kind of imperial imaginary has emerged - one predicated on interconnected islands, mobile labor forces and fluid spaces of production.



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Hong Kong is a contested place. From the confrontations between the Communists and the colonialists, the capitalists and the workers, to the showdown between the Chinese and the localists, the police and the people, development and environment, Hong Kong is in a perpetual state of crisis. In the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the Ming Chinese and Portuguese vied over it for their maritime empires. By the seventeenth century, the Qing Chinese had built walled cantonments to keep out the Dutch, French and others. Scottish and French naval hydrographers drew it as part of the Canton Peninsula. In the late eighteenth century, it was again perceived as an island on the South China coast by the Qing Chinese navy, the British East India Company and by American cartographers. By the nineteenth century, it was a checkpoint place in the overlapping networks of Qing Chinese, the British East India Company and other Europeans. In the mid-nineteenth century, it was a territory contested between the British and the Qing Chinese empires, and reimagined from a walled fortress to an island territory to an expanded colonial territory of islands and peninsula.

Maps are compelling ways to convey cartographic information but they are also distortions of the reality they claim to represent. Insofar as they are used for reference and navigation, they are easily used as political and ideological instruments. The maps of the British Empire and the East India Company in the nineteenth century present imperial grandeur. In the twentieth century, maps continued to play an important role in national political strategy, often by creative narratives with vivid images that influenced the people. By the 1930s, Hong Kong was a modernizing city and an occupied territory during World War Two, a developing industrial city with aviation ambitions in the 1950s and building regional networks in the geopolitically tumultuous 1960s. The introduction of District Offices saw the decline of the kaifong associations from the 1970s as Hong Kong embarked on the expansion of its port and airport. The re-negotiation of territory and border, the handover and post-handover projects and policies encounter a millennium phase of globalization, as regional imaginations of Hong Kong face ecological urgencies.

The sixteen episodes constitute a critical account of the compounding narratives that produce and define Hong Kong's territoriality and situate it as a global entity. The maps present how geography shapes not only history but also the future.

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Before the cultural content of the map can be naturalized out of existence, the natural content of the landscape must be culturalized into existence. This is a labor of culture, it is a labor of identifying, of bounding, of naming, of inventorying... it is a labor of identifying...

It is precisely to the extent that the map culturalizes the natural that the cultural production the map is must be naturalized in turn, this to make it easier to accept – as nature – the historically contingent landscape the society that wields the map has brought into being. But if we are to understand how this process actually works, that is, how maps accomplish this tremendous labor, we must turn to the map, and not one from a distant time or place, or one marginalized by its origins within our society, but one from the heart, one from the core…[1]

— Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps,* 1992

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2
NOIRS:
The City, the Woman and Other Spaces

In the 1960s, two particular film genres – the melodrama and the noir thriller set in working class and high-society Hong Kong – presents an assemblage of urban interior spaces inhabited by the female protagonist. Released amid the city's modernization and industrialization, and narrated through a sequence of actual locations and full-size sets, the films ostensibly masked the geopolitical tensions that culminated in the riots of 1967. Yet the two genres, one depicting the aspirations of the working class and the other personifying the need for the upper class to do good for the society in the form of the female vigilante, foreground the increasing inequality produced by the city's modernization and situate a genealogy of cosmopolitan Hong Kong within Cold War regional exigencies. The city undergoing construction was revealed through glimpses from the interior, depicted in painted backdrops, panoramic aerial sweeps of the coastal skyline and close-ups of modern building types, such as the house, the apartment building, the factory, the hospital, the car park, the highway. The working-class woman typified the figure of modernization whose place in the city was largely defined by her home, workspace and new leisure spaces such as the movie theaters and dance halls. The high society lady vigilante embodied the transnational figure equally at home in the modern interiors of the house and the bold, technological spaces of the "global sixties," and the streets and dark back alleys. Considered alongside contemporaneous depiction of the city's architecture and interior, how were the lady vigilante and her private other space, and the factory girl and her communal interior spaces, mobilized in the construction of an aspirational yet volatile Hong Kong identity?

Black Rose (*Hak Mui Gwai*) is a 1965 film produced by the Rose Motion Picture Company. The story focuses on the double lives of two high-society sisters who disguised themselves as the masked figure "Black Rose" to steal from the rich and help the poor. The main plot focuses on the theft of a blue diamond that the owner Mr. Lee staged in order to benefit from the high insurance premium. The sisters, on discovering that the "Black Rose" has been blamed for the theft, decide to steal it for real. In addition to another plot to steal an expensive jade statue belonging to yet another rich merchant, Mr. Yeung, and the arrival of an investigator sent by the insurance company, the Chen sisters take their audiences in and out of their own villa, from their secret underground chamber to their boudoir and their spacious chandelier-lit living room to other equally opulent living rooms and into the back alleys where the others – the urban poor – live.

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The noir spy-thriller genre in Hong Kong that emerged in the late 1950s through the 1960s was influenced by the James Bond series that began in 1962.[1] Particular to Hong Kong is the predominance of the female protagonist in the Cantonese-language noir thrillers, way before Hollywood introduced *Jane Bond* in 1975 or the ABC television crime drama series, *Charlie's Angels*, which aired from 1976 to 1981. The movie based on the television series was released in late 2000. Though it shares the characterization of the female protagonists as beautiful, physically skilled and intelligent women, the movie emphasizes comedy over drama. For the Hong Kong noir films with female vigilantes and their American counterparts, the combination of beauty, brains and brawn is a recurring trope that persists into the present. Taking into consideration contemporary critiques of the woman figure as the stereotypical sexualized subject, it is nevertheless the double identity of the female protagonist in the Hong Kong noir thriller that allows her to navigate the modern city in construction and its other side. Demurely dressed in a variety of on-trend fashion styles, and equally adept at ballroom dancing and in scaling walls and windows, the female vigilante is the socialite that combats injustice with equal skill and empathy. An aspirational figure whose social status is unattainable by the majority of working-class women, she provides dramatic relief from the routineness and banality of factory work and housework.

The film *Black Rose* opens to loud shouts of "Black Rose! Black Rose!" (in Cantonese Chinese) as the audience sees a figure dressed in black run out of an upper floor room, jump over a staircase railing, cartwheel onto a balcony and disappear into the dark night as policemen come running into what seems to be a large living room. The next scene jump-cuts into another setting where the black figure jumps into an alley lined with dilapidated houses and throws a bundle through the upper window. We discover it is a bundle of cash when a sleeping man is woken up by the bundle of cash wrapped with a fabric black rose. In a subsequent scene, the elder Chen sister has just returned from stealing the blue diamond from Lee's residence. After parking her car in the garage, she enters a secret passage behind a movable brick wall into a room where the stolen loot is kept. She then leaves the heavily gated room, goes up a flight of stairs and opens yet another secret mechanized door into her dress closet and through it into her boudoir, where she changes from her black vigilante attire into her silk dressing gown. The existence of the other space in the house, privy only to the three women occupants in the house – the two sisters and their housekeeper – set the tone for the dual worlds and their respective urbanisms in the rest of the film. In a reversal of the figure of Maria in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, who goes up from the underground city to the pinnacle where the rich conduct their lives, the Black Rose goes out into the

dark back alleys where the impoverished laboring majority dwells.

Also released in 1965 was *Elevator Girl* (*Din Tai Neui Long*), produced by the Shun Yee Film Company, starring the same female lead, Nam Hung.[2] Here, instead of the wealthy upper-class lady vigilante, Nam is a young working-class woman whose job is to take passengers up and down the commercial and office building in the elevator, a new machine introduced to a modernizing Hong Kong that was in the process of becoming a high-rise city. The elevator, as the main working place of the protagonist, is the space for the courtship between its elevator girl and the manager of a real estate and construction company. Equally significant, if not more so, it is instrumental in introducing to the audience the personalities and spaces that inhabit the new composite (mixed-use) commercial building typology. From the street to the pristine white lobby, to the upper floor tea house and minimalist interiors of the offices above, the elevator frames the desirable urban aesthetic of the emerging middle-class – one that the lower working-class aspires towards and which is explicitly personified by the money-obsessed father of the elevator girl.

Throughout the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, the two dominant genres in Hong Kong Cantonese cinema – the noir thriller that showcased high-society lifestyles and the melodrama set in the ordinary spaces of the working class – mirrored the city's transformation into a modern metropolis as well as the difficult urban realities and social inequalities experienced by its populace. Law Kar traced this development back to postwar Shanghai noir, which was heavily influenced by Hollywood and the move of numerous Shanghai filmmakers to Hong Kong in the final stages of China's civil war.[3] While the narration, styling and visual techniques were not as elaborate as the bigger-budget Hollywood productions (by Alfred Hitchcock, Otto Preminger, Orson Welles and Billy Wilder), the Shanghai filmmakers had already developed a stronger urban sensibility that anticipated the neo-noir and television melodramas of the subsequent decades. Poshek Fu, in his analysis of youth culture and Cantonese cinema in the 1960s, situated the emerging voices of discontent among the masses – a new generation who were more informed about the world surrounding them and who had greater access to economic opportunities. It was this audience that the marketing strategies of the Cantonese filmmakers, facing strong competition from Mandarin cinema, were directed towards.[4]

Analyzing Hong Kong neo-noir, film scholars like Esther Cheung, Esther Yau and Gina Marchetti discuss the female body and gaze as a counterpoint to the male-centered narratives. Cheung describes the cubicle in the subdivided public housing flat of the teenage female lead as an "interior claustrophobic space" that is "safe, intimate and erotic," in Fruit Chan's *Made in Hong Kong* (*Heung Gong*

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Jai Jou, 1997).[5] Marchetti analyzed the multiple personas of the female protagonist Lee and her final decapitation in *Running on Karma* (*Daai Jek Lou*, 2003), directed by Johnny To and Wai Ka-Fai, as a convergence of "noir's violent exoticism and its legacy of Orientalism" that pushes the plot and sustains the self-reflexive storytelling.[6] Wang Lingzhen's *Chinese Women's Cinema: Transnational Contexts*, in discussing women authorship and roles in Mandarin-language films, suggests that the rise of the first generation of professional woman directors across the three Chinese communities in the 1950s was closely tied to their own historical situations, geopolitical contexts, and personal backgrounds.[7] The two most prominent Shanghai émigrés were actresses-turned-directors offering films centering on love, marriage, and women's roles in a modern, urban society. Targeted at youthful female audiences, these upbeat pieces were well-received, and were precedents to the next generation of women directors. The two women directors in the 1970s, Cecile Tang Shu-Shuen and Kao Pao-Shu, directed a modest yet notable repertoire of productions.

According to media studies scholar Yau Ching, US-trained Tang's first film *The Arch* (*Dung Fu Yan*, 1970) distinguishes itself by its use of the female gaze, frozen shots and multi-viewpoint first-person camera angles that heighten female subjectivity and desire. These create a more deeply felt understanding of the female sense of time and space.[8] Her film *China Behind* (*Joi Gin Jung Gwok*, 1974) is said to have ushered in the Hong Kong New Wave.[9] Banned for thirteen years by the British Government, the film chronicles the perilous journey of a group of college students from Mainland China to Hong Kong at the height of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. It focused on presenting a documentary and realistic style using freeze-frames, expressionistic color tones and an intense mix of Mao broadcast, patriotic songs, percussion music and lengthy passages of silence.[10] Her final film, *Hong Kong Tycoon* (*Bou Fat Wu*, 1979), set in contemporary late 1970s Hong Kong, exposes common social problems in the increasingly capitalistic metropolis.[11]

In contrast, the noir films of the 1950s and 1960s were predominantly shot in studios with constructed sets and painted backdrops. In her analysis of *The Wild, Wild Rose* (*Ye Mui Gwai Ji Lyun*, 1960) as a melodrama musical noir hybrid, Lisa Oldham Stokes emphasizes that instead of location shooting, "the urban visuals register as absence rather than presence with stage sets and interiors substituting [narrative city space], suggesting an insular, female space."[12] Rather than understanding these constructed sets and interiors as absent and insular spaces, however, I argue that these other urban spaces are analogous to the modernization of the city in that on the one hand, they function as representations of what modern Hong Kong would look like; and on the other, they

form a collective commentary on an increasingly unequal city of contrasts. At the same time, these fictional spaces, the architecture of scenography, are different from the sites that they reflect or comment upon. As with Michel Foucault's characterization of heterotopias as places within which several times and spaces coexist, the cinematic boudoir, living room, vault, villa, back alley, tenement, elevator, tea house, dance hall and other urban sites are "places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality."[13]

Private yet public to the audience's gaze, the feminine domestic space coexists with and is a continuum of the modernizing city. The shiny black convertible driving past the newly-completed public housing estates and up the hill to the modern villa (*The Heroine*, *Neui Tit Daam*, 1967) or the car parked in the garage of the house (*Black Rose*, 1965) extends Charles Rice's study of the "doubleness" of the domestic interior, as "a reaction to the alienation and disjunctions of the modernizing city, as well as being complicit with the forms of surveillance and governance produced by and through the city."[14] The double identity of the socialite-vigilante simultaneously reinforces and challenges Rice's notion of the modern interior as "the consolidation of specific gendered and familial roles, for the linking of a consumer culture to the attainment of domestic arrangements that demonstrated acceptable norms, and for practices of self-representation in the context of domestic life."[15] She maintains her double identity within the familiarity of her home and from without, changing between her masked urban vigilante persona and the lady hostess of the interior. Conversely, the factory girl, typically residing in a multi-family tenement or a dormitory, dwells in the spaces of industrialized population in Hong Kong that are beyond the geographies of the socialite-vigilante who after all, does not need to work. Independently, they traverse the city's urban exterior replete with new multi-story concrete buildings and occasionally meet in the interior spaces of leisure.

As with their Hollywood counterparts, Hong Kong film directors drew references from the new architecture in the city. In Alfred Hitchcock's noir thriller *North by Northwest* (1959) for example, modern architecture played a catalytic role in situating the urban-historical context and in the unfolding of the suspense. The film opens with the glass curtain wall of the C.I.T. Building in Manhattan, designed by Wallace K. Harrison and Max Abramovitz.[16] This is in line with other contemporaneous films set in New York City that used the high-rise glass curtain walled office buildings that

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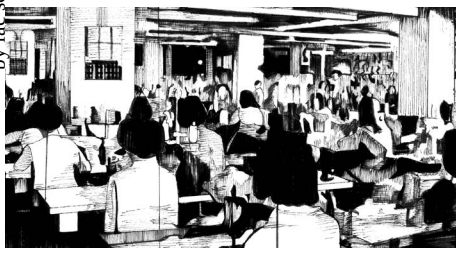
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were appearing all over midtown Manhattan – most famously the Lever House by Skidmore Owings and Merrill, and the Seagram Building by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe – as their urban establishing shots. Meanwhile, the large factory in which the female protagonist worked in *The Forsaken Love* (*Ching Cheun Mui Gwai*, 1968) directed by Chiang Wai-Kwong is resonant of Billy Wilder's expansive office space set create through forced perspective in *The Apartment* (1960).[17] **[1] [2]**

Released in a city undergoing the processes of modernization and industrialization, and narrated through a sequence of predominantly full-size sets and painted backdrops with the infrequent outdoor location, noir and melodrama films ostensibly masked the geopolitical tensions marked by increasing conflicts between the government and anti-colonial factions in society that culminated in the riots of 1967.[18] Yet the two genres, one depicting the aspirations of the working class and the other personifying the need for the upper class to do good for society in the female vigilante, foreground the increasing inequality produced by the city's modernization and situate a genealogy of cosmopolitan Hong Kong within Cold War regional exigencies.[19] It is important to note that in conjunction with these films, the popular women's magazine *Liangyou* (Young Companion), which was founded in Shanghai earlier in the twentieth century and moved its base to Hong Kong after 1949, was an important platform that presented the doubleness of Hong Kong: the enviable picturesque lifestyles of the young starlets, contemporary fashions and artistic and leisure pursuits on the one hand, and the urbanization and industrialization of the city on the other.[20] The juxtaposition of modern life lived out in the increasingly abundant leisure spaces in the city (cafes, tea houses, dance clubs, hotel bars and restaurants, etc.) could be found in every issue of *Liangyou* throughout the sixties.[21]

Meanwhile, English readers of the *South China Morning Post* were frequently informed of the changing faces of a city undergoing development, replete with advertisements of who were and what was making the city.[22] Hong Kong was Otis Elevator Company's first Asian base and throughout the sixties and seventies a chronology of the many buildings that the company equipped in Central could be chronicled through its advertisements that presented the rapidly changing skyline of the city. Never before was the construction of a city so visibly foregrounded in public print media as it was in the sixties.[23] In contrast, the social unrest that was building up and that exploded here and there in the city was not in the narrative, or even in the background contexts of the melodramas and noir

1 The factory interior in *The Forsaken Love*,1968





2 The office interior in *The Apartment*, 1960

thrillers.[24] Their celebration of the forms of modernity in the city, their seemingly uncritical stance on the stratification of the wealthy and the working class and their exclusion of political discontent and social blight extend Thorstein Veblen's 1899 theory on the rise of the institution of leisure as a direct consequence to the formation of the industrialized population.[25] Movies, as commodified leisure in rapidly industrializing 1950s and 1960s Hong Kong, meant that the conspicuous activity of movie-going was directly tied to the growing influence of mass culture among the working class.

Amid a groundswell of popular discontent and leftist sentiments, as spaces in the city, particularly industrial areas in Kowloon, Central, and North Point, became sites of increasingly violent confrontation, these Cantonese films hit a peak with over 120 released in theaters in Hong Kong and in Southeast Asia, four times more than Mandarin-language films in 1966 (126 Cantonese versus 49 Mandarin).[26] By 1967, the number of Cantonese films had dropped substantially as Mandarin films began to flood the market. In early August 1967, a series of riots and police raids on two high-rise composite buildings – Kiu Kwan Mansion (1963) and Metropole Building (1972) – in North Point, saw a complete turnaround in the meanings of the spaces in these buildings.[27] Celebrated as new, modern and desirable in *Elevator Girl*, they were now complicit in the confrontation between the leftists and the police. The elevator, momentarily, was a highly charged space which the tenants used with trepidation. The unfinished first two floors of the Metropole Building, which later in 1972 were taken up by the Sunbeam Theatre, were used as a triage center by the leftists and eventually raided.

It was only in the 1990s that the riots of 1967 began to show up in a few popular films such as John Woo's *Bullet in the Head* (*Dip Hyut Gaai Tau*), released in 1990, and Clifton Ko's *I Have a Date with Spring* (*Ngo Wo Cheun Tin Yau Go Yeuk Wui*), in 1994. Set during the height of the Vietnam War, Woo's film opens with picketing workers clashing with riot police at a factory estate, presumably

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in San Po Kong in Kowloon, the same district in which a labor dispute first broke out in a factory producing flowers in May 1967. This dispute led to large-scale riots between pro-Communists and the colonial government. [3] Ko's melodrama employs the night of the 1967 riots as a climacteric to set the interweaving narratives of the four protagonists in motion, one of whom ends up in war-torn Vietnam. In stark contrast, contemporaneous with the momentous events, the melodrama and noir thriller, with their modern sets and women protagonists, constructed a temporary environment of escape for the majority masses that were immersing themselves in the offerings of the modernizing city. How was the mid-century modern staged in these films set in industrializing Hong Kong? In the assemblage of architecture, urban spaces and interiors occupied and traversed by the female protagonist in relation to the depiction of the city's modernization, how was the woman mobilized for the construction of modern Hong Kong identity and place? In contemplating these questions, I posit that the woman's place in the noir and melodrama was analogous to the territory's identity in the region. As with the woman's oscillation between being the mistress of the domestic and the heroine of the urban, Hong Kong is embroiled in Sino-British bilateral disputes.



3 Picketing factory workers clash with riot police in the opening scene of *Bullet in the Head*, 1990.

THE *OTHER* WOMAN

The socialite hosts evening soirees in her villa and works in covertness in the city. The working-class woman works alongside many others in the new factory and high-rise office building and lives in shared accommodation. The Hong Kong of the 1950s resonates with Hannah Arendt's analysis of the character of modern society and feminine labor. "The fact that the modern age emancipated the working classes and the women at nearly the same historical moment," she wrote, "must certainly be counted among the characteristics of an age which no longer believes that bodily functions and material concerns should be hidden."[28] As with Aihwa Ong's incisive study of factory women in Malaysia, the introduction of industrial capitalist discipline into Hong Kong society likewise involves "resistance and assent to change in work patterns, consumption, group identity, serf-consciousness, and ultimately a greater synchronization of local life with the rhythm of advanced capitalist societies."[29]

Foregrounded in films like *The Forsaken Love* (1968) and *Her Tender Love* (*Long Yu Cheun Yat Fung*, 1969), the engagement of women in industrialized work saw the sharing of work and domestic

spaces, as many young single women worked in factories and lived in shared quarters with their fellow workers, and married women took factory work into their apartment homes, using their bedrooms or living spaces for sewing or the assembly of consumer objects. In contrast to Ong's study which reveals the contradictory experiences of factory women, the films perpetuate the gender stereotype of the poor factory girl who can only be rescued from her impoverished economic and social situation by a handsome rich man, typically the young handsome boss or good-for-nothing son of the boss. In this sense, the factory woman, while seemingly liberated from the oppression of domestic work and the family, is subject to the external control of industry and subservient to the expectations of the predominantly Chinese patriarchal society. Yet at the same time, the freedom to pursue her "own happiness" – to spend her own earned salary on herself, to choose her own partner and more – is evident of the increasing sense of self-determination over her own personal life separate from that of the family. Much more so than the socialite-vigilante, the factory woman, office lady and saleslady are the quintessential consumers of the burgeoning urban culture of the sixties.

The dramatic stories of the woman protagonists – the office or factory female worker and the Jane Bond or femme fatale – offered the audiences a refuge and momentary reprieve from the colonized Chinese society in a moment of self-awakening and in a city undergoing construction. In *Lady Black Cat* (*Neui Chaak Hak Ye Maau*), from 1966, directed by Chiang Wai-Kwong, the vigilante, a "plain Jane" secretary with a vivacious alter-ego "Wild Black Cat," retrieves a diamond brooch from smugglers and saves her boss, a mediocre detective, from a violent attack. The Chen sisters, two beguiling socialites who appear to spend most of their time hosting lavish parties in their modern villa with their high society friends, use the same house as the base for their vigilante activities and for their individual transformation into "Black Rose."[30] In 1966 alone, there were almost forty films of the noir thriller female vigilante genre. Others like *The Precious Mirror* (*Yuk Neui San Tau*, 1967), *The Heroine* (1967) and *Temptress of a Thousand Faces* (*Chin Min Mo Neui*, 1969) filmed in color, see the well-dressed well-heeled woman with smooth martial arts fighting moves take on villains bigger than herself.

For the women working in the textile or plastic factories and office buildings across the city, seeing her aspirational double on the big screen, weaving effortlessly between her own domestic sphere and the spaces in the city, offered momentary refuge from the humdrum routine of work. These high fashions were by then within reach in the many departmental stores that were opening up in the city. Many of these were modeled by the very stars themselves.[31] At the same time,

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the melodrama of the working-class woman – the elevator girl, the office lady, secretary, bar concierge, café and dim sum restaurant waitress – offered a relatable figure through her overcoming of daily challenges and her triumph over her romantic life. Navigating these filmic spaces in groups, the lead blends in with her group of "sisters" and still stands out as the neatly-dressed well-coifed fresh-faced beauty among the crowd. This was a standard formula in films such as *Girls are Flowers* (*Gu Neung Sap Baat Yat Do Fa*, 1966), *Colorful Youth* (*Choi Sik Ching Cheun*, 1966), *The Two Café Girls* (1963), *The Forsaken Love* (1968) and other working class girl melodramas of the 1960s. [4]



4 Above: The café interior in *Two Café Girls*,1963. Below: The café interior in *Elevator Girl*,1965.

Most of her time is spent in the new work space – the elevator, the office, the café and the dim sum restaurant in a new high-rise building – with corresponding work attire, makeup and hairstyles that saw fashion stores in the city emulating their designs. The crisp modern uniforms and attire of the elevator girl in *Elevator Girl* (1965), the office lady worker in *Blossom In Rainy May* (*Ng Yut Yu Jung Fa*, 1960), the waitress in *The Two Café Girls* and the dim sum restaurant waitress in *Queen of the Tea House* (*Dim Sum Wong Hau*, 1965) bought into the modern dress aesthetic that was becoming readily available and affordable in the emerging mass fashion market. Collections like "high fashion office work wear" were common and still are up till today.[32] The thousands of women, young and old, involved in factory work in textile factories producing clothing mostly for export, encountered first-hand the types of fashion that were already being replicated with increasing innovations made for the home market.[33]

Since the 1950s, many new movie theaters opened that catered to the increasing leisure-seeking population. There were thirty-three movie theaters with a total attendance of 900,000 in Hong Kong in 1952. Over fifty new movie theatres were built in the colony in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of these were in dense commercial and industrial districts, such as Wan Chai, Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei and San Po Kong, which offered late-night and multiple weekend show times. The working-class women constituted a large proportion of the movie-going public. The number of movie theaters doubled by 1959 and soared to 102 in 1967. The number of films reached 301 and total attendance peaked at ninety-eight million as the masses flocked to the movie theaters.[34] Limited cable distribution of television gave

way to wider tele diffusion that year and saw wider viewership that corresponded with the steady decline of movie audiences.[35] The decline in cinema audiences is not necessarily a direct consequence of the rise of television but, echoing the authors of *The Last Picture Show: Britain's Changing Film Audience*, "is caused by the same process underlying the decline in cinema, especially the breaking up of the working-class extended family."[36]

The transformation of the family structure in industrializing Hong Kong towards the nuclear family was set in place by the 1980s. With a population of 5 million in 1981, the average household size of 3.9 persons, compared to 4.9 in 1961 when the colony's population was at 3.1 million, meant the need for more housing, related amenities, schools and public services to accommodate the majority of the people.[37] In 1966, almost half the 3.8 million population in Hong Kong (excluding refugees) were female;[38] 39.2% of the population was economically active with the majority being industrial production workers (menial, semi-skilled and skilled), clerical and related workers, sales and service workers (such as hawkers, shopkeepers and others).[39] Of the working population, a third (13%) were women. The population rose to 4.4 million in 1976. The gender ratio remained similar, with 2.25 million males and 2.15 million females.[40] By this time, 80.4% of males were economically active and the percentage of working females rose to 43.6%. These statistics, which reflect Hong Kong's economic rise in the 1970s and 1980s, saw a surge of building development, infrastructure, housing and transportation. The late 1970s was the beginning of labor importation from the Philippines for domestic work, which continues to be on the rise till the present.[41] The implications for the types and spaces of leisure are multifold. The movie theater can no longer be conceived as a single-function building but is considered within a larger complex of related leisure activities and places. In these Hong Kong-made films that catered directly to the emerging industrialized working class – many of whom were first-generation citizens – the city narrated by the female lead protagonists is crucial in revealing an unabashed celebration of the emerging industrial modernism. Modernism's fleeting moment of euphoria fronted by the woman as she navigates the city's new white, bright and smooth building spaces disappears with the genre, never to appear again in any consolidated form.

THE *OTHER* ROOM

The female factory worker and office worker typified a figure of modernization whose spaces in the city were largely defined by her home and workspace. Her counterpart, the high society vigilante, was adept at traversing the modern house interior, the bold, technological

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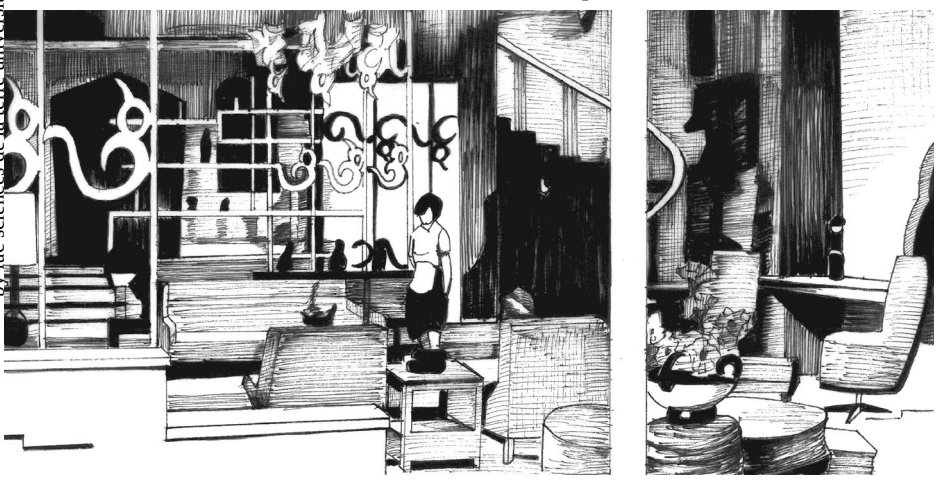
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spaces of the "global sixties," as well as the streets and dark back alleys. In the melodrama, the back alley or narrow street was a space where their social lives, familial activities, and romantic trysts were played out. The back alley serves as a visual and plot transition between the two facets of her life – work and home, lover and daughter.

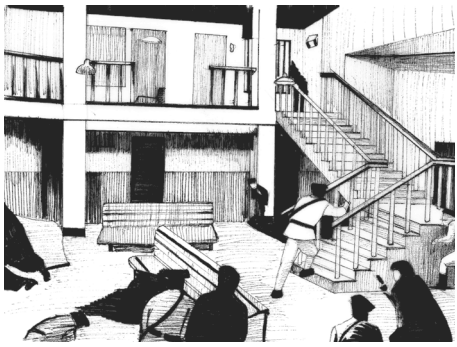
In the noir thriller, the back alley or passageway (underground tunnel) was the space where the two worlds met. Here, the highly-trained fighter replaces the well-coifed high-society lady as the central figure of the scene to take on the villains that personified the roughness and effects of inequality in the city. Here, the theatrical setting of the fight between Black Rose and the men of a street gang, contrasts with the underground canal chase scene in *The Dark Heroine Muk Lan-Fa* (*Neui Hak Hap Muk Laan Fa*, 1966). Whereas one foregrounded the narrative of injustice as Black Rose fought the men to save a young woman they were harassing in a setting in which such harassment was typified, the other foregrounded the underground infrastructure/other spaces that support the modern city.

The living room in the melodrama, far from being a private domestic space, was a place of gossip, communal exchanges and bonding among the women – in *Blossom in Rainy May*, the men were typically accompanying figures. The living room in the noir thriller, often much larger, was a space of public spectacle – the much-anticipated ball or the fancy dinner party – as well as a space of intrigue. A theft or murder took place there during or after a party, or it was the base where the woman protagonist was perfectly comfortable as host as well as intruder in her own space. Just a few years apart, the living room of the female protagonists with the bright yellow couch, gold and painted metal screens and balustrades and decorative items in assorted wood and pastel colors in *The Mysterious Sisters* (*San Tau Je Mui Fa,* 1969) gave an added multi-colored gaiety to the monochromatic interiors of previous films *The Precious Mirror*,



5 Living room in *The Mysterious Sisters*,1969.

The Dark Heroine Muk Lan-Fa and *Spy with My Face* (*Hak Mui Gwai Yu Hak Mui Gwai*, 1966). [5][6]



6 Living room in *The Dark Heroine Muk Lan-Fa*, 1966.

The living room functions as a spatial device, a transformer space of sorts, where the narrative takes a turn/twist. Because of its grandiose size, the audience will not get the full view of the living room. Instead, the camera pans this large space as it will later pan the city's skyline panorama, to reveal the plot as it unfolds in the space. Common to the films in which the living room of the house-villa or apartment-mansion is a central narrative space, is the presence of symmetry. The symmetrical hall with the grand sweeping staircase connote upper-class status – a recurrent trope used in the films to anchor the high society-can-do-good plot line.[42]

Meanwhile, the working-class bedroom was invariably a communal space – among family, friends, roommates and other women – of secrets, joys, tears and problem-solving. The bedroom is a family space in *Blossom in Rainy May* (1960) and *Queen of the Tea House* (1965). In contrast, the private boudoir or study of the lone female vigilante was a space of intrigue, the portal to a secret other space and where rescue schemes and other schemes were planned. No one else, except for that one trusted aide/accomplice/servant, was allowed in this modern technologized space – the secret passage from the large wardrobe in the bedroom of the elder Chan sister in *Black Rose* and the secret vault behind the bookshelf in the study room in *The Professionals* (*Gam Au*, 1967).

The spaces frequented by the working class, and where the high society woman made her rare appearances, were occasions where the two genres and classes meet, as in *Queen of the Tea House* (1965) and *The Two Café Girls* (1963). However, it was primarily through the working-class woman that we entered the popular leisure spaces that defined the social lives of the young industrialized class in the 1960s, as with the house party and bowling alley in *The Golden Cat* (*Fei Chaak Gam Si Maau*, 1967) and the cabaret in *The Forsaken Love* (1968). Through the young factory women, we see the training of an industrialized class and glimpse the beginning of the emancipation of women as they leave their homes and work and study in the newly built flatted factory complexes and school buildings, particularly the factory and night school in *The Forsaken Love* and the street set and bakery shop in *The Two Café Girls*.

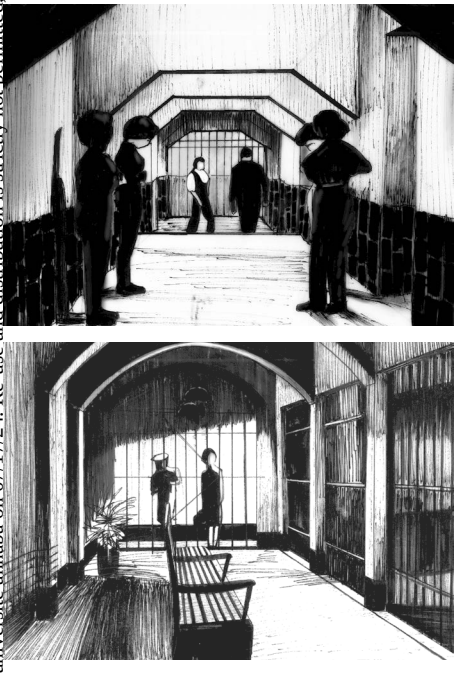
Far from everyday spaces, the other interior spaces in the noir thriller – the secret base of the criminal organization accessed through the living room of the apartment-mansion, the secret vault entered through the study in the house, the secret passageway and

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safe-room entered from the wardrobe in the boudoir etc. – were fictional counterparts to the staged "real" spaces in the other genre. As with the inaccessibility of the spaces of the wealthy higher society to the wider population and public, these other spaces offered both an imaginative form and aesthetic of "how the rich lived" and an exciting counterpart to the melodrama based on the exaggeration of recognizable everyday scenarios. Examples of these other spaces are the headquarters base of the Secret Criminal Organization in *Spy with My Face* (1966) and the secret vault within the house in *The Precious Mirror*. [7]

The sixties saw the burgeoning of working-class leisure as the city became dotted with movie theaters, amusement parks, tea cafes, restaurants, dance halls, night clubs and bowling alleys. Leisure venues such as the Oriental Theatre (1932-1981), Tai Ping Koon Tea Café (1964-), Lai Chi Kok Amusement Park (1949-1997) and Kai Tak Amusement Park (1965-1982) thrived with throngs of people at the weekends. Correspondingly, attention given to the spaces of the aspiring middle class – their domestic, work and leisure– saw an emergent interior design culture that first entered the spaces of the headquarters offices of multinational corporations, international hotel interiors and homes of the wealthy, and by the late-1960s the recognizable modern interior of the sixties was ubiquitous in the city. The interiors of *The Mysterious Sisters* (1969) looked right out of the pages of interior design magazines and were identical in terms of color tones and types of furnishings with those used in the Bond films.



7 Above: Interior of secret base in *Spy with My Face*, 1966. Below: Interior of secret vault in the house in *The Precious Mirror*,1967.

THE *OTHER* CITY

In the films, the city undergoing construction was revealed through glimpses from the interior, painted backdrops, panoramic sweeps and modern building types – the house, the apartment building, the factory, the hospital, the car park, the highway, etc. In the city, much attention in the local press and industry periodicals like *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* was given to building and urban development. For the expatriate architect-educators in the only architectural school in the city (like W.G. Gregory), architectural development in the city was often narrated in terms of dilemma

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and paradoxes. One piece, "The Architecture of Hong Kong… An Appraisal," subtitled by the question "Who is Guilty?" raised the question of the ubiquity of monotonous utilitarian construction in the city, without offering a productive way out.[43] This was the prevalent tone in most of the commentaries during this period.

The domestic environments and the bold geometry of the houses and apartment blocks were reminiscent of the prewar imagery of modern architecture that had enjoyed widespread circulation; and the housing blocks were similar to those in Britain and continental Europe and closer to home, in decolonizing Malaya and Singapore, in particular. Each connoted a lifestyle enhanced by modern conveniences. These images offered a flip side to the homes of the working class, which for the most part, were experienced only from the interior in the films. Urban locations such as Nathan Road in the commercial district in the Kowloon peninsula, and the intersection of Waterloo Road and Prince Edward Road West in Kowloon Tong, are choice sites in the films.

In the city, architectural firms like P&T turned their focus in the postwar decades to new construction methods and innovation in structural details. Projects like the two-story house in Stanley, which was completed in 1955 and which has since been demolished, is symptomatic of the search not necessarily for a new formal aesthetic but for new techniques in building – a direction that was evidenced in their high-rise projects in the subsequent decades. **[8]** Meanwhile, the pressure to accommodate the middle classes intensified in the 1960s and saw the proliferation of over a thousand high-rise composite buildings completed in the decade. Advancement in high-rise building was a common occurrence in the 1960s. Driven by the economic imperative, a generation of techno-scientific minded developer-builders and architects provided their potential clients – the middle-class public – with images of housing that promised clean, bright and green environments with commanding views of the city. And though there were far fewer views of the city from the exterior, where they occur, they were invariably of the latest infrastructural and building developments. The woman, often in pursuit, navigates these urban spaces effortlessly. Her dress and coiffure are always immaculate and as recognizably "modern" as the buildings and their interiors: a modern hospital, Mong Kok Police Station, Rumsey Street car park, City Hall, Ocean Terminal car park, Tai Wo Ping Interchange and the Kowloon-Canton Railway. **[9][10]**



8 Two-story house in Stanley, Hong Kong. c.1955. From *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder*, 1955.

Within the broader historical discourse of modern architecture was a belief in the infusion of architecture and life where the building form as container and lifestyle as content would be coherent and



9 Corridor in a new hospital in *When Girls are in Love*, 1965.

integral. Such was the belief that modern architecture connotes modern life -- modern habits, routines, behavior and dress, etc. Turning the gaze outwards, the city viewed from the interior, often painted scenes with buildings in two-point perspective, functioned as merely a passive backdrop to the narrative. Similar to the noir thriller genre of the 1950s, the city was invoked and referential to modern development.

CITY AS NARRATIVE, WOMAN AS METHOD

Towards the end of the decade, the city as backdrop began to give way to the city as narrative. The city and its contingent elements – its skyline, streetscapes, construction activity and neon-lit nights – were activated not only as spaces the protagonists occupy and navigate, but also began to offer themselves as the narrative. Perspectives from the moving tram or car, views from the office building, the woman vigilante hanging precariously from the edge of a high-rise building with the district still in construction in the background, saw the city writ large in the narration of the plot. The 1969 film *Temptress of a Thousand Faces*, directed by Chang Hwa-Jeong and produced by Runme Shaw, signifies the attempt by an established regional production company to market the female spy-heist genre to a greater audience. Shot in various beautiful locations in Hong Kong, with elaborate sets and ludicrous plot devices, it also ushers in the shift towards a comedic take on the genre from the earlier Hong Kong-produced versions that were targeted at local audiences. Young women dressed in a mix of sixties mod mini dresses and equally short modern cheong sam dresses inhabit spaces with similar stylistic blends of interiors with bold color palettes, (red carpet and upholstered couches), metallic partitions, wood paneled walls, Scandinavian-inspired wood cabinet pieces and geometric shapes. Similar bold interior sets in Shun Yee Company's *The Mysterious Sisters*, released in the same year, showcase the city's burgeoning interior design, decorating and furnishing industry.

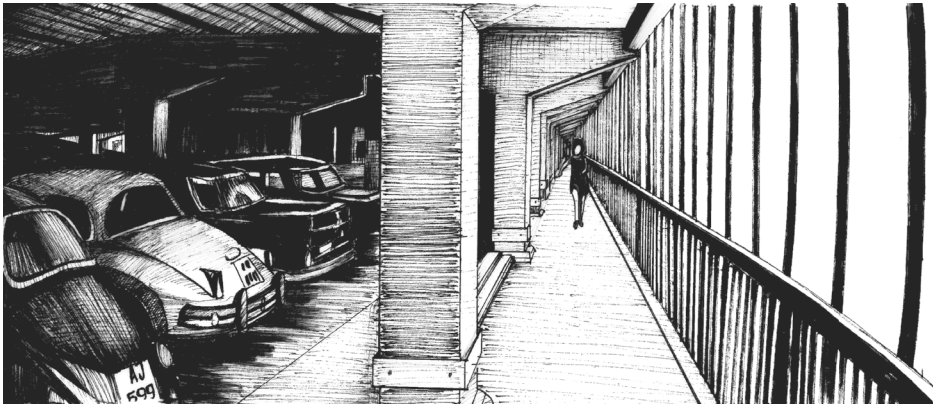
Evidently, the modern city was ready for filmic release by 1969. *Temptress* introduced its audience to the new City Hall complex, which opened in 1962, and Statue Square, which was redesigned in 1965 based on new spatial and visual connections with the Queen's Pier (1954) and City hall; and a collection of new concrete constructions. From the exuberant establishing shots of Victoria Harbour, panoramic roof top pans of the city and traveling shots of the city and the countryside from the car, the woman begins to recede

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and blend into the urban scenery. Her role as protagonist in the plot narrative and visual provocateur diminished as the urban and male gaze took over. Notwithstanding the brevity of her power as social, visual and plot line narrator, the woman figure in the noir thriller and melodrama presents herself as a lens, a method for understanding the cultural construction of dwelling, seeing and thinking in mid-century industrializing Hong Kong. Methodologically, the women leads in these films present the threefold aspects of Hong Kong modernity: the actual and aspirational experience of modernity through their lifestyles, the aesthetic of modernity, and the spaces of modernity which they occupy and through which they navigate. Specifically, her domestic life in the villa or tenement and her travels and encounters in the city foreground familiar imagery of modern architecture and the city – the house, the apartment, white walls and bold bright development dresses, the high-rise office building and the public plaza.

The 1960s began with the release of two hundred films in Cantonese and just over seventy in Mandarin. In 1969, the number of Mandarin films exceeded those in Cantonese. By 1970, Cantonese-language films made up only one quarter of all Chinese films. The establishment of HK-TVB, and the extent to which television could enter the city's spaces, reconfigured the everyday spaces into those of fiction and the spectacular – the most ubiquitous of these are the *cha chaan tengs* (tea cafes).[44] This transition also marked the end of the popular reign of the woman heroine or protagonist. Whereas she had singularly sustained the narrative, the turn to the city as set and narrative corresponded to the woman figure receding into the background. While there would be subsequent films portraying female lives and women as protagonists, the moment where the film subject, the viewer-audience and the city were so tightly intertwined seemed to have passed, as the female-centric genre gave way to the more fantastical martial arts and action genres, which saw the rise of Bruce Lee and set the stage for more fist-clenching heroes like Jackie Chan and Jet Li.

10 Car park in Central in *Temptress of a Thousand Faces*, 1969.



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In 1967, the film and the city collided in the Metropole Building as North Point was caught in the confrontation between the leftists and the police.[45] Five years later, in 1972, the Sunbeam Theater opened at the south eastern corner of the building.[46] Originally intended to be a new Empire theater screening popular movies (on the site of the former Queen's Theatre), it was established by the left-leaning Hua Chang Enterprises Ltd. and featured Cantonese opera from Hong Kong and the region. Since the beginning, it has had multiple owners. The theater's history reflects the changing sociopolitical situation that defines North Point.

Beyond Hong Kong, the 1960s saw Singaporean-Malayan involvement become a catalyst in the industrialization, modernization and cultural diversification of Hong Kong cinema, creating a "modernized tradition" – of movie theaters in the modernist design that were to define the global architectural aesthetic of the early post-war decades, and of a theater-going public with increasingly shared lifestyle desires, behavior and fashion tastes. In Singapore, many of these theaters are located in districts with the highest concentration of Chinese. Most notable of these are the Oriental Theatre (1927-60s), which has its affiliated theatre of the same name built on reclaimed land in Hong Kong's Wan Chai district (1932-1938); Jubilee Theatre (1930s-1970s), Metropole Theatre (1958-1986), Capitol Theatre (1929-1998) and King's Theatre (1950s-1980s).

Most of the mid-century theatres in Hong Kong have been demolished. In Singapore, some of their counterparts have remained and been converted into churches, schools, kindergartens and even a horse racing betting center (previously the Majestic Theater). As in Hong Kong, the Chinese diaspora, the movie-going public who once frequented these places, has moved on. In Singapore, the Majestic Theater, designed by the colonial office of Swan and Maclaren and opened in 1928, was once a Cantonese opera house that became a movie theater in the 1950s and started featuring the films that popularized woman vigilante stars not only in Hong Kong but in Southeast Asia. Nearby, the Metropole Theatre, opened in 1958, became home to the Fairfield Methodist Church in 1986. As the postwar movie theater comes to pass, the Jane Bond noir and melodrama of the 1960s, the woman protagonist and the other spaces of the city stand as archival testimonial to a moment when the woman figure was synonymous with the experience of modernity. Apropos, she embodies the paradoxical spirit of resistance and acquiescence that has come to define Hong Kong.

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3
TOWERS:
Technologies, Jardine House and Metropolitan Visions

A year after the 1976 remake of the 1933 movie King Kong, which ended with the giant ape falling to its death from the newly completed World Trade Center, the Shaw Brothers released a Mandarin version, Xing Xing Wang (translated literally as King Kong) set in 1970s Hong Kong. In a scene reminiscent of the American Kong, Xing Xing too was shot and fell from the newly completed Connaught Centre (renamed Jardine House). What is significant in the synchronous occurrences in the two cities is not simply that both skyscrapers were opened in 1973 and were the tallest in the world and in Asia respectively, but how they embodied the internationalization of modern architecture and its ideological entanglement with urban development, economy, culture and media. Hong Kong's 1977 King Kong and NBC's 1988 Noble House foregrounded the fifty-two story Jardine House as the city's icon of affluence and power manifested through technology and technological thinking. The building industry celebrated its iconic modernism – the most aggressive examples were the Otis Elevator single-photo advertisements that chronicled the entire construction process. This chapter sets out to map the intersecting contexts and visions that produced the city's speculative urbanism by examining the films and the technologies of the building complicit in the narration of modern Hong Kong. From the concrete raft plaza sitting on the marine lot of reclaimed land, to the repetitious precast ribbed floor slabs and flexible plan, to the circular perforated shear external walls and the building's claim on various "firsts," the building extends its technological rationality into the city through a covered pedestrian bridge, and inaugurated the elevated walkway system in the Central financial district. Connecting to mezzanine floors of other buildings, the tentacular network of footbridges, elevators, walkways and stairs has seen an unanticipated transformation of commuter space into public places.

> "Like cinema,… architecture is a way of thinking about urban space, about visuality, about the local and it is in some such terms that comparisons with cinema can be made."[1]
> —Ackbar Abbas, "Hong Kong: Other Histories, Other Politics," 2004

The idea of *déjà disparu* to express the simultaneous act of nostalgia and forgetting was first introduced by cultural theorist, Ackbar Abbas in 1994 and consolidated in his propitious book, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, as a conceptual lens to ruminate on the city on the eve of its handover to China. Translated literally

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as already disappeared or missing, *déjà disparu* has since become the single-most used term by all cultural producers – filmmakers, architects, artists and writers – to characterize Hong Kong space and its representations. Together with the appellation *hyperdensity*, there has since not been a more compelling description of Hong Kong. If, according to Abbas writing in 1997, the preservation of old buildings, colonial or pre-colonial, gives us "history in site" and keeps history "in site," how shall we recount the skyline created under the auspices of finance capital?[2] Those buildings still standing that are built at the cusp of Hong Kong's reinvention from a manufacturing to a financial center in the 1970s have now fallen into the category of "history in site." The most heroic of these are standing on the reclaimed land on both banks of Victoria Harbour.

Shortly after Abbas's *Hong Kong*, Fredric Jameson, in his 1998 essay, "The Brick and the Balloon," argues that under finance capital's structural reorganization of time, the future, in the financial and temporal sense, has become a structural feature of the "newer architecture." This, he writes, is exemplified by the modernist high-rise building in concrete, steel and glass with an open plan dictated by economy and efficiency in construction. Jameson calls this the "balloon" – that which could be lighter yet bigger if its future were not completely subjected to the control of the market. "The building," he writes, "will no longer ever have any aura of permanence, but will bear in its very raw materials the impending certainty of its own future demolition."[3] Beginning his analysis with Rockefeller Center in Manhattan, which signified the city's restructuring from manufacturing to a financial base, and concluding with the 1988 Hong Kong film *Rouge* where the narrative moves between the 1930s and 1997, Jameson identifies Hong Kong as a space in which a possible reimagining of a new cultural logic beyond the modern one is already taking place.

While born-and-raised Hong Konger Abbas sees the architecture and urban space in the territory as a historical process of demolition and reconstruction, of forgetting and remembering where the past reappears in the present, Jameson saw it as the space of global finance, where the future is already written into the present and its presence. Reflecting on this possible re-imagination, this chapter examines the transcultural production of Hong Kong's modernity by looking at the reciprocal relationship between the technological visions in the building of Jardine House and its cultural representations vis-à-vis the King Kong film; to consider how these intersecting visions are complicit in the narration of the city since the 1970s. Pertinently, how can the commodified building – from its design conception to its realization, operation and representations – challenge the perpetuation of the global image of Hong Kong as a metropolis that is defined only by Central and its extensions

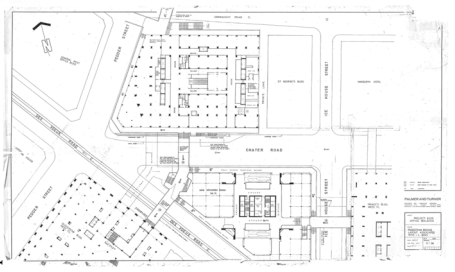
into Victoria Harbour?

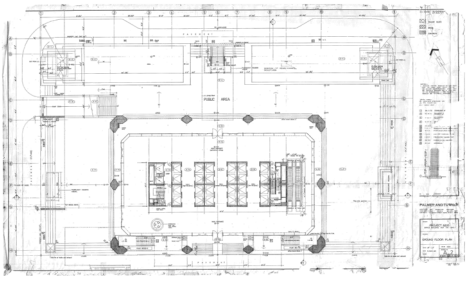
Completed in October 1973, Jardine House, designed by the colonial architectural office Palmer and Turner (P&T), was as much the city's iconic modern symbol as Minoru Yamasaki's World Trade Center twin towers were to New York City.[4] In June 1970, The Hong Kong Land Investment & Agency Co. Ltd. (known since May 1972 as The HongKong Land Co. Ltd.) acquired the 53,000 square feet lot at Connaught Place at a public auction for a record-breaking price of HK$258 million (US$46.3 million) – a price tag that put it amongst the world's most expensive sites at that time.[5] The site was part of the reclaimed land adjoining the Star Ferry pier on the waterfront of Hong Kong Island. Construction began on October 7, 1971. The acquisition of the prime lot, and the intention to erect a fifty-two story building on the site, to be called Connaught Centre, was publicly announced a month after construction began. The office building would take up one-third of the total site area, leaving two-thirds to be a plaza named Connaught Plaza. It was intended to house 8,000 office workers, equivalent to the "size of a small English town."[6] Phase I included the basement, lower ground, mezzanine and the first sixteen floors, whilst Phase II saw the completion of the rest of the building and the plaza. At the time of the public announcement, the Hong Kong public had already heard the daily piling behind the extensive construction hoarding.

At less than half the height of the 110-story World Trade Center (WTC) towers (1368 and 1362ft), with a structural inner core with a proportion of three to one (3:1), Jardine House defies easy categorization.[7] Its three to two (3:2) bay plan while close to Mies's five to four (5:4) Seagram Building, makes it distinctly more slab-like. Yet, this slab-tower challenges Jameson's imagery of the typical steel balloon frame office building. With its *in-situ* concrete façade punctuated by thirty-eight circular windows per floor, and topped with a stark hip roof, it presents a distinct architectural form that sets it apart, at the same time staking a claim in defining the urbanism of Hong Kong's Central District by inaugurating the elevated street network. Where most commercial buildings in the 1960s were still designed as compact mid-rise buildings, Jardine House was the first of its kind to be introduced in high-rise building construction in Hong Kong and considered an engineering innovation that marries the structural and the architectural to allow for a free plan.[8] [1] With a structural steel scheme identical to the WTC towers, it was compared to Mies van der Rohe's thirty-eight storied Seagram Building (1958), Pier Luigi Nervi and Gio Ponti's Pirelli Building in Milan (1956) and Gollins Melvin Ward's Commercial Union Building in London (1968).

James Kinoshita (1933), partner-in-charge at Palmer & Turner, the architectural firm that undertook the design of the project, described the building's close integration of structure and architecture

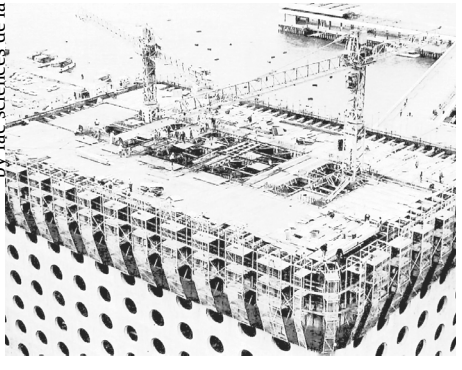
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1 Left: Covered pedestrian bridge connecting to the mezzanine level of the Jardine House, c.1973. Right: Palmer and Turner Architects and Consulting Engineers, Ground Floor Plan of the Connaught Center (later Jardine House), c.1973.

as akin to a bamboo. "It is hollow inside and it has separators at intervals like the floors in a building," he explained, "A bamboo is no more than an empty shell but it is very strong. If you want to punch holes in the bamboo, you'll find that the bamboo will remain the strongest with circular holes."[9] Later on, in his 2005 memoir *From Slocan to Hong Kong: An Architect's Journey*, he revealed that it was his wife who first suggested that he tried "something different, like circular windows" for their elevations. For him, the decision turned out to be sensible in that the circular windows would distribute the stress of the external wall around the building. The client approved and echoed, "We might as well try something different."[10] This worked for the builders, Gammon (HK) Ltd. as well, since their primary consideration was to reduce the weight of the building to make possible a piled raft foundation, which was faster and cheaper than a caisson foundation at the reclaimed site. A thick solid raft of eight and a half feet sits on 1,470 Colcrete piles of twenty-one and half inch diameter covering the full length of the site for a distance of 132 feet. [2] The building was covered with Italian light grey mosaic tiles, whilst stainless steel and glass were used in the interiors. Covered with the same mosaic tiles, the columns at the ground floor were cast *in situ* in the "futuristic shapes of hyperbolic paraboloid," not unlike the *breton brut* pilotis for Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation at Marseilles. Twenty-four Otis passenger elevators, which are divided into three zones of eight lifts each, serve the office block.[11]



2 Construction of a typical floor. Gantry units provide access to the external surface. They were lifted up to the new floor level by tower cranes when a floor was completed. From "Low-rise zone of Connaught Centre being completed," *Asian Architect & Builder*, 1972.

TECHNOLOGICAL VISIONS

Jardine House was the industry's project *par excellence* from the start. Construction occurred at a speed of three stories a month. The local newspaper duly reported on its progress. In the February 1972 issue of the *South China Morning Post* on building research in Britain and its colonies – the Building Research Station at Garston, Herts, Centre of Research for the construction

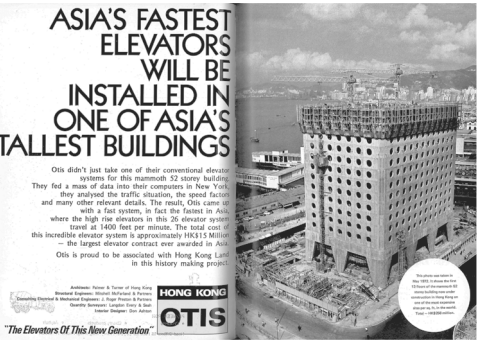
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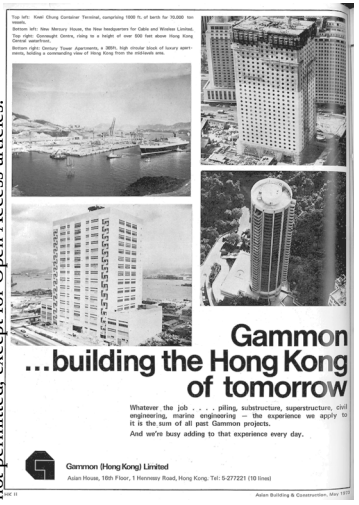
industry, had just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary the previous year – a photograph of the building undergoing construction was used as an example to illustrate the role of research in the structural and design techniques in Hong Kong building projects.[12] The office building was also the cover feature in the July 1972 issue of *Asian Building & Construction* (formerly *Far East Builder*), which was Hong Kong's leading building journal with a regional subscription.[13] And it was in this space that Otis Hong Kong made the Connaught Centre the focus of its 1972 advertising campaign, even before Rem Koolhaas foregrounded Otis's role in the story of Manhattan's skyscraper utopia.[14] **[3]**

The building industry celebrated the iconic modernism of Jardine House – most aggressive were Otis Elevator's photo advertisements that chronicled the entire construction process in 1972. It was Otis's largest elevator contract in Asia and the first building to be equipped with its high-speed elevator system.[15] It was the second modern building that Otis featured in its "The Elevators of This New Generation" advertisements of the 1970s. Prior to the year-long feature on the Connaught Centre, Otis's 1970 advertisement showed a model photograph of the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City with the headline: "You'll find Otis elevators in all leading buildings throughout the world."[16] With the construction of the Connaught Centre, Otis changed its headline to "Asia's fastest elevator will be installed in one of Asia's tallest buildings," with the description that concluded, "Otis is proud to be associated with Hong Kong Land in this history-making project." Each of these photos taken from the vantage point of a nearby building was also captioned to show the progress of construction. The first of the series in January 1972 showed the lot marked by a black box, annotated to explain that this acquisition was one of the most expensive sites per square foot in the world. The last in November stated that Otis elevators were already in operation on the first sixteen floors as the monolithic slab-tower block was still taking shape.

Others in the building industry caught on very quickly. In the same issue where photographs of the Jardine House proliferated, interspersed with the announcement of Hong Kong's own World Trade Center, York air conditioning and refrigeration company put out an ad that placed side-by-side the photograph of the models of New York's 110-story World Trade Center and Hong Kong's fifty-two story Connaught Centre. The ad proclaimed, "We have furnished the air conditioning equipment for the tallest building in the world as well as the tallest building in Asia."[17] Its subsequent ads



3 Otis ad featuring Jardine House under construction, in *Asian Building & Construction*, 1972.



4 Jardine House featured in Gammon advertisement, in *Asian Building & Construction*, 1973.

featured the completed Connaught Centre individually or with other high-rise buildings in Hong Kong. Appearing in the advertisements for concrete to glass to the sprinkler system and the scaffolding, photographs of the office building were repeatedly circulated not just within the colony but also in the region.[18]

As foregrounded in these advertisements, Jardine House was the prototypical project in which several innovative techniques were introduced to the Hong Kong construction industry. Each floor took eight days and a hundred workers to build, something previously unheard of. In a number of articles between 1972 and 1973 detailing the design and construction process, *Asian Building & Construction* described the list of "departures from conventional practices" for the building which included the use of bamboo scaffolding coupled with a dual-carriage passenger-material hoist, and a "ropeless scaffhoist," for lifting heavy beams and bulky materials, built for Gammon (HK) Ltd. by the Swedish engineering company Linden-Alimark (later replaced by Biso HK Ltd.).[19] [4] The building also inaugurated the first "Air Cushion" building maintenance cage for cleaning the exterior by clamping itself onto the façade using the "reverse hover-craft principle."[20]

Staking an even bolder claim than Otis, Gammon identified itself as "building the Hong Kong of tomorrow."[21] On April 28, 1973, three weeks after the opening of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's World Trade Center in downtown Manhattan, some one hundred VIPs in crash helmets, including Gammon's managing director, the directors of Otis and the other main contractors, the owners and the investors, plus an army of reporters and photographers, braved the wind-whipped rains on top of the tallest building in Asia, to witness the "topping out" ceremony. Fifty-two stories below, another party in the building's basement restaurant joined in the ceremony via an instant-relay television screen, which captured the full sequence of events.[22] By the time Jardine House was completed in October 1973, its position as a "completely modern, twentieth century building" was sealed. Fronting the skyline and dwarfing all its neighbors, it was the most visible icon of 1970s Hong Kong.

LAND DEVELOPMENT VISIONS

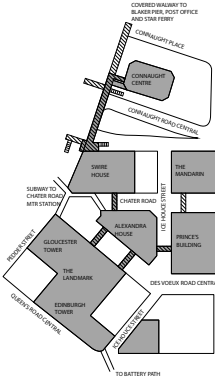
Jardine House's highly publicized technological innovations and construction process overshadowed the other narratives: the monopoly of land lots by a small group of developers like Hongkong

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Land (the real estate and development subsidiary of the Jardine Matheson Company), the contraventions of the Building (Planning) Regulations on urban form and space, and the sociological effects on the citizenry. How did a single developer come to own the majority of the land lots in the Central District? From its founding in 1889, Hongkong Land had been responsible for the development of the Central District; its first taipan Paul Chater initiated the colony's urban reclamation scheme, which the Company undertook in different phases between 1868 and 1931.[23] As successive reclamation produced more land where the former sea confronted the original lots, the first owners of the Marine Lots took over the newly formed land under various types of agreement. Most of the sites formed were subdivided by the owners and were either utilized in part by themselves, or sold or leased to other companies. After World War Two, Hongkong Land had purchased most of the land lots by the waterfront. The process whereby the original sites were formed and developed with a complex of buildings with different purposes was not precisely known, but was attributed in part to the destruction of records during the war and the already sketchy nature of records kept at the official level where Government interference with business had always been kept to a minimum.[24]

Under the directorship of the latest taipan, Vernon Roberts, (Chairman of the Company from 1963 to 1977), the purchase of the Connaught Centre site proved to be one of the Company's most spectacular accomplishments in terms of the expansion of its business.[25] He successfully negotiated a height limit of 120 feet above ground level for any subsequent building to be constructed in front of the building, which meant that every office space in the open-planned building would have unimpeded views across Victoria Harbour.[26] It was also the first high-rise office building in Hong Kong with all non-operable fixed windows and which was completely reliant on central air-conditioning for ventilation, which was a direct contravention of the then Building (Planning) Regulations, in which ventilation in buildings was an important criterion.[27] This triggered the subsequent revision of the regulation and saw the proliferation of office buildings with fixed glass curtain walls. At its completion, it was the largest office block in the city, adding over 69,000 square feet of rentable office and commercial space to the Company's already extensive Central District properties.[28] By the end of the decade, the majority of the waterfront sites in the Central District, each now occupied by a single large block, were properties of Hongkong Land. The Company owned nine commercial building properties with a total of over 3.3 million square feet of leasable area.[29] [5] Owning over sixty properties in Hong Kong, Hongkong Land was the biggest property developer in the world by 1980.[30] As the major landowner and developer of office buildings in Central, the Company wielded the power to negotiate



5 Plan showing Hongkong Land Properties: "Central District Reshaped," in Nigel Cameron, *The Hongkong Land Co. Ltd.*, 1979.

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directly with the city for access and connection between its buildings.

Jardine House marks the beginning of the end of the monolithic concrete high-rise office building and public plaza in the Central District. Subsequent multi-tenanted office high-rises by Hongkong Land were predominantly new podium tower configurations with shopping below and offices above, or existing buildings redeveloped or retrofitted to accommodate commercial activities at the lower levels. Even before it was opened, almost two miles east along the waterfront in Causeway Bay (now one of the densest commercial and shopping districts in Asia), Hongkong Land's World Trade Centre – a shopping center and office complex – was already under construction.[31] At forty stories tall, and cladded with a glass and steel curtain wall, its completion in 1975 made it the first World Trade Center complex in Asia.

The predominance of the office tower typology also saw the disappearance of the public plaza, and its replacement by the podium shopping mall in the Central District.[32] To a large extent, this coincided with the rise of Hong Kong's tourism industry in the 1960s, which saw the city's meteoric rise as the "shopping paradise" of Asia, and with the development of the underground mass rapid transit system (MTR) which was first opened in 1979. The typological shift was evident in Hongkong Land's subsequent big project in the early 1980s – Exchange Square – which houses the Stock Exchange and many international banking and financial offices. Designed by P&T Architects and Engineers, and built by Gammon Hong Kong in three phases between 1983 and 1988, the three office towers are connected via a podium mall, with connection to the underground MTR system.[33]

The King Kong myth and Hong Kong as the signifier of modern urbanity

Jardine House was an instant architectural prop for the Hong Kong film industry (which was undergoing a revival in the 1970s).[34] At Christmas 1976, the *South China Morning Post* featured the filming of King Kong falling off one of the World Trade Center towers in John Guillermin's remake of the 1933 classic.[35] The Shaw Brothers of Hong Kong saw the incentive to ride the wave of the King Kong craze, but understood the need to negotiate its appeal to its largely Hong Kong and ethnic Chinese audience base, which had already seen Guillermin's *King Kong*. Their strategy was to maintain the familiar King Kong narrative, but to imbue the tale with a Hong Kong Chinese cultural sensibility and to relocate King Kong's geographic placement to Asia, with India and Hong Kong serving as the main locales for the film's diegetic action.[36]

Shaw Brothers released *The Mighty Peking Man* in August 1977 (released in the US as *Goliathon* in 1980). The film retells the

King Kong myth with Hong Kong as the signifier of modernity and urban civilization. Jardine House was the centerpiece.[37] The film opens with the Main Building of the University of Hong Kong (1912), and the Students Union Building (1952) (demolished in 1986) in the background.[38] The pre-war colonial neoclassical architecture and the postwar international-style building captured in a single frame signifies the coexistence of the traditional and modern, a trope that is sustained throughout the film. The characters travel from Hong Kong to the Himalayan Mountains through a modernizing Bangalore and back to Hong Kong's Central District, with its gleaming skyline of concrete high-rise office buildings.

Captured and subdued, the giant ape named Utam arrives in Hong Kong's modern Victoria Harbour. On the Kowloon side is the colonial neo-classical Kowloon-Canton Railway station (KCR), soon demolished to give way to the Cultural Centre in 1978. Across the harbor on the Hong Kong side, high-rise office buildings define the Central District. The oldest of these date back to the late 1950s. Jardine House stands as the newest and tallest. [6] No one is more critical than Ackbar Abbas who describes Hong Kong's representation of itself as a simultaneous disappearance and reappearance. For Abbas, the representation of Hong Kong as an East-West city, promoted by the Tourist Association through the image of the Chinese junk against a backdrop of tall modernistic buildings, is an example of how such a narrative, which has since been the dominant discourse on Hong Kong, "manages to make a complex space disappear into a one-dimensional image, structured on a facile binarism."[39]

That "one-dimensional" image of modernity is the leitmotif of *The Mighty Peking Man*. Most of *King Kong* takes place at night where downtown Manhattan is in silhouette. The twin towers were presented as sinister towering figures resembling Kong's mountainous island in the Indian Ocean. In *The Mighty Peking Man*, Jardine House is presented amidst Hong Kong's skyline in broad daylight. The building is introduced by the protagonist for its "fantastic views," the city skyline as a "new home" for the giant ape and his female companion. Earlier, in the Himalayan jungle, the temple that Utam destroys exposes a concrete structural frame. The irony of this seems to escape the producers as Utam's trek across the "concrete jungle" of Hong Kong unfolds an architectural and infrastructural odyssey defined by nondescript concrete high-rise buildings, roads and highways that he encounters, culminating in Jardine House. [7]



6 Above: View towards the south from Kowloon: Jardine House in Central District at Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong. In the foreground, the Kowloon-Canton Railway Station was demolished in 1978. Bottom: View towards the north from Hong Kong: Jardine House in Central District, Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong. Scenes from the Shaw Brothers' *The Mighty Peking Man*, 1977, directed by Meng Hua Ho.

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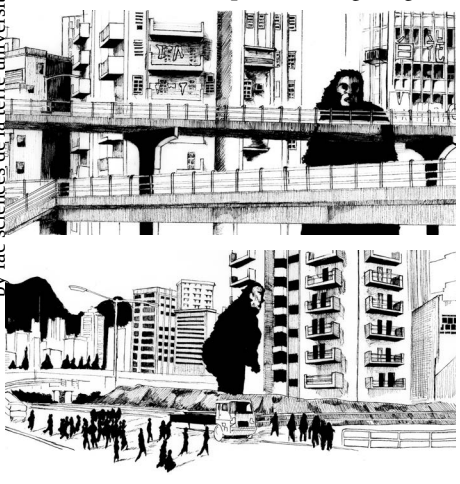
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And down on the public plaza, the spectacle of the great beast's fate is played out and broadcast via satellite television. Kong's first appearance in New York was in a public plaza in Long Island City, and his final appearance was in the plaza of the WTC complex, enveloped by a crowd. In *The Mighty Peking Man*, Utam's arrival in Hong Kong is immediately relayed to the TV Broadcasting station (1967), anticipating the finale as a public media event, where television crews and the crowd gather to witness the showdown between the beast and the city.

INFRASTRUCTURAL VISIONS

Jardine House's raised public plaza and elevated walkway are the products of negotiation between the developer and the government, brokered by the architect. P&T's James Kinoshita explained that he had persuaded Hongkong Land to take advantage of the bonus plot ratio of up to three above the usual fifteen to free up the ground floor space for an open plaza. However, because the site was some distance from the heart of Central, he convinced both the developer and the Building Authority that they could provide an overhead pedestrian bridge to link the building site to Central.[40] The public would be able to access the plaza using the pedestrian walkway that links it to the Star Ferry pier and to the Company's other office building, Union House.[41]

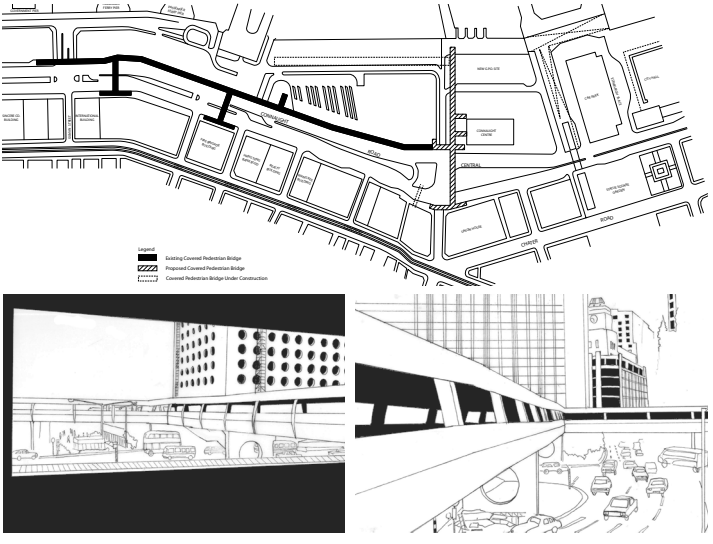
In mid-1972, the Public Works Department announced plans to construct two additional elevated pedestrian walkways to connect to the ones from Jardine House.[42] These would connect the municipal buildings such as the five-story General Post Office (completed in 1976 at under 120 feet in height) and the Star Ferry pier to Hongkong Land's elevated walkway. Following the economic downturn in 1974, the project resumed in 1978 with the introduction of a 480-meter footbridge with seven outdoor covered escalators and stairways leading to the street, the first such usage in Hong Kong.[43] Designed to carry up to 23,000 people per hour, it connects to the elevated walkway of Jardine House. The project was supervised by P&T Architects. "The overall idea for the Central District is to get everybody walking at the upper level," the project engineer, Peter Pearson, explained.[44] Despite the complaints of some owners of buildings that would be affected by the project, the elevated walkway system was further extended.[45]



7 Modern infrastructure of mobility: Utam stomping in a city undergoing highway and housing development. Scenes from the Shaw Brothers' *The Mighty Peking Man*, 1977, directed by Meng Hua Ho.

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Jardine House, and the extension of the public plaza vis-à-vis the elevated walkways to connect with the "plazas" of other buildings, effected palpable changes to the form, space and speed of Central District.[46] At a time when hand-pulled rickshaws were still a common mode of transportation for the working class, the elevated walkway, which connects directly to the first level of all these office buildings, anticipated an increased density and a new office class for a district that was *almost* completely built by a single developer.[47] By 1978, Hongkong Land had extended the elevated walkway system – designed by P&T and built by Gammon construction – to four other buildings that it owned: Union House, Alexandra House, Gloucester Building and Prince's Building.[48] **[8]** With the elevated walkway system threading through the first level of the commercial podiums of the buildings, public space was reorganized as the modernist schema of the public plaza was complicated by the network of bridges that were wide enough to be utilized as gathering places on weekends. The first levels of the buildings connecting to the walkways became crowded retail spaces. By the 1980s, modern Hong Kong was characterized by a split between the gleaming technologized high-rise office building above and the busy intricate nature of the street mediated by the elevated plaza which functioned as a lobby for the corporate on weekdays and public space for others on weekends. The open plaza was replaced by the podium shopping mall.[49] Hongkong Land's subsequent office buildings were either new podium tower configurations, or redeveloped to accommodate lower-level retail. Initially, the retail spaces in these buildings catered to professionals and those with greater spending power. Soon, the public walkways were filled on weekends by different kinds of public users, especially foreign domestic workers seeking out public spaces



8 Above: The Elevated Walkway system in Central District, Hong Kong. Below: The existing bridge network was designed in a wavy curve to accommodate the mezzanine levels of the various buildings connected. From "Mile long pedestrian bridges for Central District." *Asian Building & Construction*, 1973.

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in Central District but without the same means of consumption.[50] From May 1983, with the permission of the owners, 20,000 Filipina domestic helpers gathered at the large walk-through lobby of Jardine House on Sunday mornings for mass.[51] For a brief span of years till the end of the decade, Connaught Plaza was a public space in the city as its proponents first espoused.

"The Street against the Sky"

By the 1980s, modern Hong Kong was characterized by a split between the gleaming technologized high-rise office building above and the busy intricate nature of the street mediated by the elevated plaza which functioned as a lobby for the corporate on weekdays and public space for the others on weekends. Dean Sherwin's essay on architectural identity in Hong Kong, "The Street against the Sky," captured not only the phenomenon of the city undergoing an urban transition on multiple scales, but forecast the predominance of "an architecture of surface" over that of volume or form.[52] Also in 1983, Jardine House unveiled its new aluminum façade cladding together with Hongkong Land's elevated walkways, which were re-cladded with the same aluminum panels.[53] According to Kinoshita, the original finish for the exterior was to be pre-cast aluminum panels with the circular glass windows integrated into the panels so that they could be clipped onto the façade together. When the tender cost came in too high, Hongkong Land chose the cheaper option of grey mosaic tiles instead. From its completion in 1973, the building had a "falling tile problem" and underwent major retiling work in 1976, only for this to be completely replaced with the original proposal of aluminum panels in 1984. The difference was that by then, the company could already afford it as they had recouped their initial investment for the building.[54] By this time, for reasons of scarcity of office space in Central, rentals were tripled and new "wealthier" tenants who desired to be in the "prestigious Connaught Centre" replaced the original ones.[55]

Jardine House is poised at the cusp of the double split in the city's urbanism: one, between the vertical building and the horizontal plaza; and two, between the exterior and the interior. While its façade is not the featureless homogeneous glass and steel curtain wall that architectural observers and critics condemned, it has, since its appearance, been used to illustrate and affirm the disempowerment of architects, who despite having developed artistic new concepts in so-called "machine age" design, have hardly any impact on contractors, investors, developers and engineers. Pitted against "package builders" who could deliver a project at a fixed economic rate, adventurous architects simply could not compete. Bob Crew, in his scathing November 1973 article, "Architecture – the good, the bad and the ugly," wrote off the high-rise buildings erected under

rapid development in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, lamenting:

> "While, in certain circumstances, high-rise buildings spaciously landscaped in isolation can be reasonably acceptable (if not passable), when they are jam-packed into the insufferable densities of the Hong Kongs and New Yorks of this world, blotting out the sky and saturating us with all their social and psychological ills, they are positively undesirable and harmful."[56]

Due to his focus on the forms and façades of the skyscrapers, his critique was directed against the professionals who were stylistically modern but ineffective in affecting the process or outcome of a project and its impact on the city. However, he did not turn his gaze down to the street, or even further, underground. If he had, he would have noticed that the architects – in this case, Palmer & Turner – had corroborated with the developer not only to design the elevated walkway system and subsequently to move up the steep hillside to the Mid-Levels escalator system in the 1990s, but also to design Hongkong Land's Exchange Square, the first building in Central with direct connection to the newly opened underground Mass Transit Railway in 1988.

The Exchange Square complex, which houses the Stock Exchange and international banking and financial offices, signifies the typological shift from the extruded slab tower of Jardine House to the podium tower. Also designed by P&T, and built by Gammon (in three phases between 1983 and 1988), the three office towers sit atop a podium mall connected to the underground MTR system.[57] For the first time, the office building and the infrastructural network links Central to the rest of Hong Kong. With the opening of the Mid-Levels escalator (still) designed by P&T in the 1990s, the vision of a networked urbanism is realized, as the office commuters circulate within this tentacular circulatory system. In what looks like Team X's elevated social streets meets Paul Rudolph's multi-level transportation corridor, an interior urbanism based purely on the ethos of economy and efficiency is produced by the same *raison d'etre* behind the building of Jardine House.

IMAGINARIES OF MODERN HONG KONG

In the finale of CBS' *The Amazing Spider Man* (1979), Spidey scaled the mosaic-clad façade of Jardine House to the penthouse in a rescue mission. His ascent was visually narrated by a panorama of Victoria Harbour as the camera panned across from downtown Kowloon, capturing everything from the new Harbour City mall

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9 Reflection of Jardine House in the curtain wall façade of the twenty-nine-story World Wide House, designed by Wong & Ouyang, on Des Voeux Road Central.

to Jardine House and the Central District.[58] In NBC's 1998 miniseries *Noble House*, Jardine House is the headquarters of the fictional international trading company. The opening credits reiterated the aluminum-clad office building as a symbol of capital. The rise and fall of *Noble House* mirrors the financial uncertainties within Hongkong Land in the 1980s. All these films repeatedly reinforce Hong Kong's modernity discourse. Apropos, Jardine House embodies the internationalization of modern architecture and its ideological entanglement with urban development, economy, culture and media. Recalling the Eiffel Tower of Paris seen through the glass doors of the office buildings in Jacques Tati's fictional Tativille (*Playtime*, 1967), Jardine House is seen through the reflection of the newly completed World Wide House (on the site of the previous General Post Office), evoking the recurring theme of modernity as surface, and underscoring the impossibility of seeing a past beyond the present.[59] **[9]**

Despite its unoriginality, *The Mighty Peking Man* inadvertently mirrors the city's negotiated urbanism. Utam personifies the city's conflicting modernities as he stomps the Central District, destroying the newly constructed buildings and infrastructures. In search of the familiarity of his mountainous home, he is drawn to the towering Jardine House. In reality, the Sunday masses under Jardine House ceased after 1990 because they challenged the image of the modern pristine spaces of capital in the politically sensitive years leading up to 1997. The foreign domestic workers quickly found another public plaza for their congregation, under Norman Foster's new HSBC headquarters, although that too came to a halt in 2012, following the first Occupy Central protests.

In the final showdown of the battle with the military, the giant ape climbs to the top of Jardine House, whilst the military pelts him with explosives. Amidst much gunfire, loud explosions and a deafening, mashed up rendition of Shostakovich's *Fifth Symphony*, the giant ape, covered in flames, plunges down from the edge and crashes into the General Post Office in a thundering crescendo. **[10]** The film ends with the agonized leading man standing in the wreckage as he stares out despairingly at the nocturnal cityscape of Hong Kong from the ruins of Jardine House. The red neon sign "bountiful luck" (大吉, pronounced *dai gat*) across the harbor reaffirms the developmental logic of the city: even an indomitable icon such as Jardine House cannot escape demolition. Next to it, the newly completed General Post Office, which moved from its previous location which is now occupied by the World Wide House (that *same* reflective glass building in *Spiderman*), becomes Utam's inferno grave. Its untimely destruction closes the loop between film and a city where speculation

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dictates building obsolescence.

Let us take a moment to consider two recent visions of Hong Kong, one in Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008), the other in Rawson Marshall Thurber's *Skyscraper* (2018). In the former, nocturnal Hong Kong is a montage of multiple fragments of itself. Seen through the glass curtain wall of Cesar Pelli's 88-story International Financial Centre (IFC), multiple Jardine House-lookalikes are dwarfed in a sea of familiar-unfamiliar skyscrapers. Like *The Dark Knight*, *Skyscraper* intensified Hong Kong's urban density. The central location of the plot revolves around a 240-story tower named The Pearl, which sits on the site of the 118-story International Commerce Centre (ICC) on the Kowloon side of Victoria Harbour. Upon first viewing, it is a formulaic update of the disaster-thriller-hero movie using computer-generated imagery (CGI) like the millennial versions of *King Kong*. The blend of the real and fictional – the actual destruction of the New York City World Trade Center twin towers and stereotypical Hollywood skyscraper movies such as *The Towering Inferno* (1974) and the recent *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol* (2011) – suggests that the forms of the "new cultural logic" premised on the market economy have long been a status quo.

In stark contrast to the dark dystopian urban image of Hong Kong presented in these movies, in 2008, the city introduced rooftop farming on parts of the elevated walkway network that it had built. Below this layer of "productive" greening, the walkways themselves are more crowded than ever.[60] If *The Dark Knight*'s postmodern dystopian Hong Kong turns Abbas's critique of the one-dimensional image of the city onto itself, it is timely to embark on a new search for other inclusive yet diverse images of the city. It would perhaps be apt to provisionally conclude by taking on Jameson's assertion: to reimagine Hong Kong, one must seek out the narratives of the search for a building to haunt in the first place. The question lies not in what comes after the "balloon" or simply who is producing it, but more importantly, how it is continues to be challenged and by whom. To begin, we shall learn to problematize visual perception, to acknowledge, after Abbas, that "while images of the city do not show the city, they nevertheless fail to do so in a determinate way. This then is one method of discussing Hong Kong's urban culture," he proffers, "by attending to the kind of image used in writing, painting, photography, cartoons, cinema, architecture and so on, and asking whether these images can engage and transform the negative space of the city."[61]



10 Utam jumps from the top of the fifty-two-story Jardine House and lands in the General Post Office. Scene from the Shaw Brothers' *The Mighty Peking Man*, 1977, directed by Meng Hua Ho.

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4
COMPOSITES
The City in a Building

Arising from the intensive urban development of mid-twentieth century Hong Kong, the composite building, defined as one with domestic and non-domestic functions, embodies the historical tensions between city and home, public and private, producer and consumer, colonial and Chinese, real and ideal, masculine and feminine realms. Between 1959 and 1979, over 1,500 composite buildings above fifteen stories were built throughout the city. Intended to accommodate the emerging industrialized middle class population, the largest composite buildings housed over ten thousand inhabitants within an agglomeration of shops, factories, temples, clinics, crèches, dormitories, hostels, flats, and other spaces. Their architecture and planning manifest the way the developers, planners, architects and builders projected the notions of a consumerist society. Yet closer analysis of the multifarious programs, spatial adaptations and contestations within, reveals the human caprice that drives and defines the city. How did these tensions and everyday acts of resistances shape the spaces in the composite buildings and in turn, define and redefine the city? In examining the brief social history of a commonplace building in Hong Kong, this chapter unpacks the tropes of the modern Asian city to seek an alternative framework to understand the precarious limits between the urban and the domestic.

Post-World War Two Hong Kong was politically and economically valuable to the newly formed People's Republic of China, especially with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and the intensification of the Cold War in East Asia. The imposition of a trade embargo against the People's Republic of China (PRC) by the United States in December 1950 was followed by a partial embargo on the export of strategic materials by the United Nations in May 1951, and by a tightening of British export controls in June. Caught between the Chinese Communists and the Republic of China (ROC) Kuomintang in Taiwan, Hong Kong was also faced with the challenge of transforming its economy and it did so by embarking on a fully-fledged industrialization process. During the enactment of the embargo in the 1950s, Hong Kong provided strategic materials such as medical supplies, petrol and automobile and building supplies for the PRC, as well as food supplies during the famine caused by the Maoist policy known as the Great Leap Forward. When the embargoes were lifted, Hong Kong resumed its position as the PRC's main entrepôt in the 1970s, and became the channel through which

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the latter obtained modern technology, skills, and capital.[1]

The postwar decades up to the 1970s were a period of experimentation and reorganization in planning and housing development.[2] In 1946, soon after the end of the war, the planner Patrick Abercrombie was invited to carry out the first comprehensive urban planning for Hong Kong, for which he produced a report in 1949 that highlighted the need for infrastructural connection between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. The 1950s saw a number of new town development trials. In 1954, the Resettlement Department was formed out of the Urban Council (UrbCo), following the completion of the Shek Kip Mei Estate and the enactment of the Housing Ordinance, a year after a fire in Shek Kip Mei that rendered over 50,000 people homeless.[3] The Resettlement Department published its first annual report in 1954, which identified fire risk in the large squatter areas as the primary problem, and which recommended the availability of affordable forms of housing.[4] For the next two decades, the design and construction of multi-story resettlement housing was undertaken by the Architectural Office of the Public Works Department. In 1973, the Government led by British Governor Murray MacLehose established the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA) under a revised housing ordinance. The Resettlement Department and the Housing Division of the Urban Services Department were merged to form a new Housing Department. HKHA published its first annual report that year, to announce its formation on 1 April 1973 of its ten-year public housing program to build 1.8 million units.[5] Almost 30 per cent of the 4.2 million population lived in resettlement housing in 1973. The majority of the population still lived in the extensive squatter areas, with some in society-built accommodation and yet others in private housing properties.

From the onset, within Hong Kong's building regulations, the definition of a "composite building" refers to a building that contains domestic and other functions.[6] From the enactment of the 1956 Building Ordinance based on volumetric control, to the 1962 amendment on plot ratio control through the 1970s, over 1,500 composite buildings above fifteen stories were built in Hong Kong. They are located in the densest parts of the city, such as in North Point, along major thoroughfares in Tsim Sha Tsui, Tai Kok Tsui and To Kwa Wan and on reclaimed land in Kowloon. Of these, at least twenty contain populations exceeding one thousand, with each occupying an entire urban block. The largest and most populous of these are complexes that contain almost 10,000 inhabitants excluding unregistered tenants and illegal squatters. Emerging amidst the economic, social and political exigencies of post-war Hong Kong, the high-rise composite building exemplifies the paradox of collective sociability within an individualized private space. Not only do the high-rise composite buildings produced under the conditions of

heightened density and speculative land and building development find no equal in any other city, they also constitute a substantial amount of private housing stock. Many contain spaces in continual confrontation between public urban life and domestic life.

How did the mixed-use composite building become the dominant type of domestic architecture in the immediate decades following 1949? Broadly, its ubiquity owed much to three factors. Firstly, it provided spatially compact housing for a city with an escalating population. Secondly, it offered the expanding middle class opportunities for investing in relatively inexpensive and profitable properties boosted by the introduction of multiple ownership and the mortgage system. And thirdly, it was an agent in the expansion of the construction industry, which was bolstered by the relocation of building expertise from the Chinese mainland, particularly Shanghai. Demography, economy and technology, however, do not sufficiently account for how Hong Kong citizens and later, expatriates and foreign domestic workers, asylum seekers and fugitives, made their homes in the composite building. It embodies the containment of a social heterogeneity in a unifying framework defined by the collision of the private and the public, the imbrication of the urban and domestic, and the continuity of every aspect of urban space in the interior. To understand the people's acceptance of and adaptation to the composite building, it is necessary to excavate the cultural expectations of domestic and urban space embedded in the discourses of Hong Kong architecture and everyday life.

While cities in Asia were encountering social and economic exigencies in their decolonizing struggles and nationalizing processes, between 1947 and 1955, colonial Hong Kong underwent a meteoric rise of industrialization attributed to two political events affecting the Colony. The first was the revolutionary take-over of China in 1949, which saw droves of migrants and refugees fleeing across the border from Mainland China, bringing along the resources of new labor, capital and technical skills and experience in industrial development. The second was the Korean War and the United Nations Embargo on trade in strategic articles with China in 1951, which constituted a great blow to the trading role of the city and forced it to turn to the development of other industries to compensate for the losses in trade.[7] With a seemingly unlimited supply of cheap labor, adequate capital from local and foreign sources and experiences and capricious entrepreneurship, low tariffs and a laissez-faire capitalism, Hong Kong's per capita income tripled between the first post-war decade and 1969. By 1971, the urban density was 750 people to the acre.[8] Over a third of the labor force was engaged in industrial employment and the city saw an expansion in the number of labor unions and the size of their membership.[9] Only one fifth of Hong Kong's primarily immigrant families were born locally then.[10]

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To a large extent, the composite building was the architectural corollary of the laissez-faire system, which produced the city's highly speculative built environment. Initially constructed to accommodate the burgeoning industrialized middle-class population, by the mid-1970s, many composite buildings were used for a variety of commercial and industrial purposes including small cottage industries such as spice and textile production, packaging and finishing, retail and storage. The industrial process extended from flatted factories into the domestic sphere where women assembled and packaged plastic products, toys and finishing work for textiles, to supplement the household income. Triggered by the shift from a manufacturing base to service industries in the late 1980s, many of these industries have since relocated to farther industrial areas or are significantly reduced in scale — such collectives have gradually been replaced by multifarious groups of diverse ethnic backgrounds originating from various localities as far away as sub-Saharan Africa whose livelihoods do not rely on industrial-based work.

In their study on the small industrial unit in Hong Kong, Dennis John Dwyer and Chuen Yan Lai examined the second phase of industrial expansion in Hong Kong through internal changes in capital use as a consequence of the embargo placed upon trade with China during the Korean War, where textiles, specifically clothing, and later plastics were the leading industries.[11] The expansion of the urban industrial population was accompanied by the proliferation of small enterprises; many factories were found in single rooms in residential buildings and in shacks on the hillsides in refugee areas. They identified that as such, the physical accommodation of these industries is integrated into the economic and urban planning of the city, where the policy of large-scale squatter resettlement implicated the relocation of the small industrial units. In 1958, the colonial Resettlement Department began a program of flatted factory development to accommodate a wider range of industrial enterprises.[12] Concurrent to the building of factory blocks (with heights ranging from five to seven stories) undertaken by the Resettlement Department was the construction of the composite building types by private enterprise — these include also higher and denser versions of the *tonglau* (walk-up row houses with ground floor shops) — where the flat units were immediately susceptible to conversion into small factories.

Additionally, in Tai Kok Tsui, for example, there were existing buildings that were taken over by specific industries, such as garment making and plastics, as well as buildings where the lower floors were occupied by industrial units with the upper floors residential.[13] The geographer Victor Sit deepened the study on the accommodation of small industries by examining the different types of factories, including private domestic units that were converted to industrial

uses. These accounted for 5.65 per cent of the total private dwelling units in 1971, most of which were housed in the post-war composite buildings — "modern apartment blocks," according to Sit.[14] In a 1998 article, he suggested that the HKSAR government should extend its industrial economy to the larger Pearl River Delta, a scenario which has since been realized and which has witnessed the departure of factories in domestic spaces (FID), with other types of industry, such as guest houses and offices, tending to take their place.[15]

As private co-operatives, many of the earlier generation of composite buildings contain an agglomeration of flats, shops, offices, factories, dormitories, hostels, nurseries, clinics, restaurants, clan associations, temples and hosts of other religious, medical, educational and recreational functions. The architecture — the building block that maximizes the site footprint — manifests the way its developers, architects and builders projected the notions of a consumerist society: each square foot of habitation is rationalized and quantified. Yet the varieties of programs, spatial adaptations and contestations within testify to the combination of pragmatist logic and human whim that drives and defines the city. How did the geopolitical tensions and everyday acts of resistance shape the spaces of the composite buildings and the city? To examine the genealogies of confrontations, we have to return to the middle of the twentieth century when the British Government decided to turn Hong Kong into a manufacturing center instead of handing it over to newly Communist China.

"A PROBLEM OF PEOPLE" AS THE THESIS OF DENSITY

When the British retook Hong Kong in 1945, the population of the colony had been depleted to around 600,000. By 1956, it had increased more than fourfold to over 2.5 million. Amongst these, about one million new arrivals were from Mainland China, of which 700,000 were identified as refugees.[16] The rapid population increase put immense pressure on the provision of housing and public facilities. The first chapter of the Hong Kong Annual Report in 1956 titled "A Problem of People," highlighted the government's sense of urgency. It identified the problem of a vast immigrant population as a paramount challenge that had an influence on all areas of public policy. Amongst the policies, the large-scale resettlement program and public housing program represented major steps undertaken to cope with the changes brought by the post-war influx of Mainland immigrants. It pointed out that because of the scarcity of land in Hong Kong, the actual population was twice the normal capacity of Hong Kong, which was 1.2 million.[17] This was the moment when the

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thesis that Hong Kong, with its shortage of land, was threatened by immigration from Mainland China, became one of the prominent features of public discourse.

On October 10, 1956, the National Day of the Republic of China, violent riots broke out, which started with looting and attacks by pro-Nationalist civilians on pro-Communist civilians and their property in Hong Kong. Known as the Double Ten riots, they were the culmination of tensions accumulated since 1949 by the majority of the population who were outraged at the possibility of Hong Kong being handed back to China if the entrepôt trade could not be maintained. The famine in China, triggered by Mao's Great Leap Forward (begun in 1958) and the 1962 Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, brought an additional 100,000 immigrants who crossed the border into Hong Kong. The colonial institutions inherited from the pre-war era, when Hong Kong was largely a temporary stopover for transient businessmen and workers, were severely challenged by the disenfranchised majority of residents who were little more than colonial subjects, allowed the "privilege" of living in a "foreign" territory. This political set-up was increasingly untenable as the immigrants settled down. The May 1967 street riots were the tipping point that saw the government shaken from its complacency. In the following decades, it began introducing extensive public reforms to avoid political alienation. Housing was at the frontline.

Resettlement was already a "serious" priority upon the British return from 1947.[18] Of particular interest in the Annual Departmental Reports of the Commissioner for Resettlement were the sections that dealt with the economics of multi-story resettlement and the method of calculating the rent per unit. The Public Works Department built the early resettlement estates such as Shek Kip Mei, So Uk and Li Cheng Uk, and the first low-cost housing estate at North Point was built by the former Housing Authority (founded in 1954). The Government Low-cost Housing Program was formally implemented in 1961, to provide higher quality rental accommodation. From 1965, high-rise resettlement blocks with improved facilities, such as a private lavatory and balcony in each flat, were built. At this time, the population in public housing estates reached one million, which accounted for almost a third of the entire population. The deterioration of the political, social, and economic conditions in China, and the Western trade embargo due to the Korean War, ended Hong Kong's role as its premier entrepôt and spearheaded the industrial development of the 1950s. The economic transformation during that decade was spurred by the provision of development conditions for industries. The improvement of local infrastructure and water supplies made land available for large factories to be built, particularly in new towns and low-cost multi-story industrial buildings to be constructed in resettlement estates for light industries.

The development of the first industrial town in Kwun Tong coincided with the establishment of the Housing Authority in 1954.

Concurrently, in the early 1950s, the problem of housing for the middle class was highlighted in the trade journal *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder*. The questions of for whom, what and where to build were the focus of a 1955 issue centered on the need for building societies to erect middle class co-operative housing. [1] The *Lady Grantham Villas* in Taikoktsui Kowloon, built by the non-profit Hong Kong Economic Housing Society, opened in July 1955.[19] The seven five-story blocks of flats following a "strictly practical, utilitarian and serviceable" design were the first examples of subsidized low-cost housing sold to the public. On the one hand, this issue of the journal revealed the inadequacy of one-off housing projects for accommodating the lower class (this was evidenced by the Shek Kip Mei Resettlement Estate) and, on the other hand, it anticipated the implementation of the low-cost housing program starting with North Point Estate in 1957. At the same time, it was the beginning of private interests in affordable housing that saw the spate of composite buildings after 1956. The editors identified the difficulty of obtaining financial assistance on a reasonable interest basis, the limited level ground and impossibility of suburban growth, as well as the need for the improvement of roads and transport facilities. They recommended three ways in which the government could promote cooperative building of middle-class housing: by town planning suitable areas and improving road access to them; by selling land by private treaty to *bona fide* and approved cooperative societies at a reasonable value; and by extending financial assistance for this class of building.[20]

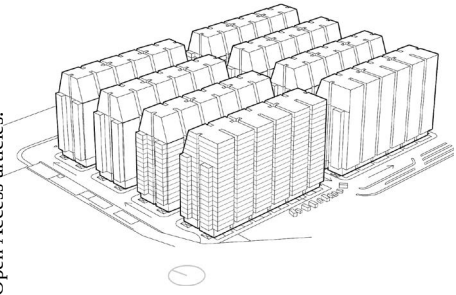


1 E.Y. Wu, C.N. Chow and Associates, Compact Flats in Big Demand by Middle Class. From *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder*, 1964.

Multiple Ownerships and the Mortgage System

A decisive shift occurred in the meantime, as the Chinese developer Ng Tor Tai introduced the notion of multiple ownership to Hong Kong's real estate market.[21] Prior to 1953, real estate transactions involved entire buildings. Whereas land sales by public auction continued, developers could now resell parcels and units to other small-time developers and individual buyers. Immediately following this, in 1954, a developer named Henry Fok Ying Tung introduced the mortgage system.[22] In 1956, Fok's National Investment Company Limited built the Empire Court in Causeway Bay, a seventeen-story apartment block designed by C.T. Wong. It was the tallest building in Hong Kong at the time of its completion. The first three floors were given to shops and offices, the upper floors contained apartments ranging from studios to three-bedroom apartments and the seventeenth floor was a penthouse for Fok himself.[23] By then, there were more than 500 newly-registered developers who had secured financial support from banks, and government policy was

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2 Man Wah Sun Chuen in Jordan, Kowloon, 1967.

favorable to the demolition of old buildings. 1800 buildings were completed in 1960 alone, totaling an investment of HK$11.5 billion, which was almost twice of that in 1958.[24] While most of these were built by private developers, some building societies were involved too. Earlier, in a 1955 issue of the trade journal *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* featuring the housing projects built by The Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, the Hong Kong Housing Society, and building co-operatives (such as the Belcher's), as well as the government's resettlement schemes, the editorial states explicitly the return on capital investment as an incentive for the building of middle-class co-operative housing by building societies.

Volumetric, Vertical and Setback

In 1955, the Building (Planning) Regulations in Hong Kong were revised and the height limit of buildings was increased to one and a half times the width of the adjacent road.[25] The setback act was introduced to prevent buildings from obstructing natural light in footpaths and the streets. The impact on private apartment blocks was visible. In the main thoroughfares of Kowloon — where the transaction of land blocks was high and much building activity was to take place — in the following few decades, apartment complexes the size of an urban block with the top few floors set-back began to appear. The developers hired reputable foreign émigrés and local architects, including Eric Cumine, Szeto Wai, Lamb Ping Yin, John Sousa Moraes, and Su Gin-Djih, to design these composite buildings. Some builder-developers like Tai Cheong Construction Company hired realtor companies that provided architectural design services. Harriman Realty Company Limited was the architectural office responsible for the design of the sixteen-story Mirador Mansion on Nathan Road in Tsim Sha Tsui Kowloon, in 1959. Comprising three lower floors of shops, it occupied an entire block. Its eighteen-story neighbor, Chungking Mansions, designed by American-trained Lamb of P.Y. Lamb, Hazeland & Co., was completed in 1961. Moraes had designed Ocean View Court in 1957 for Kiu Fung Investment Co. Ltd., a consortium of a developer firm, a construction firm and managers of the whole project. All these composite buildings contain elevators.

A new regulatory measure based on plot ratio and site coverage was introduced in 1962 and enacted in 1966 for controlling building density.[26] Prior to this date, many developers tried to obtain planning permission. In the ten-year period between the two ordinance amendments, thousands of composite buildings were approved, and many were built in the late 1960s and 1970s. One of the most spectacular of these is Man Wah Sun Chuen, a development of

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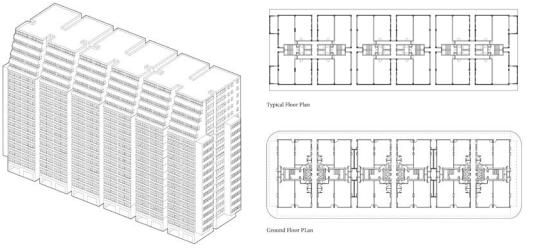
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eight eighteen-story apartment blocks in Jordan, Kowloon (1964-1967). [2] Each block contains about 419 units and houses more than 1,300 people. This is comparable to the Unité d'Habitation block in Marseilles (1947-52) which contains 337 apartments, a hotel and shops. The then newly established Ka Lin Real Estate hired AA-trained Cumine who had taught at St. John's University in Shanghai, together with other proponents of Bauhaus ideology, and ran the most prolific architectural office in post-war Hong Kong.[27] Cumine's massive block with its tapered profile reveals the economic imperative behind the literal and formal translation of the 1956 Development Control regulation of buildings by volume.[3] The estate towers fortress-like over the streets that front it, forming an urban wall that stood defiantly against a shoreline continually reconfigured by reclaiming.

Reinforced Concrete Construction and the Predominance of the Brutalist Aesthetic

The 1953 Korean War had a significant impact on the development of the construction industry in Hong Kong with investment from many Shanghainese entrepreneurs and builders who chose to remain in Hong Kong. Having fled the Chinese mainland during the political upheavals of the 1940s, they brought in building technology like fine plastering and piling machinery, and advanced the use of reinforced concrete, which was introduced to the colony in 1947.[28] The Shek Kip Mei Resettlement Estate, constructed by Fok Lei Company in a year following the 1953 major fire that rendered 58,000 people homeless, was the first housing project to use concrete structural walls.[29] By the mid-1950s, reinforced concrete had become the most common building material for housing construction in Hong Kong.[30] From 1960, when it was obvious that they would no longer return to the Chinese mainland, Shanghainese contractors ramped up their investments in Hong Kong and introduced larger and more advanced machinery like cranes and large concrete piling. As the construction industry was the main sponsor of *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder*, the buildings that were reported on in the journal were the main protagonists in the advertisements of the industry products.[31] There was nothing hidden as to the forces at play behind building form and aesthetics.

In Britain, in December 1955, architectural theorist Reyner Banham had just published an article titled "The New Brutalism" in the *Architectural Review*. He identified the term to have originated as a polemic of anti-Communist abuse which was formalized by architects like Louis Kahn, Alison and Peter Smithson as a "ruthless adherence



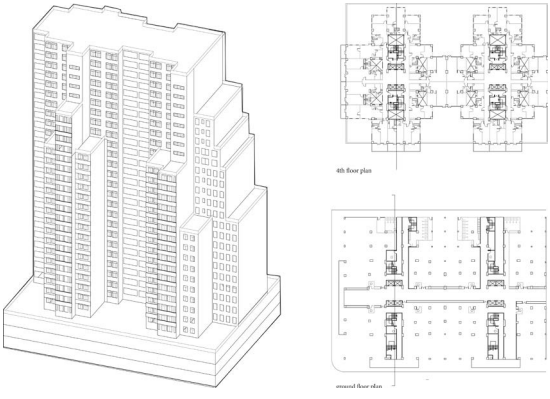
3 Axonometric drawing and typical floor plans of Manking Building, one of eight eighteen-story blocks in Man Wah Sun Chuen in Jordan, Kowloon, designed by Eric Cumine, 1967.

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to one of the basic moral imperatives of the Modern Movement — honesty in structure and material".[32] He defined the "New Brutalist building" as endowed with "memorability as an image," "clear exhibition of structure," and "valuation of materials 'as found'".[33] In terms of the scale and intensity of building, Hong Kong easily rivaled Britain in the 1950s. In particular, the construction of new brutalist buildings — all those that satisfied Banham's three criteria — far surpassed the few examples that he discussed in his essay. Following Banham's argument, the defining difference was that the composite buildings in Hong Kong were sites of political and economic contingency, while in Britain this architecture was ideologically driven. The Hong Kong designers did not intend these buildings to embody Communist or anti-Communist ideas (anti-symbolic or anti-heroic), yet the intersection of political, economic and social factors produced these large concrete blocks that contained spaces of domesticity and livelihoods, deeply entangled with the urban imperatives of the city.

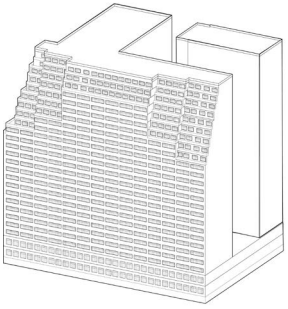
FROM HOMES FOR THE URBAN CLASS TO SITES OF RESISTANCE

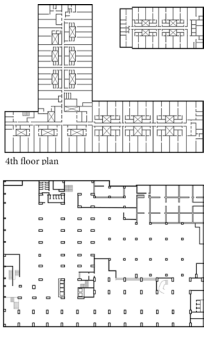
Two episodes centered around four, or rather, two pairs of composite buildings as protagonists of urban contingency in 1966 and 1967. The narratives and contexts surrounding the development of these buildings from their original purpose, as homes for the urban middle-class, to the deterioration of their status in the city, as enclaves of political and economic disenfranchised *others* (refugees, prostitutes, illegal businesses, radical leftists), revealed a society undergoing tremendous transition in the 1960s. These spaces, akin to Michel Foucault's heterotopias, which thrive on non-hegemonic conditions, were already actual sites where the middle-class Chinese family confronted multifarious others every day. Within a few years of their opening, the intense interiorization — subdivision and interior built-up of rooms and spaces — of these blocks, springing from the need to accommodate numbers of people far exceeding the original capacities, catapulted these buildings to the forefront of the escalating tensions between the city's predominantly Chinese migrant population and the British colonial government;



4 Axonometric drawing and floor plans of Kiu Kwan Mansion in North Point, Hong Kong Island, designed by Steven Yue, 1963.

these conflicts were publicized in the local press media.





5 Axonometric drawing and floor plans of Metropole Building in North Point, Hong Kong Island, designed by Tam Heung Sing, 1972.

Protest Street and Hideout Homes

The twenty-seven story Kiu Kwan Mansion completed in 1966 was the tallest building in Hong Kong at the time of its completion. It contained 624 units each between 400 and 600 square feet in size.[4] In 1967, the building was home and refuge for many of the leftists involved in the 1967 riots. Between May and December 1967, fifty-one people were killed, more than eight hundred injured, and over eight thousand "bombs" were detonated (of which 1,100 were real) in the clash between the pro-Communists and the colonial establishment.[34] North Point was then predominantly populated by Fujianese, many of whom supported the leftists, and resided in Kiu Kwan Mansion. The building was designed by Hong Kong architect Steven Yue directly across from the twenty-three-storied New Metropole Building (later known simply as Metropole Building), designed by Hong Kong architect Tam Heung Sing. [5]

The former housed many employees of Mainland-owned companies and leftist union offices. According to police constable James Elms, who lived in North Point and worked at the Bay View Police Station nearby, on the ground floor of Kiu Kwan Mansion was Wah Fung Chinese Products Emporium, known as the base of operations "for everything as far as the left went."[35] He was at home asleep at 1pm on 6 May when tensions escalated at the Hong Kong Artificial Flower Works' San Po Kong Factory. Workers disgruntled over wages and the dismissal of twenty-nine machine operators had been locked out, and demonstrations were held as workers from other factories joined in.[36] The violence reached its height in July and only subsided in December.

In July 1967, tenants of the two buildings began moving out for fear of being involved with the leftists. Most left their possessions behind. A tenant of Metropole Building interviewed by the *South China Morning Post* revealed that the Communists caused panic when they converted the first and second floors of the building into what looked like hospital casualty wards.[37] He also said that they went from floor to floor urging the tenants to join them in "heroic struggle against suppression." A few weeks later, the raids of leftist strongholds Kiu Kwan Mansion and Metropole Building began at 6.40am on 4 August. Police cordoned off King's Road and Tong Shui Road nearby. Police landed on the rooftop of Kiu Kwan Mansion in helicopters from a British aircraft carrier. The staircase

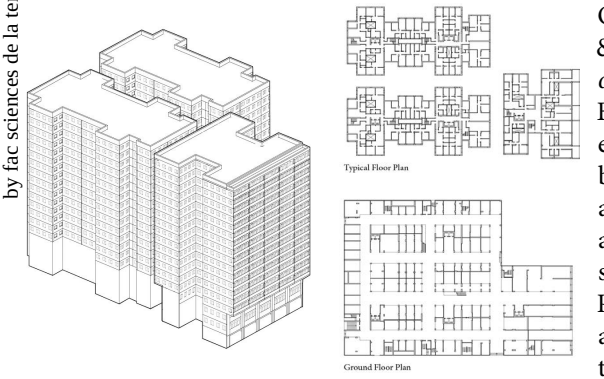
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to the roof was also sown with traps such as glass bottles and hidden explosives. A *Fujian* Association on the seventh floor, suspected of being a hideout for the patriots, was empty.[38] Several units on the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh floors were vacant and unfurnished and contained makeshift tents. Another team of policemen entered the department store through the rear stairs as the entrances to the ground floor arcade were covered with live wires, obstacles, hidden mines of bottled gas bombs, and traps. A "watch tower" was found at a hidden corner in the staircase.[39]

Across the street, police hopped off from the rope stairs hung from the helicopter, as the rooftop of Metropole was not wide enough for landing. They discovered that the first two floors of the Metropole Building, which was still under construction, had been converted into a triage center. A well-concealed and efficiently equipped secret hospital was discovered at the rear of the third floor of Metropole Building, with a secret entrance from the back of the house. Windows were painted black and installed with wooden blinds.[40] The hospital consisted of a casualty ward, an operating theatre containing an operating table from Shanghai, a radiography clinic, a sterilizing plant for medical instruments, an X-ray machine and a dispensary stocked with pills and bandages made in the Chinese mainland.[41] Another small clinic was found on the third floor, which provided supplies to the hospital above. A collection of spears and other weapons were found on the twenty-third floor.[42] The building was cordoned, but residents could get in and out of the building with the guidance of the police.

Metropole Building reopened for tenant occupation in 1972. The building, comprising a three-story plinth and an L-shaped block and slab block each twenty-stories high, contained a total of 1,037 units. For the rest of the decade, it was home to doctors' clinics, export companies, the Hong Kong Conservancy Association, the Hong Kong Christian Council, and the main distributor offices for Asia Health Equipment Company specializing in "modern health equipment for Southeast Asia," Miller News Operation (distributor for Harper & Row Collier-Macmillan), *Arts of Asia* magazine and Aron Enterprises (distributor for sports equipment). A host of other businesses including a travel agency, a publicity company, a manufacturing company specializing in clothing from Pakistan, an escort company and a Japanese restaurant occupied the second and third floors.



6 Axonometric drawing and floor plans of Chungking Mansions on Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, designed by P.W. Lamb Hazeland & Co., 1961.

Metropole International Department Stores Ltd. Supermarket – "the largest and most modern supermarket in Hong Kong" – opened in the basement in January 1975. The ground floor was taken up by a jewelry store and Banque Nationale de Paris, which opened their North Point branch on the ground floor in November that same year. Notwithstanding the owners' attempt to revamp the building from leftist triage to international center, a large Chinese community with Mainland allegiances remained, as evidenced by the many practitioners of Chinese medicine and herbalists, and the concentration of clans and associations from the Guangdong region of South China.

In the months leading up to the police raids, the interior common spaces of the two composite buildings were a continuum of leftist space that extended from King's Road into the shop floors and up to the double-loaded corridors to the roof. Chinese pro-Communist propaganda intermingled with daily commercial activities on the street. The column-gridded open plan of the first two floors in the partially occupied Metropole Building corresponded spatially to the open wards of hospitals and was easily converted to a triage center. The labyrinthine Wah Fung Chinese Products Emporium on the ground floor of Kiu Kwan Mansion was a calculated deterrence for trespassers and police.

Workshops and Factory-homes

A year earlier, across the Victoria Harbour in Tsim Sha Tsui, two composite buildings — Chungking Mansions and Mirador Mansion — were bases for "missile" launches during the intense three-day riots that escalated from peaceful demonstrations against the colonial administration's decision to increase the fare of the Star Ferry crossing by twenty-five percent.[43] For a brief moment, between 6 and 8 April 1966, the two buildings, among others along the main commercial thoroughfare Nathan Road, were embroiled in an urban warfare where protestors hurled flowerpots, bottles and rubbish at police officers patrolling the street during a "sweep."[44] Hidden inside the densely occupied buildings, the police could only stop the "missiles" by firing shots in the direction from which they were hurled. The sheer size and density of the block made it impossible for the police to locate the perpetrators.

Completed in 1961 and 1959, respectively, Chungking Mansions and Mirador Mansion were microcosms of Tsim Sha Tsui's transformation from a predominantly residential era with trading activities at the harbor to a highly mixed residential-industrial-commercial district after World War Two. [6][7] Early advertisements for Chungking Mansions in *Wah Kiu Yat Po* (*Overseas Chinese Daily News*) encapsulated the initial public image of these composite buildings as grand stately homes ("mansions"), targeted at middle-

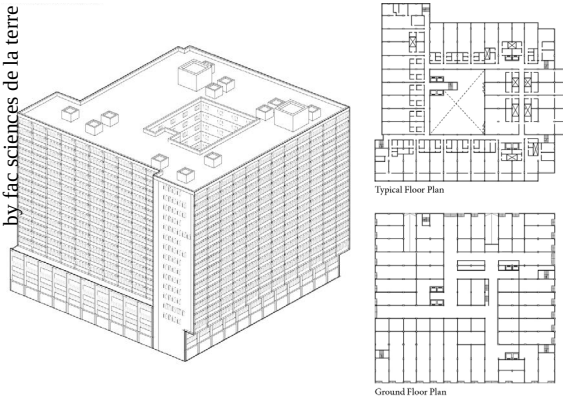
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class Hong Kong and overseas Chinese buyers keen to own a home and a shop within close proximity. In his brief account of Chungking Mansions' history through interviews with its original residents, sociologist Gordon Matthews highlights the disjunction between the "high-class" image of the building and its actual shoddy construction and diverse mix of tenants by the late 1960s, largely due to the onset of the Vietnam War, which saw the transformation of the area into a red-light district, frequented by American naval personnel transiting the city. These spaces in Chungking Mansions were described by Hong Kong-based novelist Xu Xi in her 2005 novel, *Chinese Walls*, which was set in 1960s Hong Kong. There were already hostels, restaurants, clothing and leather goods stores, watches and jewelry shops, and a plethora of small businesses. In the eyes of the author-narrator, the protagonist of the short story is a young prostitute with orange hair who embodies Hong Kong's colonial status — a Chinese territory on loan to the British.[45]

Barely a few years after its completion, the domestic status of Chungking Mansions changed from a family-based and private condition to a more public one, with a heterogeneous and transient working-class population. By the late 1970s, many of the original Hong Kong Chinese families had moved elsewhere and were replaced by new Chinese immigrants and South Asians who began to buy the units at lower costs than other locations in the city. The reconfigured "shop-house" in a three-bedroom unit became obvious: it used the front as the workshop, one room for the office as "shopfront" and the other two rooms in the back for domestic purposes. It became typical for up to twenty occupants, including a three-generation family, and employed shop workers, to live and work together in an eighty meter-square unit.

One block north, Mirador Mansion was already fully managed as a co-operative building in which every tenant owned his/her own shop or apartment. Developed and designed by Harriman Realty, Nathan Road was still densely lined with prewar shop-houses (*tonglaus*) at its completion in 1959. Advertised in 1957 as a "new skyscraper in Kowloon … with 800 residential and business units," by the time of the architect's final submission to the Building Department, the number of units had been increased to 1,505! The upper floor plan configuration, composed of units along a common corridor oriented towards an internal open courtyard, was set up for use as an



7 Axonometric drawing and floor plans of Mirador Mansion on Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, designed by Harriman Realty, 1959.

apartment or a shop. Fifteen floors of blank units, each equipped with a toilet and kitchen, were built above a commercial podium comprising three floors of shops. By the mid-1960s, on the eve of the street curfew in April 1966, the building had already been flagged for its shoddy construction and poor maintenance.[46] As with Chungking Mansions, Mirador Mansion's density was exacerbated by the influx of refugees at the height of the Vietnam War and Cultural Revolution in the Chinese mainland. Their reputation as "problematic buildings" reached a peak in 1988, when two electrical fires — one in Chungking in February and the other in Mirador in August — drew public attention to the buildings' overcrowded conditions and overloaded capacity.[47] The Chief Fire Officer of the Fire Protection Bureau estimated that there were at least 1,500 hostels ranging from single rooms to multi-story businesses, although there were only 800 registered addresses.[48]

Rampant subdivision and incessant subletting became the usual practice in these composite buildings. On the one hand, this showed that intense privatization went on to the extent that nobody knew how many people actually lived in these buildings, or who were first-, second- or third-level tenants. The retail podium developed into a trading place that became part of a vertical network of shops with storage spaces on the lower levels, and dormitories and owners' homes on the upper levels. This type of interior emporia departed from the contemporary single owner-developer multi-tenanted malls that proliferated in Hong Kong. There were two immediate consequences of the multiple ownerships in the composite building: firstly, the possibility of social mobility for the original owners; secondly, there was little incentive for overall maintenance of the public common spaces and services, which were continually encroached upon. Subsequently, the opening of the Tsuen Wan mass transit railway (MTR) line in 1982, with a stop in Tsim Sha Tsui, saw a further increase in tourist presence on Nathan Road in addition to the substantial number of Indian and Pakistani entrepreneurs and South African traders.[49] Many of the Indians had already had businesses in the area since earlier in the twentieth century, and others were decommissioned army and police officers turned business operators, whilst most of the Africans were transient residents who found their temporary homes in guesthouses developed in these composite buildings.

THE CITY IN A BUILDING

Dwelling upon the euphoria of development, which has only led to the volumetric transformation of the composite building to the podium-tower configuration, this brief excursion into midcentury

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Hong Kong offers a glimpse of how the experience of the composite building has been shaped by the very conditions it creates. What if the large-scale composite building, a variant of the utopian megastructures envisioned by the architects attracted in Hong Kong by developers in the latter half of the twentieth century, is allowed to realize its fullest architectural potential of a city in a building? What if the relationship between a dwelling and the city is consummated in the most integrated way possible? Subsumed by the city's rapid densification and market-driven development, the massive composite building remains standing today as testimony to the kind of pragmatic utopianism that drives and defines Hong Kong's built environment. As a building on a scale that encompasses the complexities and densities of the city, the composite building presents a crucial point of entry for the rethinking and reinvention of the current state of urban habitation and preservation. As housing in Hong Kong is still undergoing an unending crisis, architect Szeto Wai's appeal against speculation in his 1959 inaugural address as President of the Hong Kong Society of Architects offers a poignant point of reflection on the current state of affairs:

> "Speculation promotes blight and obsolescence, and it is in the interest of the public that a curb be put on this indiscriminate commercialism. I appeal to all members of this society to exercise their social conscience in performing their professional duties, and to Government to discourage speculative development. Our Professional Practices committee concerns itself with the promulgation and execution of a code of ethics and I would like to suggest that the promotion of this social conscience comes within its province. As we stand in the threshold of a new decade, let us resolve it will usher in a new era of architecture so that when posterity comes to pass a verdict on our work it will say 'they were architects indeed.'"[50]

Szeto Wai's appeal on behalf of the professional body did not anticipate the events that would unfold in the 1960s, with a Hong Kong Chinese exodus in specific parts of the city. Many homeowners in composite buildings sold or rented their units and fled to other parts of the city. Most of those who rented did not return to them. Now almost half a century old, the demise of the composite building seems inevitable. Yet, with their multiple ownerships, the co-existence of the illegal and extralegal entities, and the interconnected urban networks of which many of these buildings are a part, they have become resistant strongholds against speculative development and redevelopment. Paradoxically, although produced by building speculation, they are now amongst the most resilient structures in the city. When demolition is not imminent, under the present

pressures of development, many of these large composite buildings are undergoing the transformation into typical *safe* and *generic* mall-environments, subject to perpetual surveillance. Arguably, multi-pronged public and private initiatives to convert them as such were already set in motion the moment their plans were approved in the 1950s.

The mid-century composite building appears to have momentarily side-stepped urban renewal, as the numerous ownerships and tenant subdivisions make it difficult for developers and the government to claim the site as a single legal entity for redevelopment. Far from being a "dinosaur of a future past" — Reyner Banham's description of the megastructural visions of the period — the composite building is a potential site for continuing reflections on contemporary development, concerning not only the configurations of dwelling units, but also the reinvigoration of actual lived communal spaces. This is especially crucial for a city in which space is closing in on itself, public space is increasingly experienced and defined within air-conditioned consumerist environments, and urban ethnic enclaves are produced with little remedial measures or alternatives. Take for example, Kiu Kwan Mansion and the Metropole Building in North Point. Both were Communist hideouts during the 1967 riots; now Kiu Kwan is home to various Fujianese clans in the region, and Metropole contains a large community of medical practitioners; the traffic in and out of these apartment blocks and the ever-changing use of the private and communal spaces worries the building management.

The composite building development in Hong Kong presented itself as a particular insert in the global narrative of modern architecture. It offered a glimpse of the possible coexistence of a contingent population of individuals and collectives dwelling collectively in a continually contested relationship with each other, the developer and the government. Modern architecture in its most recognizable postwar brutalist guise was densely inhabited and vernacularized. The emergence in the late 1960s of the shopping podium and residential high-rise as predominant form up to the present signified a decisive shift from *a city of people* to *a city of surveillance*, since the sharp delineation of the communal circulatory space and individual private space allowed for easy physical and visual control.

In that regard, film director Wong Kar Wai's oneiric depiction of Chungking Mansions' interior captured the apex of colonial transition that has come to pass. In 1997, the cultural theorist Ackbar Abbas called the building "a kind of down-market-mall-cum-flophouse," meaning a "truly heterotopic space and living contradiction."[51] Post-1997, the composite building continued to be occupied by diverse groups and individuals: owners and managers,

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traders and middlemen, temporary workers, asylum seekers, domestic helpers, sex workers, addicts and tourists.[52] Everyone was captured in the surveillance system installed by the Incorporated Owners of Chungking Mansions.[53] A block north, Mirador Mansion — home to a large community of tailors, fabric makers and in recent decades, guesthouses — appeared to be its more introverted counterpart. The first three floors of the podium contain more than 200 shops, while a third of the upper floors consists of a mix of studio apartments, guest houses, tailors and textile traders. [54] **[8]**

In 2009, the Hong Kong Government, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority, launched a HK$1 billion "Operation Building Bright," to provide subsidies and one-stop technical assistance for owners of about 1,000 30-year old, or more, dilapidated buildings to carry out repair works. On June 30, 2012, the Building Department fully implemented the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS), in order to handle the problem of building neglect at source. The majority of buildings to be affected by the two-pronged approach of cleanup and checkup were the half-century old composite buildings. Chungking Mansions was "cleaned up" before the Operation. In 2004, a full security system was installed with television screens mounted at every elevator lobby, and every tenant was listed in its directory. In 2011, on the occasion of the building's 50th anniversary, the Incorporated Owners enforced an exterior "clean up." All exterior signage was removed and the entire building façade was painted a homogenous grey. This exterior redressing was heralded by the *Sunday Morning Post* as marking the building's transformation "from eyesore to icon."[55] **[9]** Behind the grey homogenous façade, the introverted world of the interior belies a contested surface waiting to be rethought and redesigned.

Yet, the kaleidoscopic environment of Chungking Mansions through the lens of Wong and his cinematographer Christopher Doyle is the "authentic" *other* Hong Kong that visitors still seek when they make their "touristic" pilgrimage to the building complex, for it extends the popular imagination of illicit activities, clandestine affairs, and ambiguous spaces of triad gangs, grey traders, police



8 Left: Ground floor shops from the first floor mezzanine of Chungking Mansions, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon. Right: Ground floor shows from the first floor mezzanine of Mirador Mansion, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon.



9 Left: Chungking Mansions taken after the façade was "cleaned up" by the Incorporated Owners. Right: Upgrading works of individual units at Mirador Mansion.

and hired killers portrayed in Hong Kong films. After the Kowloon Walled City, Chungking Mansions seemed to be the only remaining stronghold for the coexistence of the legal, illegal and extra-legal. Anthropologist Gordan Mathews' year-long field study of the social lives within the building complex added another dimension to the reading of the Chungking Mansions. Rather than celebrating the illegalities, he focused on the agglomeration of multiple ethnicities that passed through the complex, justifying its label as "ghetto at the center of the world."

Mathews' appellation is a socio-cultural irony. Whereas a ghetto typically refers to the agglomeration of a similar ethnicity, his study of Chungking reveals that there are at least 120 nationalities that have dwelled in or at least passed through the building complex. Leo Ou-Fan Lee, a keen commentator of Chinese culture, echoed Mathews' irony in his 2008 overview of Hong Kong, affirming that "the largely silent Indian minority in Kowloon is scarcely noticed by the Chinese majority."[56] As such, the title "Ghetto in the World" uncovers the cultural paradox that underpins the identifying formation of modern Hong Kong. In this composite building, the parallel history of a less than racially homogeneous metropolis is played out. It is this interior world, this "jungle" where bodies and things collide and hide, which fascinated filmmakers, sociologists, anthropologists and other seekers of alternative culture and history beneath the official "where east meets west" line. Indeed, it was not until Mathews' study that a deeper dissection of the building was conducted in order to excavate the *other* city.

Architects and urban planners have invariably stayed away from the discourses of its interior, keeping their distance; at most, they analyzed the singularly of the composite building as a typological massing driven by building regulations. Even its envelope of various cantilevered neon signs, which had excited academics and tourists alike (though a bane to the regulators), has not been a choice site for speculative design intervention. By the time the Incorporated Owners enforced the exterior "clean up" in 2011, the grey homogenous façade of this introverted world of the interior hardly offered itself as a contested surface to be rethought or

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redesigned. Nevertheless, the composite building is complicit in the narration of Hong Kong's urban history. These buildings manifest a moment in which speculative urban development under the colonial enterprise produced nuanced and fluid spatial associations, to the extent that the limits between the urban and the domestic were perpetually redrawn by the contestations among the various stakeholders. By the 1980s, the single-developer residential tower with commercial podium building type-form replaced the multi-owner volumetric block which was the dominant configuration of the composite building. At the same time, this change marked the beginning of the end of the "composite" in terms of social affiliations and intermingling within these buildings, and portended the urban forms and "generic" spaces of the financial city driven by the rationale of global speculation.

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Might all the pieces of ruins put together present
yet another architecture? Ridiculous the great heads on money,
laughable at the straight faces running things. We pass in this
corridor in the changing surface of the pond by chance
our reflections rippling a little. We'd rather not bend;
neither of us is in love with flags or fireworks.
So what's left are these fragmentary, unrepresentative words,
not uttered amidst the buildings of chrome and glass, but beside
a circular pond riddled with patterns of moving signs.

—Leung Ping-Kwan, *City at the End of Time*, 1986, 87

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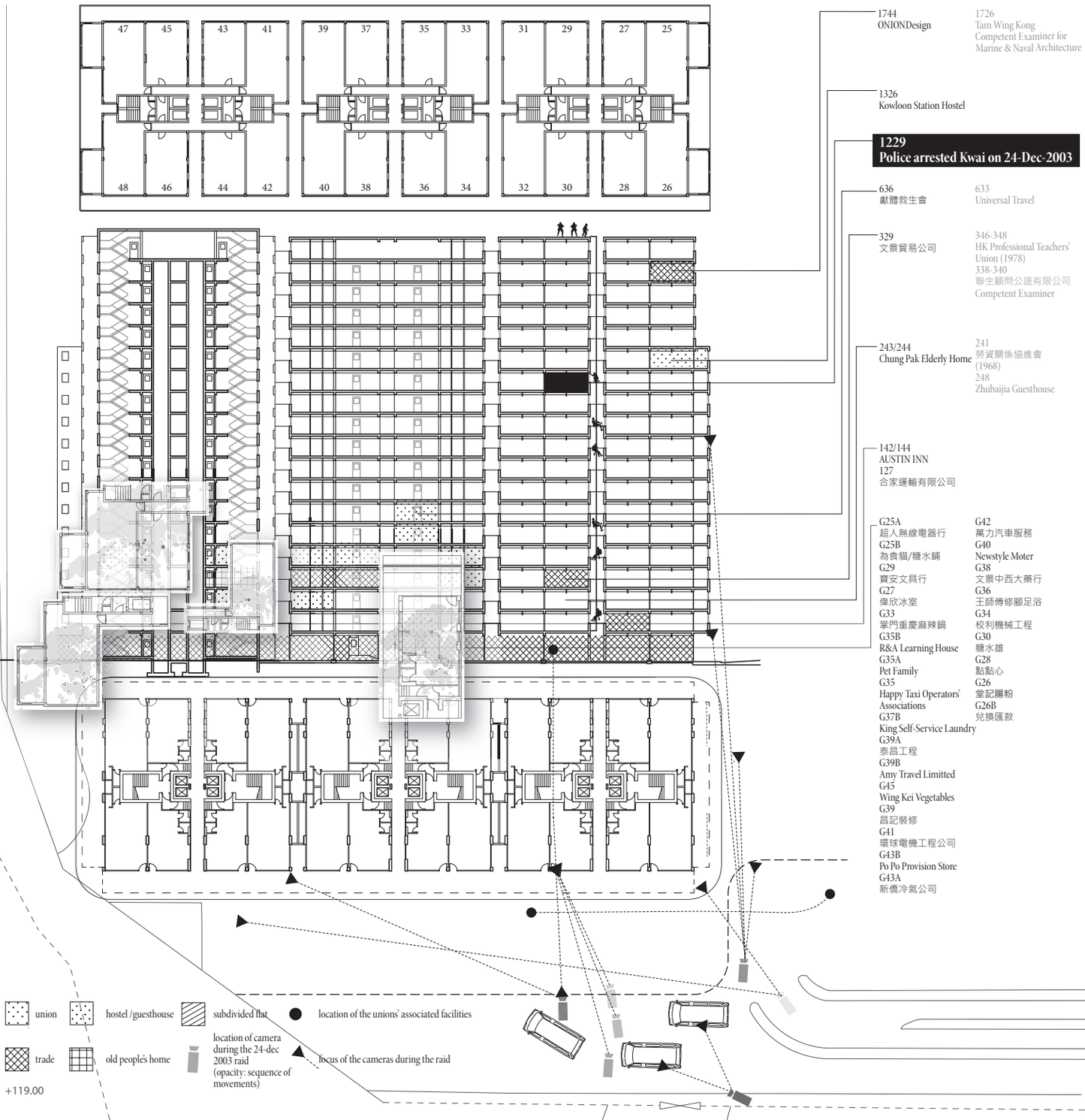
5
NARRATIVES:
Composite Building Studies

Emerging amidst the economic, social and political exigencies of Hong Kong when the colony was experiencing the influx of a great number of immigrants as a consequence of the 1949 Revolution in mainland China, the high-rise composite building indicated a number of shifts from earlier conceptions of high-density housing. It was a conflation of shop, factory, temple, clinic, crèche, flat and more, within a massive building block. As a building conceived at the scale of an urban block, it manifests the way its developers, architects and builders projected the notions of a consumerist society onto the architectural aesthetic and organizational structure of the building. Each unit of living is rationalized and a quantifiable value is placed onto each cubic dimension of everyday living. This was a significant departure from a socialist conception of housing as a welfare provision. In that regard, the composite building attested to the deterministic split between public and private housing in Hong Kong, the former was ushered in by the building of the first public housing estate in Shek Kip Mei in 1953.

The documentation and analyses of the composite building typology are urgent. In the first decade of the enactment of the 1962 Ordinance, over 1,500 composite buildings were built in Hong Kong. Almost all of them remain standing today. These building developments contain populations in the thousands. Almost all of them are located on flatlands developed from dockyards on the edge of the city, and benefited from the planning ambiguity to become coastal districts. Large plots derived from huge dockyards and mixed light industrial-housing complexes started to develop; due to the scale of the development and isolation from existing urban fabrics, such cases tend to become self-sustaining communities. The largest and most populous contain units with almost 10,000 inhabitants, excluding unregistered tenants and illegal squatters. This figure does not include illegal tenants and short-term boarders in the many guest-houses within.

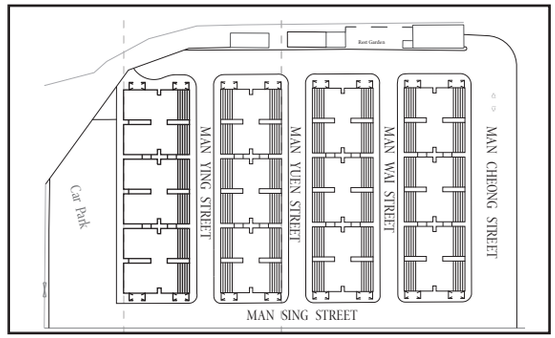
Combining field documentation, visual analyses, ethnographic observations, mapping and orthographic drawing, the following studies of selected composite buildings conducted between 2012 and 2016, reveal how they are deeply connected to the geopolitics and economics of the city and the region. These composite buildings were constructed according to the 1955 Building (Planning) Ordinance and each contains more than 400 units, housing between 1500 and 10,000 inhabitants.

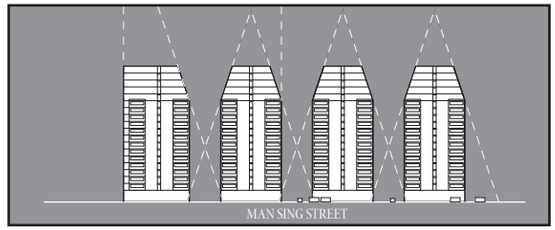
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00:00:00
SYNOPSIS

The officers in charge of the operation inspect the site. The target site is an urban island block surrounded by several construction sites and can be accessed in all directions, inculding the harbor to its south and west.





01:30:00
CORDON AREAS

120 armed police seal off the streets around all the blocks and set up a control centre on Man Wai Street.

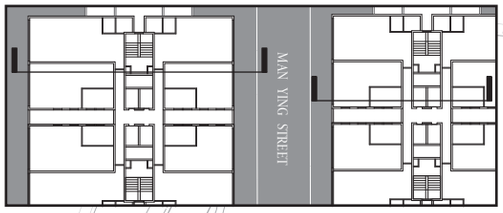
[MAN KING BUILDING]
KWAI PING HUNG'S ARREST:
A Space-Time Visualization

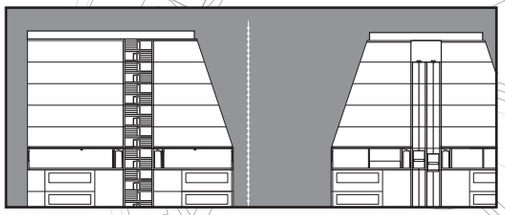
On Christmas Eve 2003, 120 Hong Kong police made a dramatic arrest of the territory's most wanted man in a flat in Man Wah Sun Chuen. Within four minutes, he and his accomplice were nabbed and their hideout raided. It was the shortest arrest in Hong Kong's history.

Man King building in Man Wah Sun Chuen is a private development of eight eighteen-story blocks of mixed-use buildings in Jordan, Kowloon, designed by the Hong Kong-based Eric Cumine Associates (1964-1970). It contains 419 units and houses more than 1,500 people. The massive block with its tapered profile reveals the economic imperative behind the formal translation of the 1956 Development Control regulation of buildings by volume.

The estate now stands as a gateway between the mid-twentieth century industrializing Hong Kong and the contemporary globalized urban life radically changed by new rapid transportation and communication technologies.

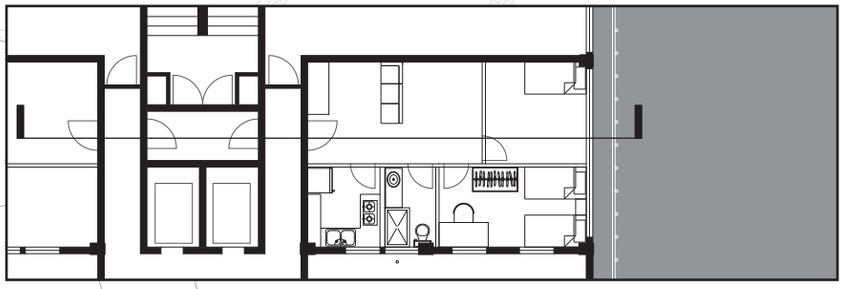
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02:45:00
OCCUPATION

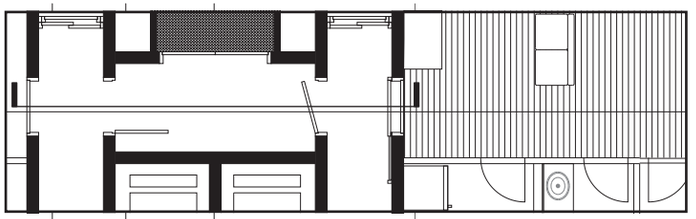
Armed officers start to occupy the whole stairwell. Several "flying tigers" abseil from the roof along the scaffold on the facade. Surveillance equipment is also set up at the unit across the road.

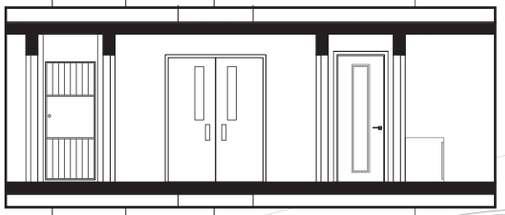




03:20:00
AMBUSH

Hooded and armed officers of the Hong Kong Police Force Special Duties Unit (SDU) hide in ambush along the interior hallway and on the scaffold outside the window.



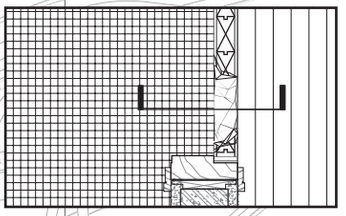


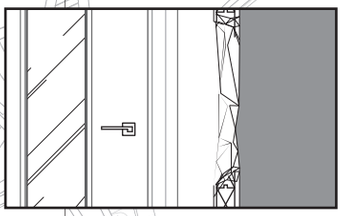
03:30:05
BOMBING RAID

The track down began with the explosion of the gate and front door of the apartment

03:30:05
DOORS BLASTED

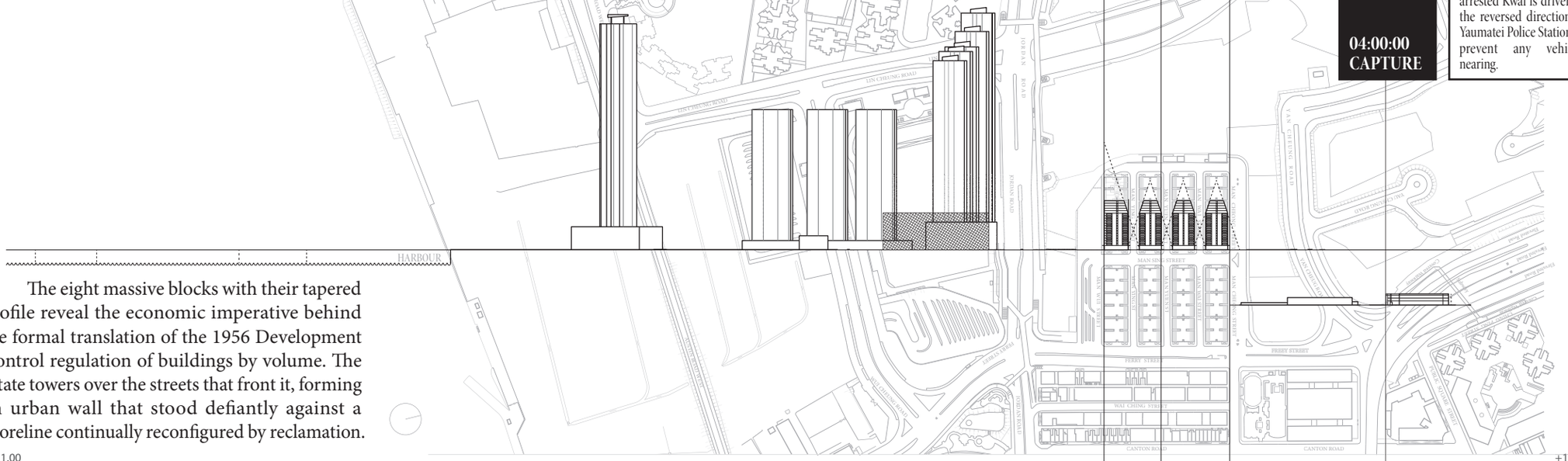
The SDU team breaks into the apartment room and seizes the unsuspecting, sleeping Kwai





04:00:00
CAPTURE

The patrol wagon with the arrested Kwai is driven in the reversed direction to Yaumatei Police Station, to prevent any vehicles nearing.



The eight massive blocks with their tapered profile reveal the economic imperative behind the formal translation of the 1956 Development Control regulation of buildings by volume. The estate towers over the streets that front it, forming an urban wall that stood defiantly against a shoreline continually reconfigured by reclamation.

+121.00

+122.00

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2212
註冊中醫師李火堅
2206
香港麝妃(燒灰)同鄉會

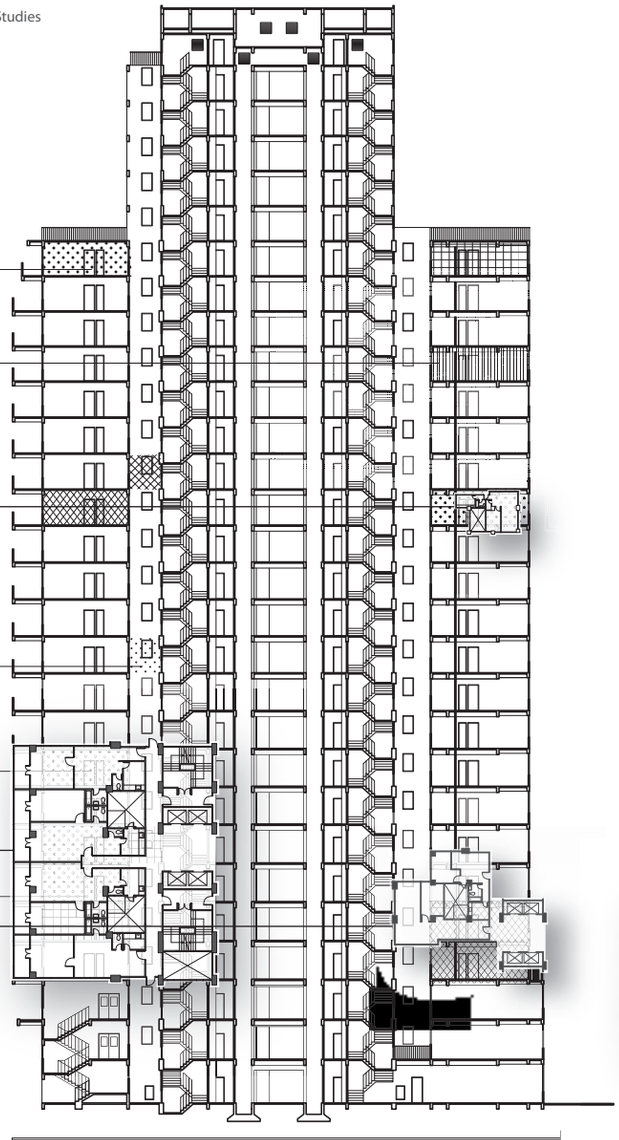
1909
香港東區各界協會
1912
Well Prime Limited

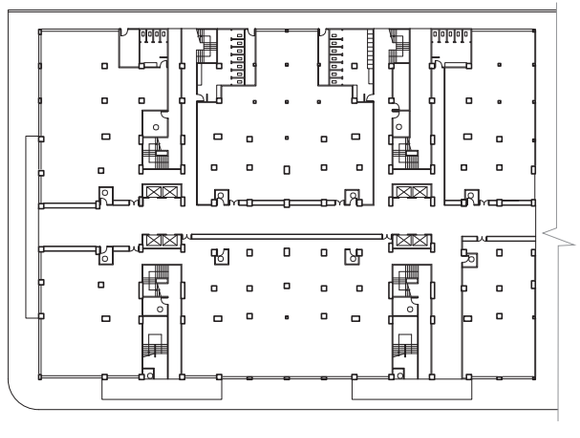
1601
祺源貿易公司

1513
石獅市五星(五社)旅港同鄉會 /
水西宮保生大帝吳真人
1507
聖蓮企業(香港)公司
1405
Sun Luen Tat Trading Co
Top Concept Garments Co.
1305
天元棋院
1108
香港石龜許厝同鄉會(玄天上帝)

0806
旅港錦尚同鄉會
0712
中醫師王素霞

0608
香港福建同鄉中醫中心
0604-0607
香港福建同鄉會 / 香港國民教育促進會
0506
香港晉江南莊同鄉會/
香港古婆莊天竺庵佛委員會
0414
石獅彭田旅港同鄉會有限公司
0412
華民公司
0409
雅新貿易公司
0408
開心建設會保健室
0308
祇園精舍
303
美美髮型屋



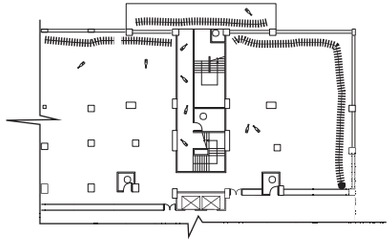


The first three storeys of the Kiu Kwun Mansion in the Chinese Emporium, the largest Chinese goods department store in Hong Kong. The emporium was opened upon the completion of the building.

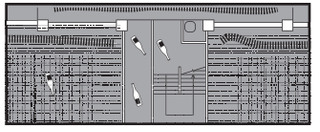
clan club
HK club
temple
clinic
trade

+123.00

07:00:00 ROOFTOP SIEGE

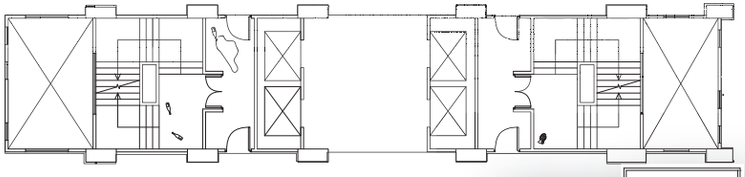


A riot broke out at Kiu Kwan Mansion, the unfinished Metropole Building and Ming Yuen Building (since demolished) in North Point. The police descended on the rooftops of the buildings in a helicopter from a British aircraft carrier. Police entered Kiu Kwan Mansion from the roof and the podium through the Chinese emporium.



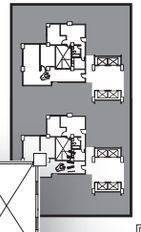


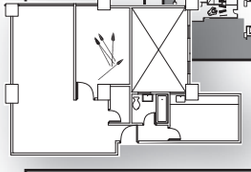
The entrance to the store was barricaded with electrified metal wire and mesh. Bottled explosives and traps with homemade bombs in glass bottles were found at the entrance to the roof and the 28th floor stairwell.



07:15:00 OBSTRUCTION

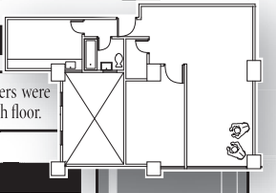
Several men were arrested for preventing the police from entering and investigating the two units on the 3rd floor of Kiu Kwan Mansion.





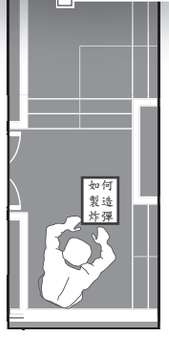
07:10:00 HIDING

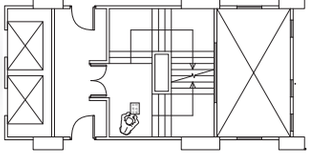
Two Bank of China staff members were found hiding in a unit on the 27th floor.



07:20:00 SUSPECT

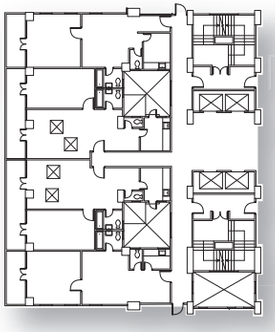
A man was detained on the staircase when he appeared to be trying to escape. Police found on him a pamphlet titled, "How to make a bomb."

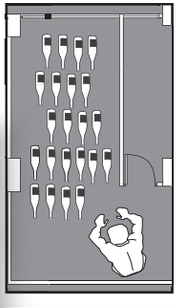




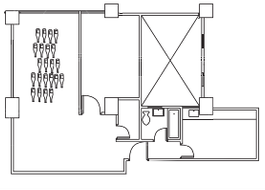
Weapons including a large number of spears were found in a unit on the 24/F of Kiu Kwun.

07:30:00 HOME FACTORY





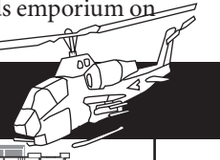
A man was arrested in an apartment unit on the 9th floor; 24 glass bottle bombs were found inside the unit.



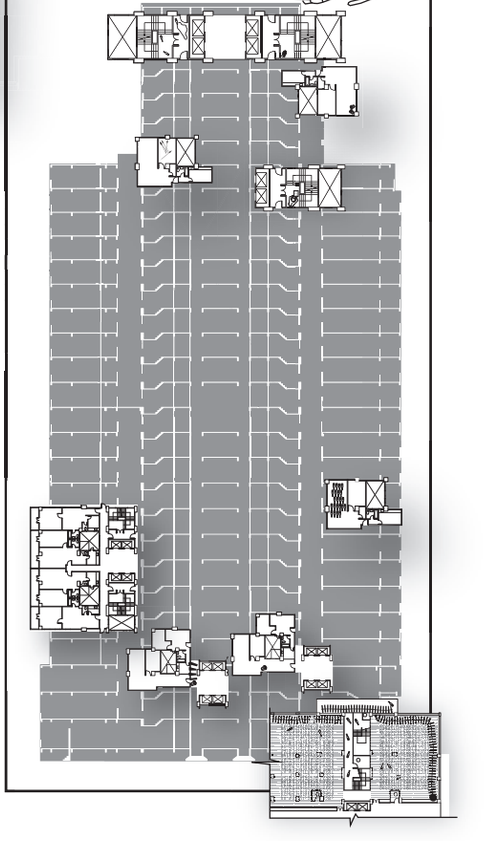
Police entered the Fujian Clan Association unit and found it empty. Inside, they found a few tents and a chessboard with a half-finished game.

[KIU KWAN MANSION] RAIDS: Spatial Confrontations

On August 4, 1967, the leftist strongholds Kiu Kwan Mansion and Metropole Building were raided. Kiu Kwan Mansion is a twenty-seven-story, ninety-five meter-high composite building at 395 King's Road in North Point. Completed in 1966, it was home to a considerable number of employees of Mainland-funded companies and housed a number of leftist union offices. Designed by architect Tsui Shui Lun and developed by the subsidiary company of Nanyang Commercial Bank, the two-block complex contains a total of 624 units. It accommodates mostly flats, clan associations, mainly from Fujian, trading companies, educational centers, medical clinics, and a Chinese goods emporium on the podium level.



06:40:00 4TH AUGUST, 1967

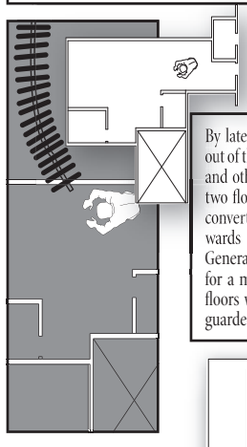


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[METROPOLE BUILDING]: RAIDS
Spatial Confrontations

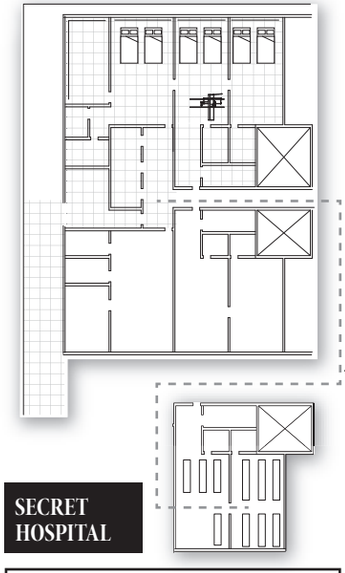
Across the street from Kiu Kwan Mansion, the twenty-three-storied Metropole Building designed by Hong Kong architect Tam Heung Sing was only partially completed when the raids were conducted. Metropole Building reopened for tenant occupation in 1972. Comprising a three-story plinth, an L-shaped block and a slab block each twenty stories high, it contained 1,037 units. In the 1970s, it housed doctors' clinics, export companies, the Hong Kong Conservancy Association, the Hong Kong Christian Council, distributor offices and other businesses. In 1975, a department store, supermarket, bank and jewellery store opened at the ground and street levels.

Police helicopters landed on the roofs of Kiu Kwan and the Ming Yuen building. As the rooftop of Metropole Building was not wide enough for landing, the police jumped from rope stairs lowered from the helicopter. The twenty-three-story Metropole Building at 416-438 King's Road was built by Chinese development company Da Yuen Real Estate Ltd. Designed by architects Tam Heung Sheng, Szeto Wai and Siu Lun Yue, it was also completed in 1966 but the units were only occupied from 1972. The building contains 1037 units, 32 per floor.

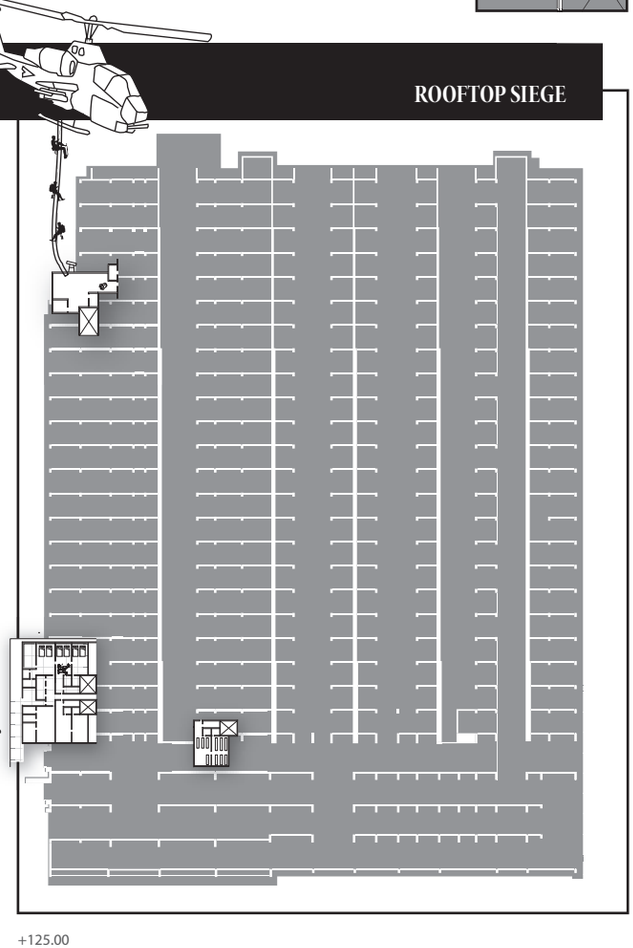


FORTIFIED

By late July, 20 percent of the tenants had moved out of the building. Many left behind their furniture and other possessions. A tenant said that the first two floors of the building above the podium were converted into what looked like hospital casualty wards with a sign outside that read: "Chinese General Chamber of Commerce preparatory office for a medical clinic." All the windows on the two floors were blackened and the wards were heavily guarded by "thugs."

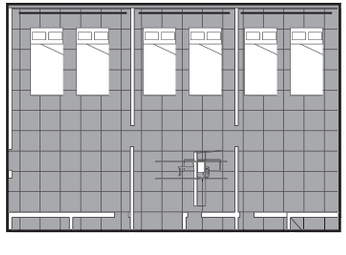


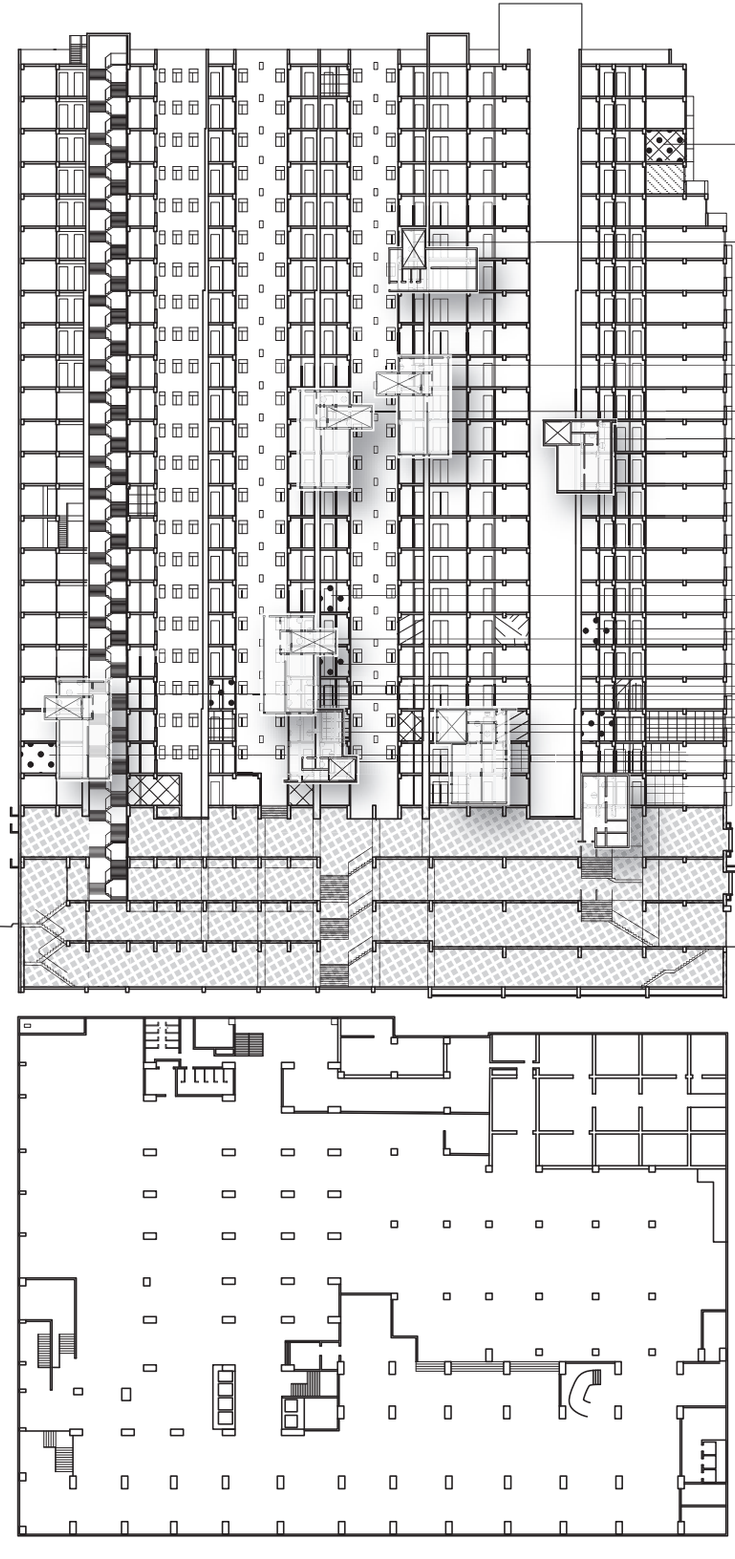
ROOFTOP SIEGE



SECRET HOSPITAL

The police found a well-hidden and efficiently equipped hospital on the fourth floor. A small door disguised as a metal panel was the only access from the back. A clinic was found on the third floor which provided supplies to the hospital above. Police also found a collection of spears and other weapons on the 23rd floor.





2522 健成方服推拿中醫診所
2537 達成藝術
2530 佛教三德泓法中心
2523 英林同鄉會
2330 旅港晉江梧桐坑同鄉會 / 淨覺寺
2322 沙塘同鄉會
2230 Factory
2122 JP Enterprise Limited
2002 Liandai Clans Hong Kong Macau Taiwan Association
1905 俞明珠中醫師
1723 Goldtime Employment Agency
1623 Ying Lin Clans Association (HK) LTD.
1615 Closeson Technology Ltd.
1522 HK Macau Sati Clans Association
1427 港澳台蚶江中學校友會
1333 紀榮源中醫師
1211 中華中醫診療所
923 港澳石獅西芩同鄉會
835 美龍美髮屋
834 旅港錦東同鄉會
822 Gezhou Clans (H.K) Association
723 福建晉江田洋旅港同鄉會
628 盈髮屋
623 鄭傳鴻中醫師
622 港澳永寧同鄉會
619 香港磁灶鎮同鄉總會
615 香港晉江前港同鄉會
626 勁松聯誼會
624 四葉草營養俱樂部
532 香港八閩弘農楊氏宗親聯合會/ 香港八閩宏農置業有限公司
531 中醫科研中心
529 西醫馮啟祥
527 香港晉江沙塘同鄉會
526 鍾文略藝術圖片社
524 黃哲貞醫生
522 南僑中學香港校友會
523 仲景堂中醫診療中心
512 御卓康痛症理療中心
501 中醫家 (陳宇傑 鍾淑美)
429 西醫劉愛珍 譚國華
428 國際醫學診斷中心
426 西醫潘順源
418 棣邊同鄉會
404 福建旅港鈔岱同鄉會有限公司
331 中醫蔡長益
322 福林禪院
316 聖佑壇
315 晉江華僑中學同學會



education
clan club
clinic
trade
subdivided flat
temple
salon
retail

+125.00

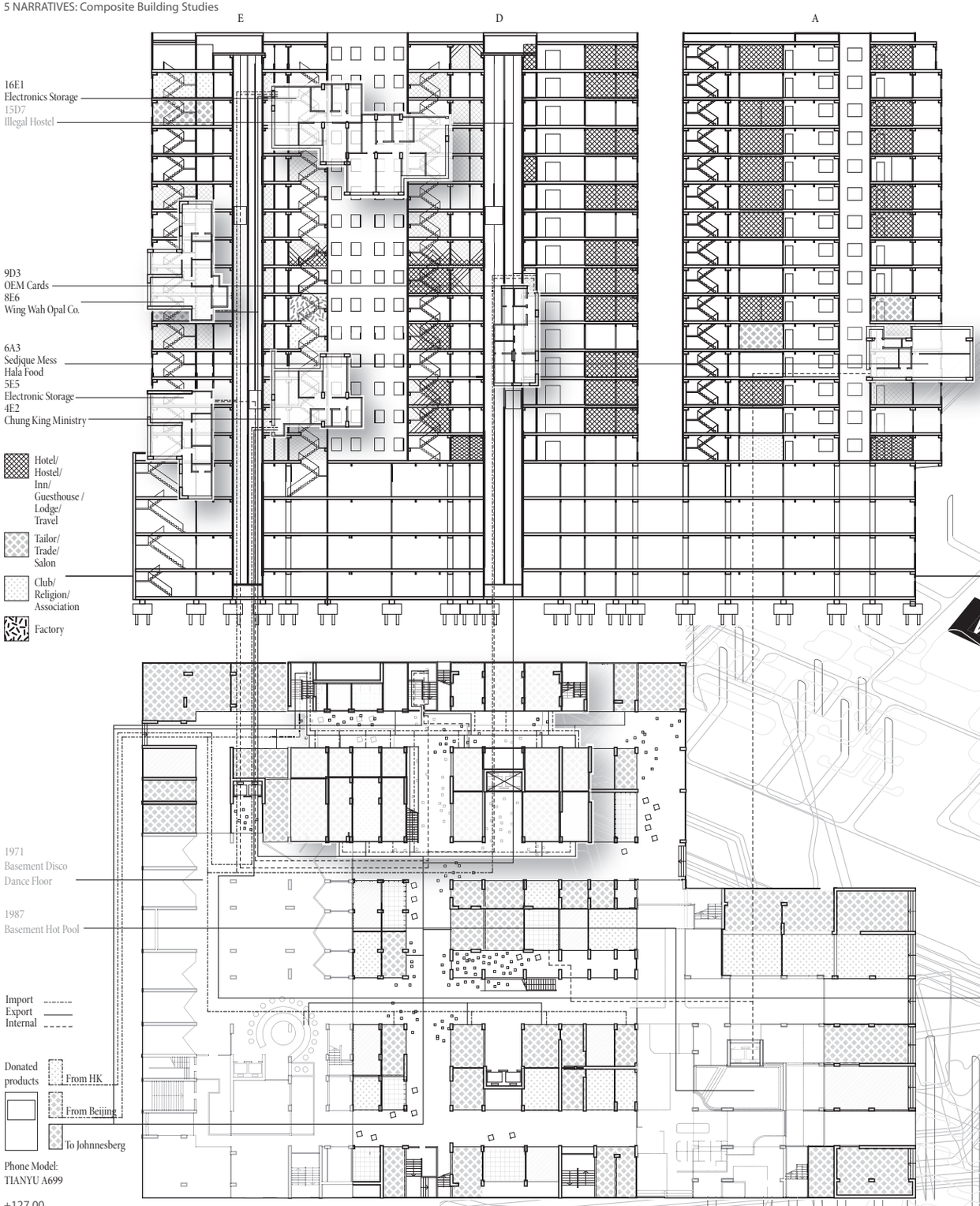
+126.00

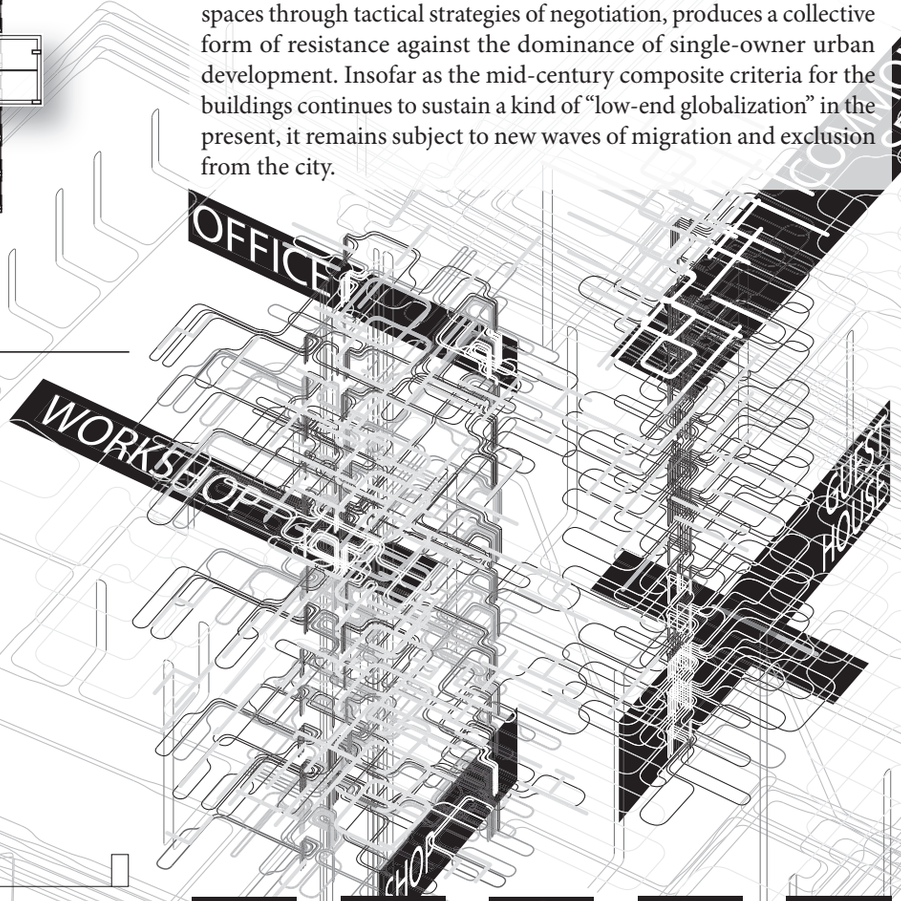
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[CHUNGKING MANSIONS] Networked Islands

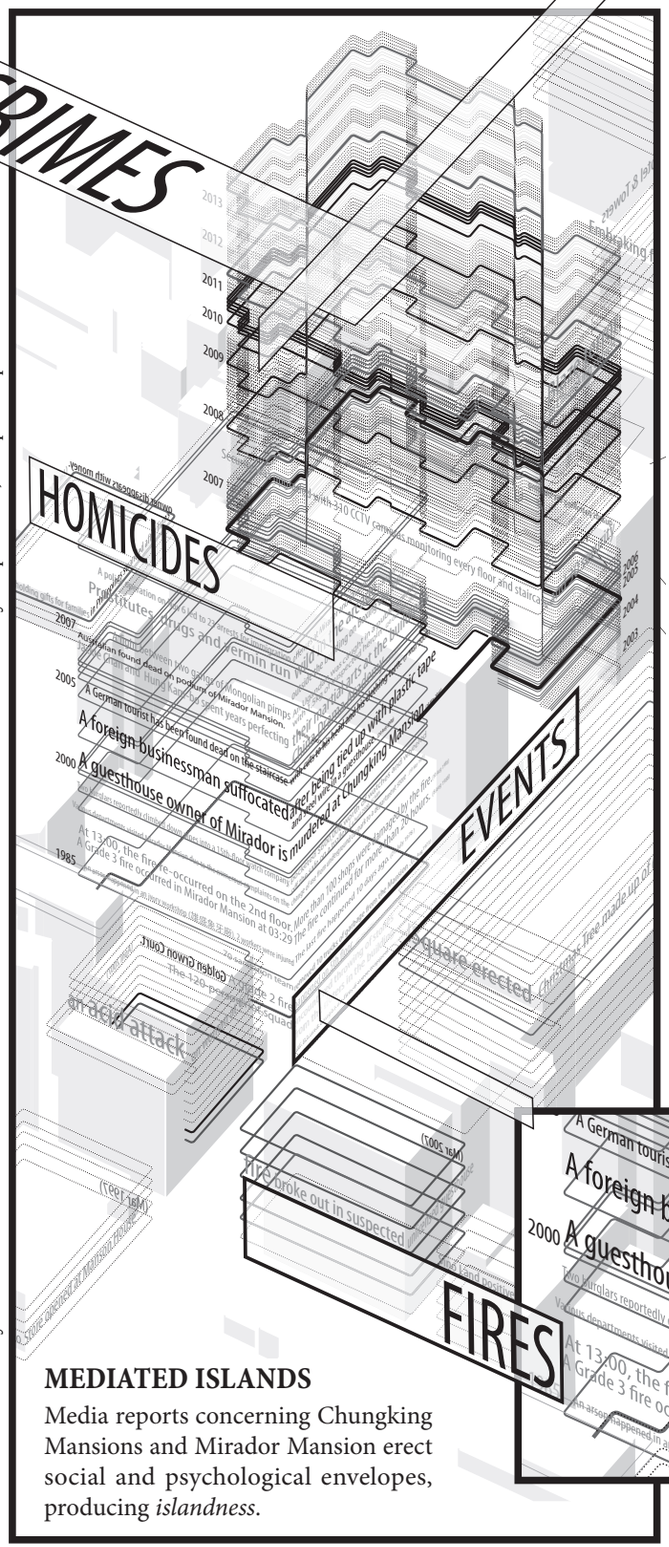
Chungking Mansions and Mirador Mansion accommodate individuals and groups that constitute geopolitical patterns of interrelationships and communities with mutual economic interests. The buildings are interconnected enclaves with exclusionary relationships with the Hong Kong citizenry yet are highly accessible to the rest of the city. The extension of shop fronts into the common circulatory spaces creates an urbanism of interior thoroughfares. Tenants occupy storefronts on the podium levels and in storehouses above. Others operate cooperative enterprises in related goods and services – electronics and repairs, textiles and tailoring. The variety of uses within the composite buildings, and the continual adaptation of spaces through tactical strategies of negotiation, produces a collective form of resistance against the dominance of single-owner urban development. Insofar as the mid-century composite criteria for the buildings continues to sustain a kind of "low-end globalization" in the present, it remains subject to new waves of migration and exclusion from the city.





A	B	C	D	E
Hotel 6	Hotel 4	Hotel 4	Hotel 3	Hotel 4
Hostel 5	Hostel 2	Hostel 2	Hostel 15	Hostel 8
Inn 2	Inn 5	Inn 3	Inn 2	Inn 2
Guesthouse 23	Guesthouse 24	Guesthouse 27	Guesthouse 24	Guesthouse 17
Lodge 0	Lodge 0	Lodge 0	Lodge 0	Lodge 1
Trade 2	Trade 2	Trade 1	Trade 5	Trade 2
Tailor 0	Tailor1	Tailor0	Tailor 0	Tailor0
Club 0	Club 2	Club 2	Club 0	Club 1
Travel 1	Travel 2	Travel 0	Travel 0	Travel
Food 1	Food 1	Food 0	Food 0	Food 0
Religion 0	Religion 0	Religion 0	Religion 0	Religion 2
Salon 1	Salon 0	Salon 0	Salon 0	Salon 0
Factory 1	Factory 0	Factory 0	Factory 0	Factory 0
Association 1	Association 0	Association 0	Association 0	Association 0

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MEDIATED ISLANDS

Media reports concerning Chungking Mansions and Mirador Mansion erect social and psychological envelopes, producing *islandness*.

VOLUMETRIC ISLANDS

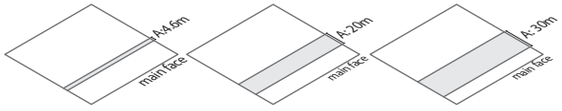
The buildings within a five-minute walking radius of Chungking Mansions and Mirador Mansion fall into three periods. A visualization of these buildings based on the regulation when each was approved shows what the district could look like should they be realized according to their maximum potential heights. Composite buildings, constructed according to the 1956 regulation based on volumetric criteria, stopped short of the steeple-like top. Nonetheless, the potential occupation of that space has occurred within the actual built volume below. The introduction of plot ratios in accordance with the 1962 Ordinance marked the beginning of regulated communal spaces within the composite buildings and the disappearance of multiple stakeholders. Meanwhile, media reports ranging from unsavory crimes to pragmatic transactions to recent nostalgic trips into the buildings in search of "real, gritty and cosmopolitan" Hong Kong reinforce implied boundaries that present them as marginal urban peripheries, despite their central location in Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon.



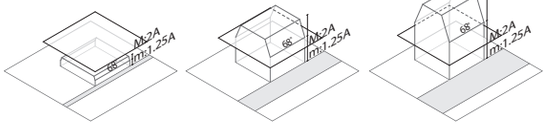
FORMS OF HONG KONG'S BUILDING REGULATIONS: MAXIMUM LIMIT

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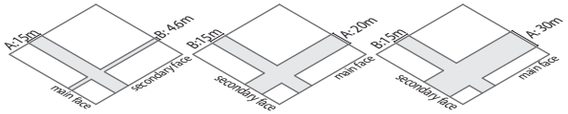
CLASS A SITE : ONE STREET FACING SITE



4.6m width front road | 20m width front road | 30m width front road



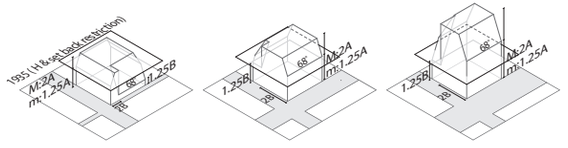
CLASS B SITE : CORNER SITE



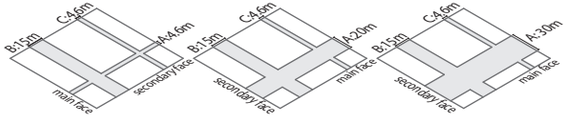
4.6m width front road
15m width cross road

20m width front road
15m width cross road

30m width front road
15m width cross road



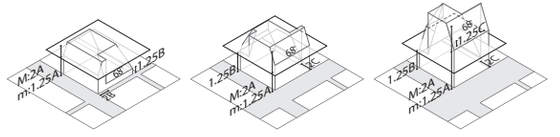
CLASS C SITE : DOUBLE CORNER / ISLAND SITE



4.6m width front road
4.6m width cross road
15m width cross road

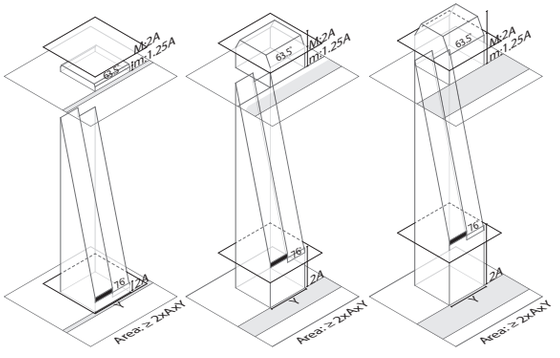
20m width front road
4.6m width cross road
15m width cross road

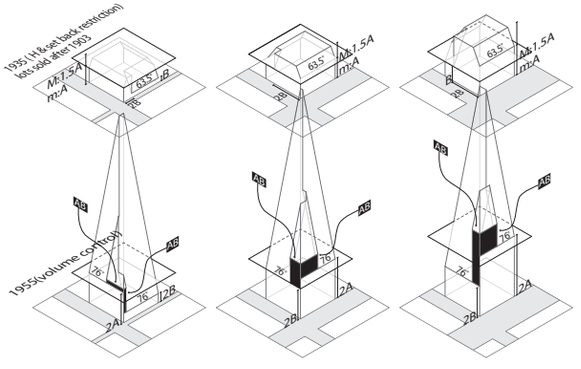
30m width front road
4.6m width cross road
15m width cross road

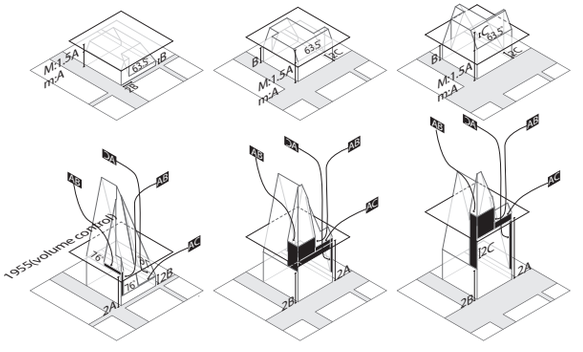


1903
Public Health and Building Ordinance
Height : max.80ft
Angle: 68°

1935
Building Ordinance
Height : max.80ft
Angle: 63.5°

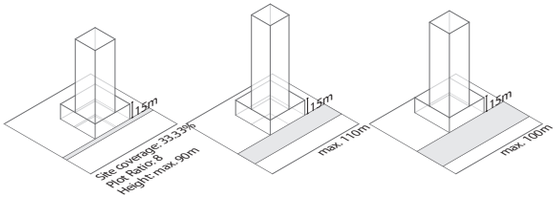


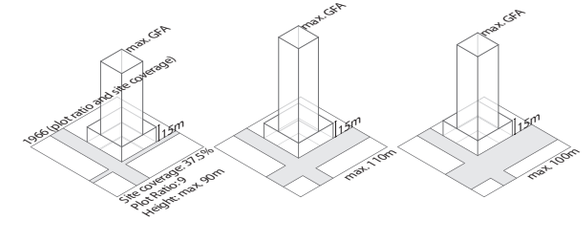


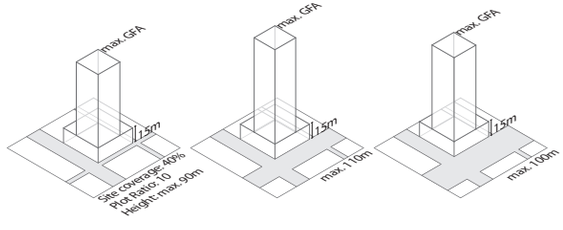


1955
Building (Planning) Regulations
Angle: 76°

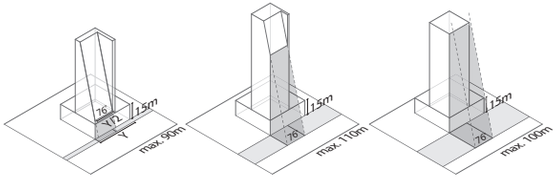
1962-6
Building (Planning) Regulations
Site coverage: 33.33%
Plot Ratio: 8

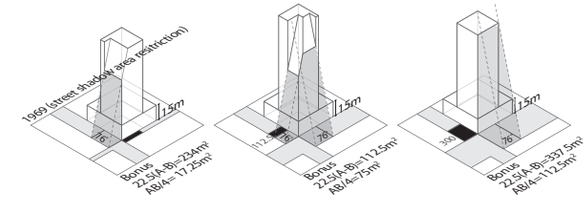


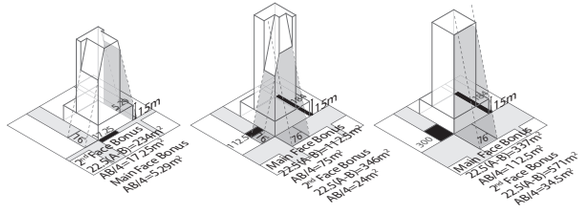




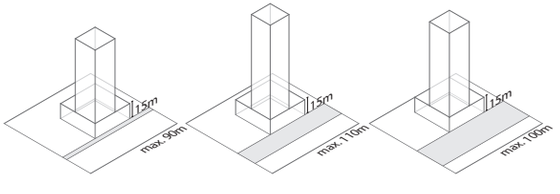
1969
Building (Planning) Regulations
Angle: 76°

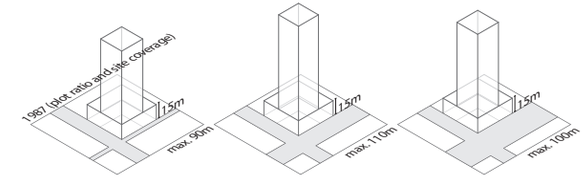


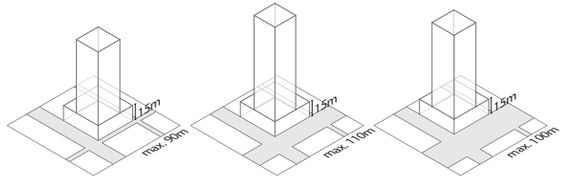




1987
Building (Planning) Regulations

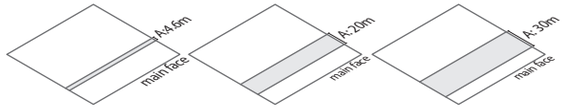






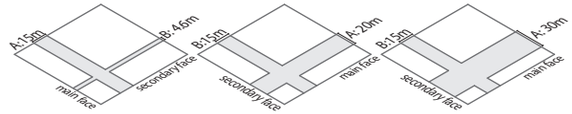
FORMS OF HONG KONG'S BUILDING REGULATIONS: MINIMUM LIMIT

CLASS A SITE : ONE STREET FACING SITE



4.6m width front road | 20m width front road | 30m width front road

CLASS B SITE : CORNER SITE

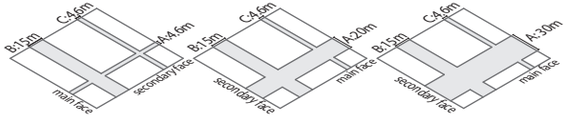


4.6m width front road
15m width cross road

20m width front road
15m width cross road

30m width front road
15m width cross road

CLASS C SITE : DOUBLE CORNER / ISLAND SITE

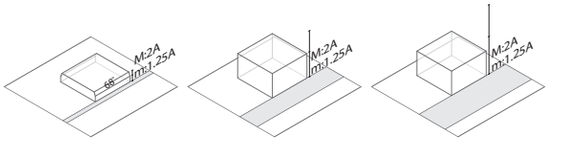


4.6m width front road
4.6m width cross road
15m width cross road

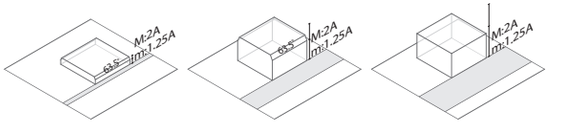
20m width front road
4.6m width cross road
15m width cross road

30m width front road
4.6m width cross road
15m width cross road

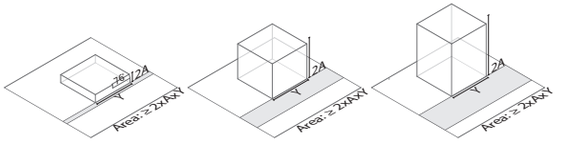
1903
Public Health and Building Ordinance
Height : max.80ft
Angle: 68°



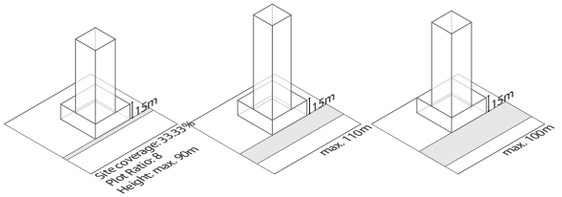
1935
Building Ordinance
Height : max.80ft
Angle: 63.5°



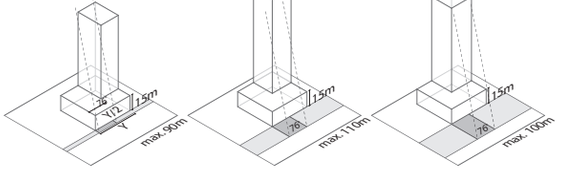
1955
Building (Planning) Regulations
Angle: 76°



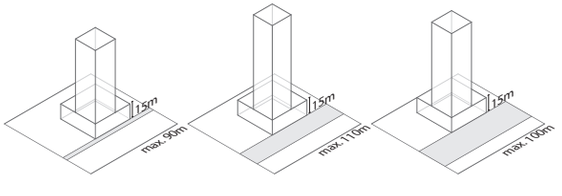
1962-6
Building (Planning) Regulations
Site coverage: 33.33%
Plot Ratio: 8



1969
Building (Planning) Regulations
Angle: 76°

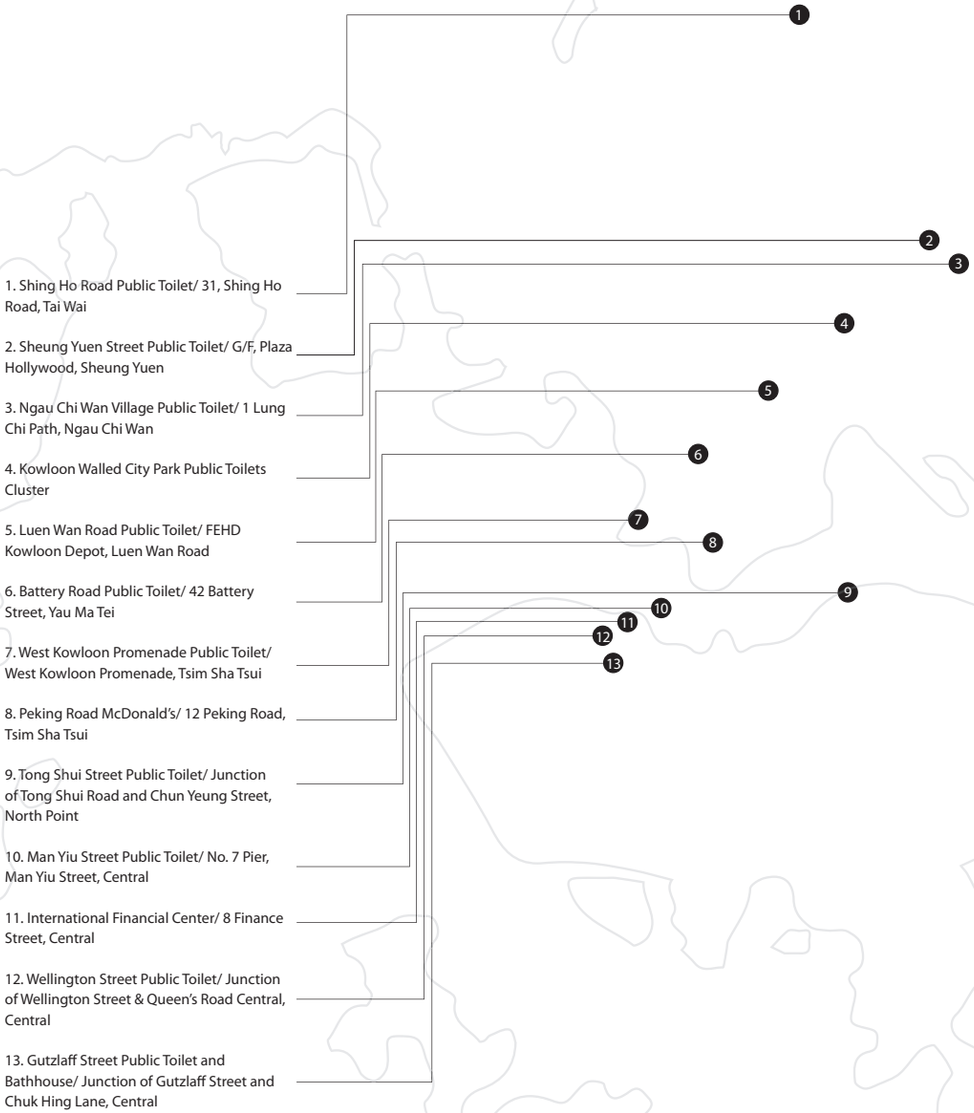


1987
Building (Planning) Regulations



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EXCURSUS
Mapping Toilet Architecture

There are more than 1600 publicly accessible toilets in Hong Kong's streets and parks, excluding those managed by the MTR, shopping malls and privately operated markets.[1] Of these, 798 are public toilets under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) of the HKSAR; 90 are located on Hong Kong Island, 61 in Kowloon and 647 in the New Territories and the Outlying Islands.[2] The Architectural Services Department (ASD), which was preceded by the architectural office of the Public Works Department (PWD), is responsible for the designs. The toilets share ten features. Whereas the majority involve the consistent provision of the types of amenities, elements and materials in the toilets, three refer to the quality of the external design, the space and lighting. The ASD stipulates that the external design shall be "aesthetical and distinctive," the toilet areas "spacious" and provided with "sufficient" natural and artificial lighting with the use of glass block partitions. This is a far cry from the early days of the public toilet — the first, in Pound Lane, opened in 1904 — on two different counts. One, they are much better maintained and increasingly distinctive in design. Two, although they used to be public communal spaces, even up to the 1960s where many households still did not have private toilets, their main function now, according to the ASD and the Tourism Board, is for public convenience to allow residents to stay out longer and "to meet the needs of tourists."[3]

The mapping of publicly accessible toilets is part of a larger endeavor to narrate the integral relationship between the architecture of toilets and the social lives of the districts in which they are located. The nineteen toilets drawn in Chapter 6 are "guerrilla" insertions that serve as hypertext to the assemblage of how-to essays on urban survival histories and tactics. These include seven in and around the vicinity of the Kowloon Walled City Park, with the rest located in the New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. Rather than an inexhaustible list, the focus is on public toilets as sites of social space and activity. From the ground floor public toilet in the privately-owned shopping mall at Diamond Hill that is frequented by commuters of the adjacent bus terminal, to the free-standing one nestled under the footbridge in Central, to the one in the municipal sports complex at Sun Yat Sen Park in Sai Ying Pun, each harbors a condition that challenges any attempt towards standardization and which cannot be folded into a singular overarching narrative.



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Mong Kok

1. Larch Street Public Toilet/ 105 Larch Street, Tai Kok Tsui
2. Mong Kok Road Public Toilet/ Mong Kok Road Playground, 661B Shanghai Street, Yau Ma Tei
3. Anchor Street Playground Public Toilet/ Anchor Street Playground, 55 Anchor Street, Tai Kok Tsui
4. Pok Man Street Public Toilet/ 1 Sham Mong Road, Cheung Sha Wan
5. Nelson Street Public Toilet/ 1024 Canton Road, Jordan
6. Portland Street Public Toilet/ 193 Portland Street, Mong Kok
7. Sai Yee Street Garden Public Toilet/ Sai Yee Street Garden, 32 Sai Yee Street, Mong Kok

Yau Tsim

8. Liu Cheung Road Public Toilet/ West Kowloon Station Bus Terminal
9. Shanghai Street and Waterloo Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Shanghai Street and Waterloo Road, Yau Ma Tei
10. Market Street Public Toilet and Bathhouse/ 1 Market Street, Yau Ma Tei
11. Yau Ma Tei Market Public Toilet/ Yau Ma Tei Market, 20 Kansu Street, Yau Ma Tei
12. Gascoigne Rd. Public Toilet/ Junction of Gascoigne Road and Nathan Road, Yau Ma Tei
13. Battery Street Public Toilet/ 42 Battery Street, Jordan
14. Parkes Street Public Toilet & Public Bathhouse/ 107 Parkes Street, Jordan
15. Jordan Road Public Toilet/ King George V Memorial Park, Jordan
16. Kimberley Road Urinal Toilet/ Junction of Kimberley Road and Austin Avenue, Tsim Sha Tsui
17. Science Museum Road Public Toilet/ Concordia Plaza, 1 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui
18. Tsim Sha Tsui East Public Transport Interchange Public Toilet/ Tsim Sha Tsui East Bus Terminus, Mody Road, Tsim Sha Tsui (next to Wing On Plaza
19. Tsim Sha Tsui Ferry Concourse Public Toilet/ Tsim Sha Tsui Ferry Concourse, Tsim Sha Tsui

Kowloon City

20. Ma Tau Kok Road Public Toilet and Bathhouse/ 180 Kowloon City Road, Kowloon
21. Pui Ching Road Public Toilet/ 5 Pui Ching Road, Ho Man Tin
22. San Ma Tau Street Public Toilet/ 30 San Ma Tau Street, Kowloon
23. Kowloon City Road Public Toilet/ 3 Kowloon City Road, Kowloon
24. Hok Yuen Street Public Toile/ 12A Hok Yuen Street, Hung Hom
25. Gillies Avenue South Public Toilet/ Junction of Gillies Avenue South and Station Lane, Hung Hom
26. Baker Street Public Toilet/ 65 Baker Street, Hung Hom
27. Hung Hom Complex Public Toilet/ 1/F, Hung Hom Complex, 11 Ma Tau Wai Road, Hung Hom
28. Dyer Avenue Public Toilet/ 1 Dyer Avenue, Hung Hom
29. New Hung Hom Ferry Pier Public Toilet/ New Hung Hom Ferry Pier, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong

30. Chun Wah Road Public Toilet/ Chun Wah Road Bus Terminus, Ngau Tau Ko
31. Ngau Tau Kok Public Toilet and Bathhouse/ 1 Ting Fu Street, Ngau Tau Kok
32. Lai Yip Street Public Toilet/ Junction of Lai Yip Street and Wai Yip Street, Ngau Tau Kok

Central and Western

33. Belcher's Street Public Toilet/ 212 Belcher's Street, Western
34. Shek Tong Tsui Municipal Services Building Public Toilet/ Shek Tong Tsui Municipal Services Building, 470 Queen's Road West, Shek Tong Tsui
35. Water Street Public Toilet and Bathhouse/ Junction of Water Street and Pok Fu Lam Road, Western,
36. Kotewall Road Public Toilet/ 17 Kotewall Road, Western
37. Mui Fong Street Public Toilet/ At side of 21 Kwai Heung Street, Sai Ying Pun Old Peak
38. Central Street Public Toilet/ near Centre Street Market, First Street, Sai Ying Pun
39. In Ku Lane Public Toilet/ 8 In Ku Lane, Western
40. Macau Ferry Bus Terminus Public Toilet/ Macau Ferry Bus Terminus, Sheung Wan
41. Wing Lok Street Public Toilet/ G/F, Sheung Wan Municipal Services Building, 345 Queen's Road Central, Western
42. Lok Ju Road Public Toilet/ 21-23 Lok Ku Road, Western
43. Pound Lane Public Toilet and Bathhouse/ Junction of Pound Lane and Tai Ping

Street, Western
44. Hospital Road Public Toilet/ B/F, FEHD Staff Quarter, Hospital Road, Western
45. Robinson Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Robinson Road and Castle Road, Mid-level
46. Ladder Street Public Toilet/ Ladder Street facing Lower Lascar Row, Western
47. Wah Hing Lane Public Toilet/ Junction of Shing Wong Street and Wah Hing Lane, Sheung Wan
48. Mee Lun Street Public Toilet/ At side of No. 6, Mee Lun Street
49. Wellington Street Public Toilet (Male Only)/ Junction of Wellington Street and Queen's Road Central, Central
50. Wing Wo Street Public Toilet/ 2327 Wing Wo Street, Sheung Wan
51. Rumsey Street Multi Storey Carpark Public Toilet/ G/F, Rumsey Street Multi Storey Carpark, Shueng Wan
52. Man Fai Street Public Toilet/ Junction of Man Fai Street and Man Kwong Street, Central
53. Exchange Square Public Toilet/ G/F, Exchange Square near Bus Terminus, Central
54. Lan Kwai Fong Public Toilet/ Lan Kwai Fong Sitting-out Area, Central
55. Glenealy Public Toilet/ Junction of Glenealy Road and Arbuthnot Road, Central
56. Ice House Street Public Toilet/ 16 Ice House Street, Central
57. Kennedy Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Kennedy Road and Garden Road, Central
58. Man Yiu Street Public Toilet/ Man Yiu Street, Central (Near No. 7 Pier)
59. Star Ferry Multi Storey Carpark Public Toilet/ Junction of Edinburgh Place and Connaught Road, Central
60. Queen's Road Central Public Toilet/ Junction of Queen's Road Central and Bank Street, Central
61. Hong Kong Park Indoor Game Hall Public Toilet/ HK Park Indoor Game Hall, 19 Cotton Tree Drive, Central
62. MacDonnell Road Public Toilet/ 48 MacDonnell Road, Mid-level
63. May Road Public Toilet/ Junction of May Road & Chatham Path, Mid-levels

Wan Chai

64. Southorn Centre Public Toilet/ G/F, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai
65. Spring Garden Lane Public Toilet/ Junction of Spring Garden Lane and Cross Street, Wan Chai
66. Wan Chai Market Public Toilet/ 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai
67. Kat On Street Public Toilet/ Junction of Kat On Street and Kennedy Street, Wan Chai
68. Expo Drive East Public Toilet/ Expo Drive East (next to Golden Bauhinia Square)
69. Wan Chai North Temporary Public Transport Interchange Public Toilet/ Adjacent to Bus Terminus at Wan Chai Ferry Concourse
70. Cross Lane Public Toilet/ Junction of Cross Lane and Bullock Lane, Wan Chai
71. Canal Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Canal Road and Lockhart Road, Wan Chai (next to Wan Chai Fire Station)
72. Morrison Hill Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Morrison Hill Road and Sports Road, Wan Chai
73. Wong Nai Chung Road Public Toilet/ 95 Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley
74. Moreton Terrace Public Toilet/ Tung Lo Wan Drive Bus Terminus, Causeway Bay (At side of Bus Terminus)
75. Warren Street Public Toilet/ Junction of Warren Street and Shepherd Street, Tai Hang
76. Lin Fa Kung Public Toilet/ Lily Street, Lin Fa Kung, Tai Hang
77. Tai Hang Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Tai Hang Road and Lai Tak Tsuen Road
78. Hing Fat Street Public Toilet/ Victoria Park, Hing Fat Street, Causeway Bay
79. Wing Hing Street Public Toilet/ 15 Wing Hing Street, Causeway Bay

Eastern

80. Oil Street Public Toilet/ 3 Oil Street, Causeway Bay
81. Tong Shui Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Tong Shui Road and Chun Yeung Street, North Point
82. North Point Passenger Ferry Concourse (Shu Kik Street) Public Toilet/ 34 Shu Kuk Street, North Point
83. Java Road Public Toilet/ North Point Vehicular Ferry Pier, Java Road, North Point
84. Pak Fuk Road Public Toilet/ Junction of Pak Fuk Road and Healthy Street Central, North Point
85. Quarry Bay Market Public Toilet/ 38 Quarry Bay Street, Quarry Bay

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6
MANUALS
Resistance in Praxis



TAI PO
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CHOI HUNG ESTATE
+48.0 Juliana Kei
151 **How to Create Space without Building**

KOWLOON WALLED CITY
-3.0 Eunice Seng
163 **Kowloon City Public Toilets**

YAU MA TEI
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KOWLOON WALLED CITY
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273 **Notes**
283 **Credits**



As we have indicated, there are two discrete metabolisms on the planet. The first is the biological metabolism, or the biosphere – the cycles of nature. The second is the technical metabolism, or technosphere – the cycles of industry, including the harvesting of technical materials from natural places. With the right design, all of the products and materials manufactured by industry will safely feed these two metabolisms, providing nourishment for something new.

—William McDonough, Michael Braungart, *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things* (New York: Macmillan, 2010)

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The Urban Strategy introduced here is designed to harness that "aggressive potential" and appropriates the invasive nature of trees to rally a resistance force to compete for open space in opposition to developers' land acquisition.

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How to Reclaim Urban Space Subconsciously

Crack a Network
Tai Po



Choi Kit Wong

"Frontiers are an invention of men. Nature doesn't give a hoot."

— Lieutenant Rosenthal, *La Grand Illusion*, 1937, directed by Jean Renoir

Every flat owner desires a piece of his own private greenery. However, if we examine a satellite image of Hong Kong, about three quarters of the land other than the densely populated metropolitan area is covered in greenery.[1] It seems more than enough for the population of over seven million to enjoy.[2] The green areas were demarcated as Crown Land in the colonial days and it was not until 1977 that the Government officially designated them as country parks.[3] Since then, they have been openly accessible to the public. But the busy city dwellers can only enjoy these spaces during their day trips on the weekends, if they can even afford the time at all. Evoking an image of clean-living and benevolent nature, the unadulterated countryside is the escape from the placeless frenzy of urban life.

This is when nature is brought back to the city, in which its colored representation – green– denotes the pattern of public parks within the urban grid.[4] Notwithstanding the Green Hong Kong Campaign launched on New Year's Day 2019 to promote greening in the community and to enhance public awareness in greening, green spaces as an essential

The 24 country parks and 22 special areas specified by the Country Parks Ordinance cover a total area of 44,239 hectares in Hong Kong.

planning parameter are usually the last bits used to fill up the "leftover" patches on the zoning plan. The developers invariably have the upper hand over green space. In some of the more than 1,000 pocket-parks cordoned off by a fence wall erected by the Leisure & Cultural Services Department, they end up isolated from the community where they are situated.[5] The most frequent visitors – the elderly and delinquents – shared their fate of being outcasts of the city.

What if nature takes on a more active role in reclaiming green space in our city? Instead of being a "static" and "borrowed image of the countryside," is there an alternative green that could be cultivated from within our city? Imagine a green space that grows with the development of the city. Could the instinct of Nature develop an autonomous resistance against the rapidly rolling bulldozer of the developer? In his book, *The Ecological Thought*, Timothy Morton argues that Nature, designed as picturesque, is actually an active agent of territory and ownership. He writes:

> "In the idea of pristine wilderness, we can make out the mirror image of private property: Keep off the Grass, Do Not Touch, Not for Sale. Nature was a special kind of private property, without an owner, exhibited in a specially constructed art gallery. The gallery was Nature itself, revealed through visual technology in the eighteenth century as 'picturesque' – looking like a picture."[6]



1 *Ficus microcarpa* taking root in a pavement crack, Hong Kong, 2010.

On 28 August 2008, a hundred-year old Coral Tree (*Erythrina variegata*) collapsed and accidentally killed a nineteen-year-old woman in Stanley, Hong Kong Island.[7] The fatal incident triggered city-wide attention to trees in the urban environment. A tree, once a pleasant shelter to pedestrian and friendly vegetation, is now considered lethal to an unsuspecting passer-by.[8] The thousands of felled trees and disruptions during typhoons in Hong Kong demonstrate the potential aggressiveness of the tree. Its humble and harmless appearance easily camouflages the aggressiveness that is rooted in the most basic rule of ecology: competition for resources. In the competition for light, air, soil, nutrients and land – the most scarce and precious of all resources in an urban area – the tree is a formidable opponent to the building and sidewalk which it may impede. [1]

The Mechanism

The Urban Strategy introduced here is designed to harness that "aggressive potential" of trees. It appropriates the invasive nature

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of trees to rally a force of resistance to compete for open space in opposition to developers' land acquisition.

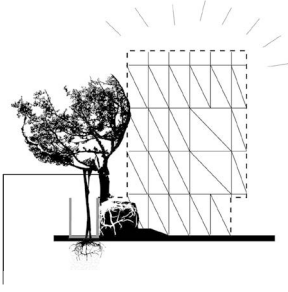
If a tree stands rooted on a land marked for redevelopment, according to the terms of lease, any tree felling within the site requires a compensatory planting of the same DBH (Diameter Breast Height). [2] A plant with a minimum DBH of 95 millimeters is defined as a tree).[9] This lease condition is common for large land development. When a developer buys a piece of land, the lease will list a series of conditions and will require the submission of a Master Layout Plan (MLP) to the statutory company. The Master Layout Plan will need to encompass all the clauses in the lease. Among the clauses is tree-felling. An Architect's common approach is to hire a Landscape Architect to conduct a tree survey and identify the trees that need to be felled or preserved within the site. There is usually a conflict between the MLP drawn by the Architect and the existing tree conditions, in that their natural occurrence is in the way of the construction. After assessing the existing condition of the trees, they will then submit a tree-felling proposal to the relevant government agency for approval. The varying conditions of existing trees call for different treatment.

If a tree stands in the way of a roundabout drop off or a proposed clubhouse location, for example, a new tree can be transplanted to an alternative location. However, if the tree has a DBH so large that it is impossible to find trees of similar size in the market, several trees with a total aggregate DBH equivalent to the original trees can be planted in place of the big trees. However, sometimes, a tree is old enough to possess the merit of leisure and amenity values. These types of trees are classified as "Old and Valuable Trees" (OVT).[10] [3] The government has the record of each and every OVT in the HKSAR and has a team that continuously monitors their health status. These trees are treated as endangered species in terms of management.

Given this hypersensitivity towards trees in the urban environment, a strategy can be developed to take advantage of the joint effect of the land policy and nature's aggressive expansion. An eco-political mechanism is hereby introduced to demonstrate how the developer's gigantic podium blocks that are "infesting" the city can be passive-aggressively infiltrated by the subversive germination of tree seeds and clustering of trees in our city. [4]



2 Tree sprouting in an empty building lot, Hong Kong, 2011.



3 Old and Valuable Trees (OVT) at work, Hong Kong, 2011.

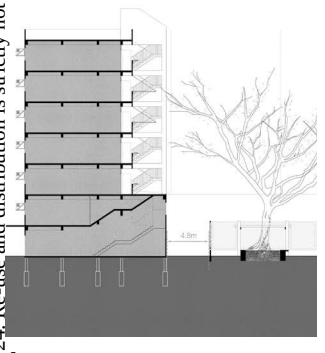
The Agent

To recruit the most suitable species for the task is the first order of business. The candidate is selected from a disused Police Station on the hilltop at Tai Po. A Banyan Tree that grows on the

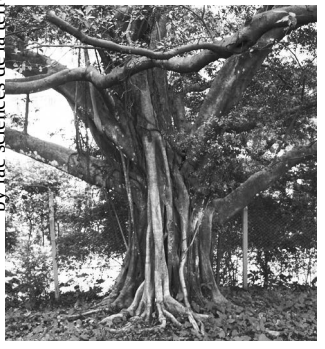
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OVT Criteria (Old & Valuable Tree):
a) Large Trees
- Trunk diameter > 1000mm (1.3m above ground)
- Height > 25m (approximately 8 storeys)
- Canopy spread > 25m diameter

B) Rare Species
- Old age (> 100 years old)
- Cultural/ historical significance
- Outstanding form



4 Eco-Political Mechanism, Hong Kong, 2011.



5 *Ficus microcarpa* at old Tai Po Police Station, Hong Kong, 2012.

slope has aggressively expanded its tree crown (reaching almost 15 meters in radius) since the police abandoned the location in 1987.[11] The branches reach outward beyond the boundary fence and overshadow the entire access road at one end. On another, the branches reach out to the top of the slope where its aerial roots, dangling down from the branches, have taken root at the slope top and grown into a conjoined twin. The tree is registered as an OVT and is protected by law. Any attempt to construct anything beneath its tree crown area will constitute an offence, an illegal act. This Banyan Tree has successfully forced the developer to avoid construction close to its drip line, that is, the projected boundary of the tree crown. The family of ficus is thus enlisted as the agent to execute the reclamation of urban space. [5]

The Site

The site selected is the vacant lot in Diamond Hill, the former squatter village of Tai Hom Village that was demolished in 2001. The government planned to redevelop the land into public housing for 10,000 residents and a railway depot. However, the plan underwent a long process of approval, and bureaucratic procedure has left the land unattended for twelve years.12 In May 2015, following the release of the Planning Brief for the "Comprehensive Development Area" Site in Diamond Hill, the *South China Morning Post* announced that the site of a former historic village and moviemaking hub in Diamond Hill will be home to 4,000 public flats housing 12,000 residents, after town planning advisers approved the government's redevelopment proposal.[13]

The Intervention

Given the long time duration of land idling, vegetation was allowed to occupy the site spontaneously through seed dispersal by natural means. Most of them are propagated through the common dispersal method of the succession cycle, for example airborne by wind or by birds' droppings. The site is fenced off from entry. A thoroughfare temporarily cuts through the center of the site to allow pedestrians to commute between the industrial area and the subway station. This passageway is currently devoid of activity, while construction of the public housing has begun behind the fences. It will soon be replaced by various underground and elevated pedestrian linkages in the proposed plan for 2023.[14]

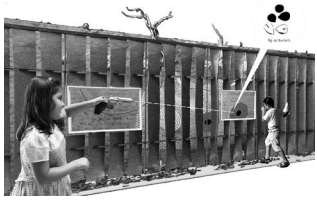
This passageway is a perfect opportunity to put the assumption of the reclaiming mechanism into practice. The aim is to possess as much ground within the vacant site with

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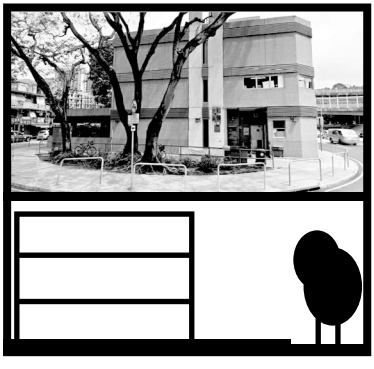
as many trees as possible. The intervention, however, must be stealthy and passive. Instead of transplanting a tree to the site, the intervention shall enlist all unsuspecting passers-by and turn them into temporary guerrillas to bombard the fence with seed.

First, the passage way must be mobilized through activities. For instance, a hawker selling fruit at the subway entrance may be the first to be deployed. His customer buys a bag of fruit and eats one as he hurries along the thoroughfare. When he is done with the fruit, he casually throws the apple core over the fence, thus committing the act of seed dispersal. [6] What if a neighborhood toy shop starts selling plastic bullets "contaminated" with tree seedlings? On sunny afternoons, the fenced passage becomes a temporary "war zone" where kids play guerrillas, shooting seeds at each other. Missed bullets end up in the cracks of the pavement within the restricted zone. Yet in another scenario, the lottery shop at the street corner gathers a sizable crowd of horse racing fans. They too unconsciously participate in the greening process as they carry newspapers embedded with ficus tree seeds. These are dispersed as they read standing or sitting on a seat near the area. As time goes, more seeds get dispersed over the fence, and more trees will grow to their full size and expand their territory.

The minuscule seed becomes an agent for reclaiming public open space. The various guerrilla tactics of intervention empower the community to join the resistance forces against profit-driven development. Though most may be oblivious of the actions they undertake, nevertheless, the collective effort of the community and its collaboration with nature is subconscious but germane. It will take years to effect and there is no certainty of success. Nevertheless, this narrow window of opportunity to crack open the alternative frontier for the reclamation of the urban commons must not be missed.

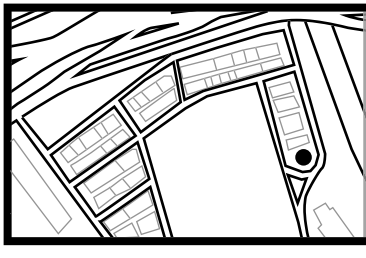


6 Street warfare unknowingly aiding seed dispersal, Hong Kong, 2011.



Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
No.31, Shing Ho Rd., Tai Wai

Shing Ho Rd. Public Toilet



Shing Ho Road Public Toilet is part of the municipal complex with other sanitary facilities such as the municipal refuse collection point. It is right next to the river and faces a primary school. The public toilet is sited within a relatively calm and naturalistic setting.

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This is a modernity then that calls for more than physical reform. It calls for a change in our very perceptions, or 'the way we live'. Here is a society that is both obsessed with material products and ideologies of efficiency yet nostalgic for a disappearing 'real' world of social relations and personal interactions.

—Nezar Alsayyad, *Cynical Modernity, or the modernity of cynicism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006)

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The fabricated diversity in choices of retail goods (with the promise of greater range to come), however, could not replace the nostalgic longing of the elder generation for the chaotic but sociable market, nor the connoisseurship of the younger generation cultivated by years of commodity surplus and choice.

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How to Create Space Without Building

Sustain a Housing Contingency
Choi Hung Estate



Use: Residential
Completion Date: 1962
Architect: Hong Kong Housing Authority
Owner: Government of HKSAR
Hours: 00.00-24.00
Costs: < HKD 1397 ($)

+48.0
22.19.59.72N,
114.12.45.83E
Choi Hung Estate,
Ngua Chi Wan

Juliana Kei

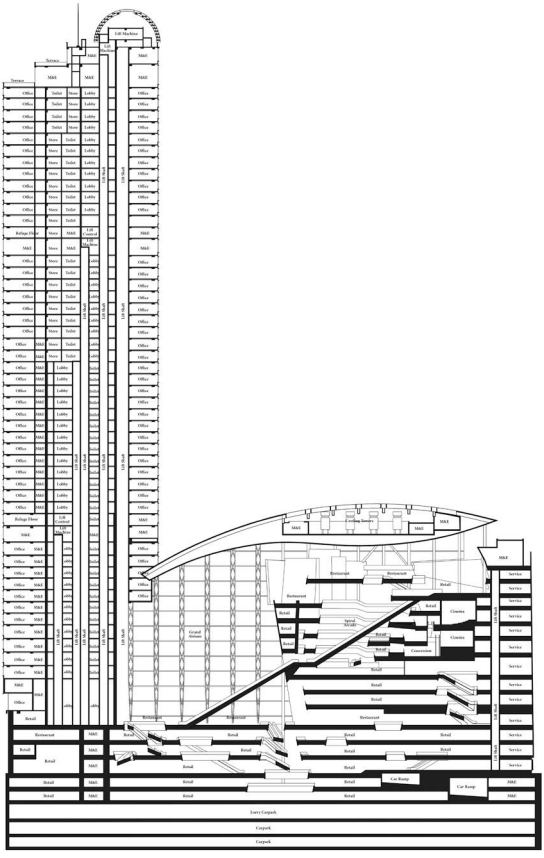
"It is possible, nevertheless, if only in a meditational or transitional way, to form a mental picture of primacy of concrete spaces of semi-public, semi-private spaces, of meeting-places, pathways and passageways. This would mean the diversification of space, while the (relative) importance attached to functional distinctions would disappear."[1]

—Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1991

The Chinese term for shopping, *kwang gai*(逛街), means literally to walk on the street. The active participation of the individual in the city is integral to the consumption and commerce of goods transactions. Moreover, in the urban spaces of Chinese society, the tri-processes of trade, production and leisure have always been regarded collectively as essential elements that benefited the vitality of society. The famous Song Dynasty painted scroll *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*, by Zhang Zeduan, is a clear illustration of this; one can have a glimpse of how the street running along Bian River was infrastructure, a trading ground, a gathering space, a sports ground, and even a meditation spot, all at the same time.

Hong Kong earned its reputation for being a "shopping mecca" as early as 1953 and has since evolved with the times.[2] The configuration of the city's urbanscape has in many ways

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1 Section of Langham Place through the 40-meter tall atrium, Mong Kok, Hong Kong, 2015.

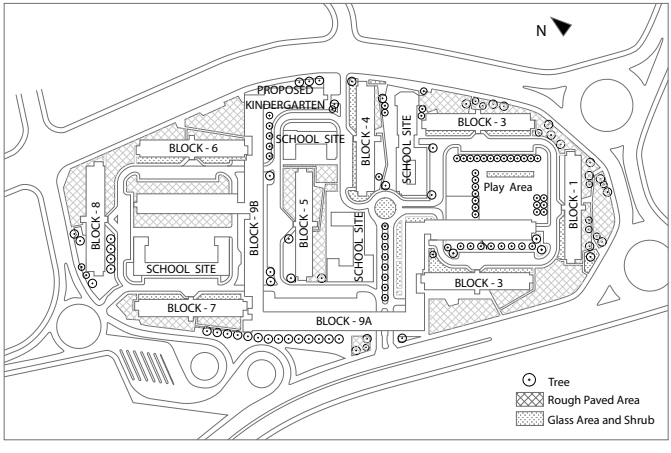
been redefined by the act of shopping. Shopping malls were first built to promote tourism in Hong Kong during the early post-war years and are now the most important social space for the city. There are forty major shopping malls in Hong Kong and almost every district has a local mall of varying scale.[3] In 2003, Langham Place – an office, hotel and shopping complex with 56,000 square meters of retail area – was constructed in Mong Kok, one of the densest neighborhoods in Hong Kong. Given that it displaced two entire city blocks in the neighborhood, Langham Place was required by code to provide open public spaces as compensation. The developers, Great Eagle Group and the Urban Renewal Authority, offered a counter proposal instead. They argued that the air-pollution level in Mong Kok was too high and the weather in Hong Kong too hot and humid, and therefore proposed a forty-meter-high, centralized air-conditioned atrium space as an alternative.[4] [1] The proposal was accepted and open spaces in Hong Kong have since been redefined by LED-light sky projections and aluminum trees within a curtain-walled atrium space.

The Hong Kong flâneur, however, has long been strolling and sauntering in the tempered environment. The first publicly accessible air-conditioned space in Hong Kong was Harbour

City, a mega structure constructed in 1966. Influenced by the Japanese Metabolist and post-war British Brutalist styles, Harbour City has cruise terminals, car parks and a shopping mall contained under one roof. The mall, which was first constructed to promote tourism in Hong Kong, has now become the only social space in the city. The internalized mall has dominated the livelihood of the streets and also downgraded the experiences of exploration and discovery into something simply about consumption and the transaction of commodities.

The disappearance of streets and the amalgamation of activities were not necessarily by-products of urbanization and modernist planning. On the contrary, some of the earliest modernist attempts in Hong Kong were able to mediate between the so-called conflict of traditional social spaces and planned high-density urban habitations. One of the most prominent examples of these developments would be Choi Hung Estate in East Kowloon, constructed between 1961 and 1964. Comprehensive amenity planning was implemented for its community of 43,000 people, including retail spaces, fresh food markets, playgrounds and five schools.[5] It was the Hong Kong Government's intention to encourage residences to enjoy their newfound stability after the Revolution and to integrate with the rest of the community through these shared spaces.

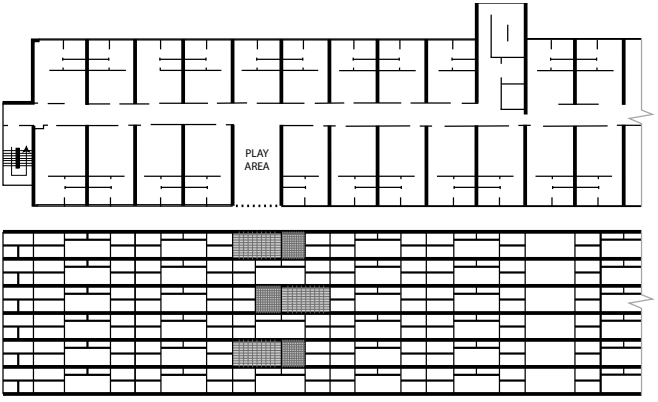
Recognized for its excellence in design by Palmer and Turner Architects, Choi Hung Estate was nicknamed Si-Fu Lou (The Master's Building) and was recognized as a privilege for its habitants despite its relatively rural location.[6] [2] The estate buildings were planned in the complete absence of air conditioning, and at various heights, to ensure cross ventilation: four long L-shape blocks of seven stories and eight towers of twenty stories. [3] Other amenities, including badminton courts and children's playgrounds, are found throughout the



2 Site Plan of Choi Hung Estate showing a generous amount of outdoor and covered play spaces, Mong Kok, Hong Kong, 1962.

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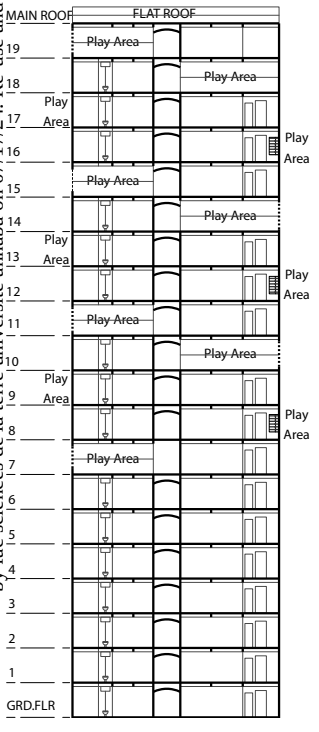
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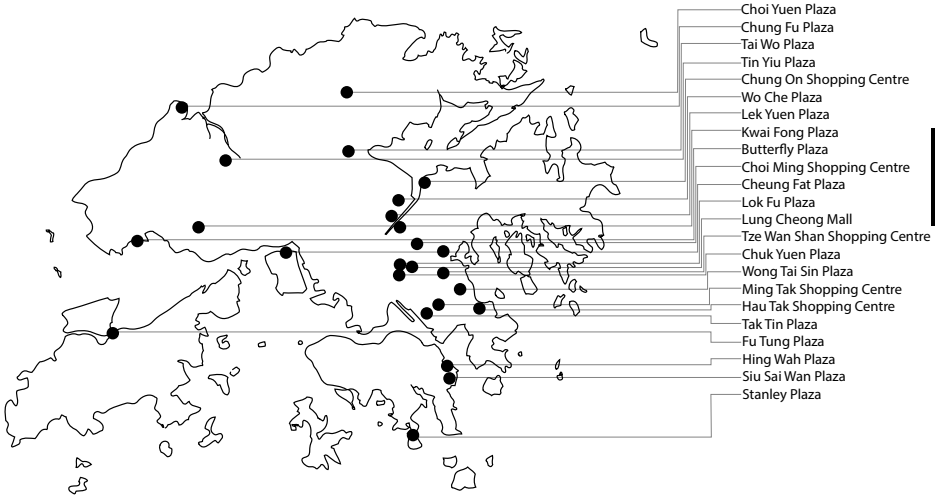
3 Partial Floor Plan and elevation of Type B block in Choi Hung Estate, Mong Kok, Hong Kong, 1962.

courtyards, shaded by surrounding buildings. The ground floor of the estate is often occupied by retail spaces, yet in certain instances, they are deliberately left vacant to ensure ventilation. Another architectural intervention of Choi Hung Estate is the play spaces found above the sixth story on the towers. They are located at the center of the floor and repeated every two floors. The location of the playground alternates and becomes a prominent façade feature of the estate. **[4]**

The courtyard of Choi Hung Estate has a remarkable history. There is an iconic photograph of President Nixon playing badminton with children in the Choi Hung Estate courtyard, taken during his visit in 1972.[7] Yet for the older residents of the estate, the most distinctive memory of the area was of hawkers occupying courtyard and bus terminal spaces. The hawkers' actions were volatile. They emerged around four o'clock in the afternoon to erect different food stalls on makeshift structures like trolleys, plastic bins or wooden stools. They sold noodles from northern China, sweet cakes made with Chinese herbs and dumplings made by fishermen, offering an array of food for the residents from various localities and with different tastes. The courtyards in the estate always overflowed with activity until the launch of the *Keep Hong Kong Clean* campaign in 1972. The campaign clamped down on informal activities across the city, gradually forcing hawkers to take up leases in areas such as fresh food markets and retail spaces in public housing estates where the Housing Authority implemented rent controls. In order to promote small businesses and secure jobs for estate residents, twenty-six of the retail units of the Choi Hung Estate were designed with residential apartments at the rear. This shop-house typology was also introduced to other housing estates constructed in the same period, such as Choi Yiu Estate in Shatin and Wa Fu Estate in Pok Fu Lam.[8] The concepts of work, life and play were never clearly delineated in the old days of Hong Kong society; makeshift factories producing plastic flowers and clothing were commonly found in the living rooms of housing



4 Section of Choi Hung Estate Tower Block, Choi Hung, Hong Kong, 2015.



5 Locations of housing estate shopping centers that underwent privatization, Hong Kong, 2013.

apartments. Likewise, one can hardly find a store in Choi Hung Estate that is restricted to a singular function: *Cha chaantengs* are often make-shift tutorial centers or pharmacy stores preparing herbal tea in clay pots for residents, and owners of snack shops are happy to be child sitters for a few hours, looking after the primary school children of their regular customers.

Although competition with convenience stores and supermarket chains has been fierce, hawkers and small stores alike are able to sustain their businesses due to the relatively low rents offered by the Housing Authority. Since 2002, the private enterprise Link REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) has imposed a series of Asset Enhancement Schemes in the shopping centers of twenty-three public housing estates, accounting for approximately twelve per cent of all public housing estates in Hong Kong. [5] They now cumulatively own more than 11,000 square feet of retail space, all of which is said to be located "on the doorstep of forty per cent of Hong Kong's households, serving primarily the daily needs of people in Hong Kong."[9] This privatization process has led to rent increases from forty to 200 per cent for all stores in the shopping centers. To make matters worse, Interior Enhancement Schemes have been forced upon stores regardless of size, putting a further financial strain on proprietors and costing them hundreds of thousands of dollars. Those most affected by the privatization process are food stores and wet market stalls. The monthly rent of these stores was about 700 HKD per square meter in 2011, which is twice those of other stores and 100 times those of medical centers in the same building.[10] The rent of a general store in a Link REIT-run estate is at least thirty per cent higher than its counterparts managed by the Housing Authority in the same district, therefore leaving family-run stores no choice but to close down or relocate.

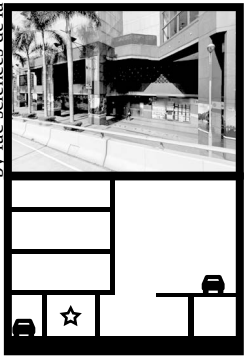
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Since the privatization of shopping centers in public housing estates there has been growing resistance to the Neoliberal scheme from both political parties and estate residents. The establishment and sales of Link REIT have been stigmatized from the start. In 2005, Ms. Lo Siu Lan, a sixty-seven-year-old estate resident, filed an appeal. She argued for the derailing of the privatization scheme since the profits of Link REIT were subsidized by the urban poor like herself, while the properties acquired by Link REIT were undervalued. Although her challenge was rejected after seven months of legal battles, advocacy groups such as the Link Watch emerged which were skeptical about the scheme.[11] A 2008 motion raised in the Legislative Council for buying back the stocks of the listing was another attempt to "re-publicize" social housing retail amenities.

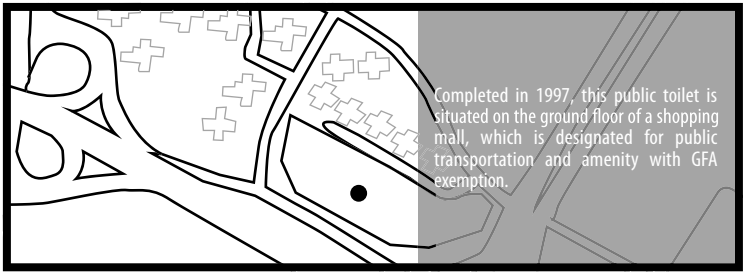
Choi Hung Estate was one of the few estates in East Kowloon left out of the privatization process since it was deemed too old for the Asset Enhancement Schemes. Television documentaries, magazines and newspapers, and even General Studies material in the Diploma for Secondary Education, have used Choi Hung Estate as an archaeological site of Hong Kong's immediate past.[12] Awareness of the uniqueness of the old housing estate stores has increased among citizens, who are concerned not just with preserving the vanishing local culture but also with opposing the monopolies of chain stores. The fabricated diversity in the choice of retail goods (with the promise of greater range to come) cannot replace the nostalgic longing of the elder generation for the chaotic yet social market environment, nor satisfy the connoisseurship of the younger generation, cultivated by years of commodity surplus and choice. **[6]**

With the 2008 financial crisis behind us, now is the time for a city dominated by service industries to experiment with alternative retail models such as hawker-style set-ups, small store cooperatives, and multi-tiered branding. Beyond nostalgia, a mapping of the social networking is integral to the exchange of



Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
G/F, Plaza Hollywood, Sheung Yuen St.

Sheung Yuen St. Public Toilet



goods and services for the estate and the communities it engages with, which would undoubtedly affect spatial planning.

In Choi Hung, there are two grounds for experimentation – the courtyards and the play spaces in the sky. Shopkeepers can start splashing water into courtyards again during summer, exactly as had been done in past years. A few plastic guns filled with water can be hung from the columns of the colonnade, cooling down the spaces with mist while kids battle each other. On the hottest days of summer, ice water bottles can be hung on fans to introduce a cold breeze. Over the weekends, water balloon- and water gun-fights will occupy the courtyard, providing free entertainment for adults and children alike. Once the courtyard is clean again, toddlers will roll around on the ground, while young people sit around and picnic. Activities in the courtyard are not static; people move around, following the shaded areas at different hours of the day and activating various corners of the estate. As Walter Benjamin described it, "Buildings are used as a popular stage" from the passion for improvisation.[13]

Another animated stage will be the play spaces in the towers. The popular idea of play now emphasizes an uninterrupted process of creation and recreation. As anticipated by the Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys, meeting people, browsing websites and watching online videos are all simultaneously enjoyable moments but also productive events.[14] In the foyers of public buildings, Starbucks and hotel cafes, one will find men and women sitting typing fiercely on their laptops; they are the labor force hired by projects and not by jobs. The presence of this "immaterial labor" indicates a specific sector in society, a newly defined productivity in terms of creativity.[15] In Choi Hung Estate, the play spaces can readily turn into incubators for start-ups and learning centers. The delineation between "work space" and "living space," which has dominated our social practices since the Victorian era, will be dissolved. The dwellers and the "desk-hopers" will interact in unexpected ways. They will borrow, barter or initiate service exchanges in the play spaces. Production in domestic spaces, which significantly contributed to the economic growth of Hong Kong in post-war days, will return to the public housing estates in the form of creativity and knowledge exchange.

The linearity of the public housing blocks, and the easy access by staircase between different floors, make strolling in the building possible. One can take a Pilates class at the fifth-floor play space, participate in a quick leather workshop, enjoy music from a nearby violin class, or talk to the neighborhood life coach, all before entering the courtyard to take in the fresh night

A phenomenon that emerged in the city in the early 2010s is the small leather goods DIY workshops. Many of them only open during the weekends. Similar "Immaterial trades" include tutorial classes, yoga classes... etc



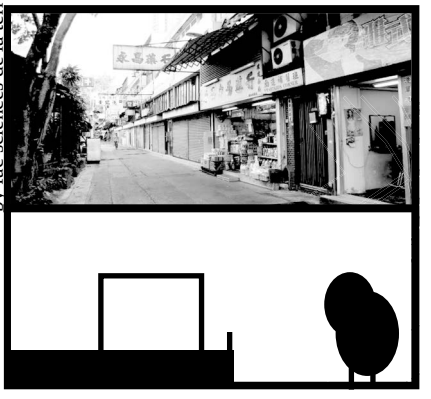
6 Choi Hung Estate shops, Mong Kok, Hong Kong, 2013.

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air.[14] The activation of the play-and-work spaces offer another ground for gathering, leisure and production within the city.

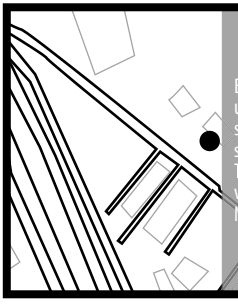
To resist the homogeneous shopping or commercial model of today we would have to intensify spaces. When play, life, work and shopping can all happen in different spaces, there will no longer be any empty ones. The shopping mall may still dominate the streets with its LED screens and intriguing signboards, offer diverse food and beverage options or even provide spectacle entertainment, yet the manifestation of commodity exchange has superseded attention to the ecologies that produced them. The playing-working-shopping in Choi Hung Estate reveals to us a glimpse of Hong Kong city's energy in its past and its present. Furthermore, it demonstrates that this public housing estate was constructed not merely for the individual, but with ambitions of housing an entire community.

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Ngau Chi Wan Public Toilet

Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
No. 1 Lung Chi Path, Ngau Chi Wan



Built in 1982, Ngau Chi Wan Village is a small urban village behind Choi Hung Village. One can still find 3-4-story village houses and street squatter housing in the area.
The public toilet is situated on the first floor of a village house. There is another public toilet in the Ngau Chi Wan Municipal Complex.

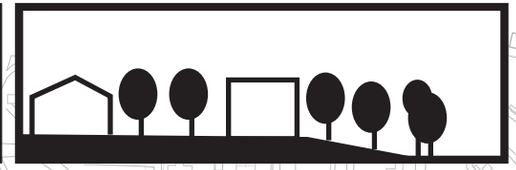
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Kowloon City

Public Toilets in and around the Walled City Park







Hidden amidst the banyan trees, the Lok Fu Public Toilet sits on a slope, slightly set back from the main street. The toilet and bathhouse building is part of the Hou-Wong Temple complex. Built before the 1980s, it is one of eleven bathhouses in Hong Kong. It only opens for limited hours.

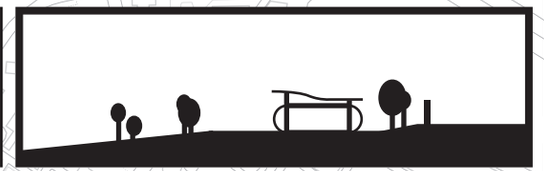
Opening Hours: 07:00-09:00 am, 16:30-20:30 pm
Junction of Tung Tau Tsuen Rd. and Junction Rd.

Lok Fu Public Toilet & Bathhouse

Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
Inside Carpenter Rd. Park

Carpenter Rd. Park Public Toilet



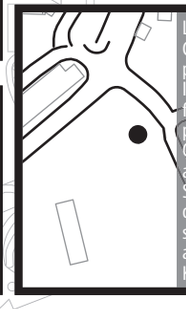




The public toilet building is located on the north side of Carpenter Road Park, along a slope near Tung Tau Tsuen Road. It consists of two symmetrical portions, one housing the male toilets to the west and the other the female toilets to the east. The structure is distinctive in its geometrical form and semi-cylindrical metal cladding. The two toilets are surrounded by greenery.

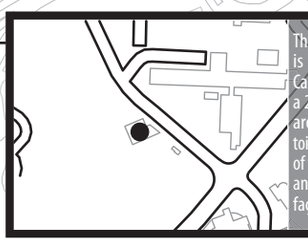
Kowloon Walled City Park Public Toilet

Opening Hours : 06:30-23:00
Kowloon Walled City Park East Gate



Located near the east entrance of Kowloon Walled City Park, the public toilet building resembles a pavilion with a traditional Chinese roof of the period. It contains a male toilet on the south side and a female toilet on the north side, separated by a partition wall. It is located in the Kowloon Walled City Park, along Tung Tsing Road, and can be accessed from the East Gate and Northeast Gate. Surrounded by trees and shrubbery, the toilet is designed to blend into the Southern Chinese Garden surroundings. It opens for limited hours and closes at night, following the opening hours of the Kowloon Walled City Park.





The Tung Tsing Road Public Toilet is located on the east side of Carpenter Road Park. It contains a 2-story high refuse collection area on the south and a public toilet on the north. The two parts of the building are accessed from an external staircase on the east façade of the public toilet.

Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
18 Tung Rsing Rd.





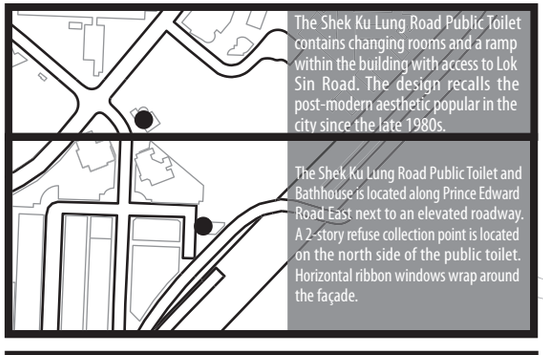
Tung Tsing Rd. Public Toilet

Shek Ku Lung Rd. Playground Public Toilet

Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
18 Lok Sin Rd.







The Shek Ku Lung Road Public Toilet contains changing rooms and a ramp within the building with access to Lok Sin Road. The design recalls the post-modern aesthetic popular in the city since the late 1980s.

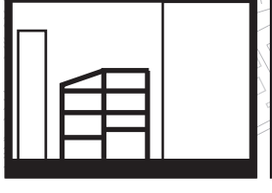
The Shek Ku Lung Road Public Toilet and Bathhouse is located along Prince Edward Road East next to an elevated roadway. A 2-story refuse collection point is located on the north side of the public toilet. Horizontal ribbon windows wrap around the façade.

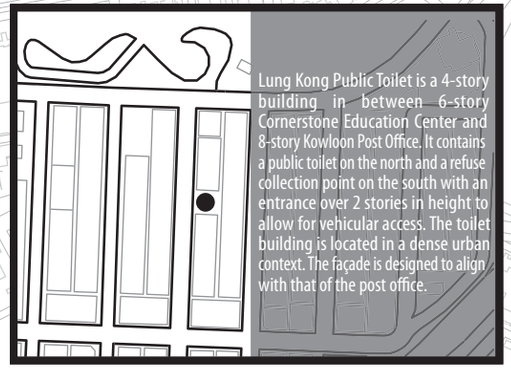
Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
Junction of Sek Ku Lung Rd. and Carpenter Rd.

Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
30-32 Lung Kong Rd.

Lung Kong Public Toilet







Lung Kong Public Toilet is a 4-story building in between 6-story Cornerstone Education Center and 8-story Kowloon Post Office. It contains a public toilet on the north and a refuse collection point on the south with an entrance over 2 stories in height to allow for vehicular access. The toilet building is located in a dense urban context. The façade is designed to align with that of the post office.





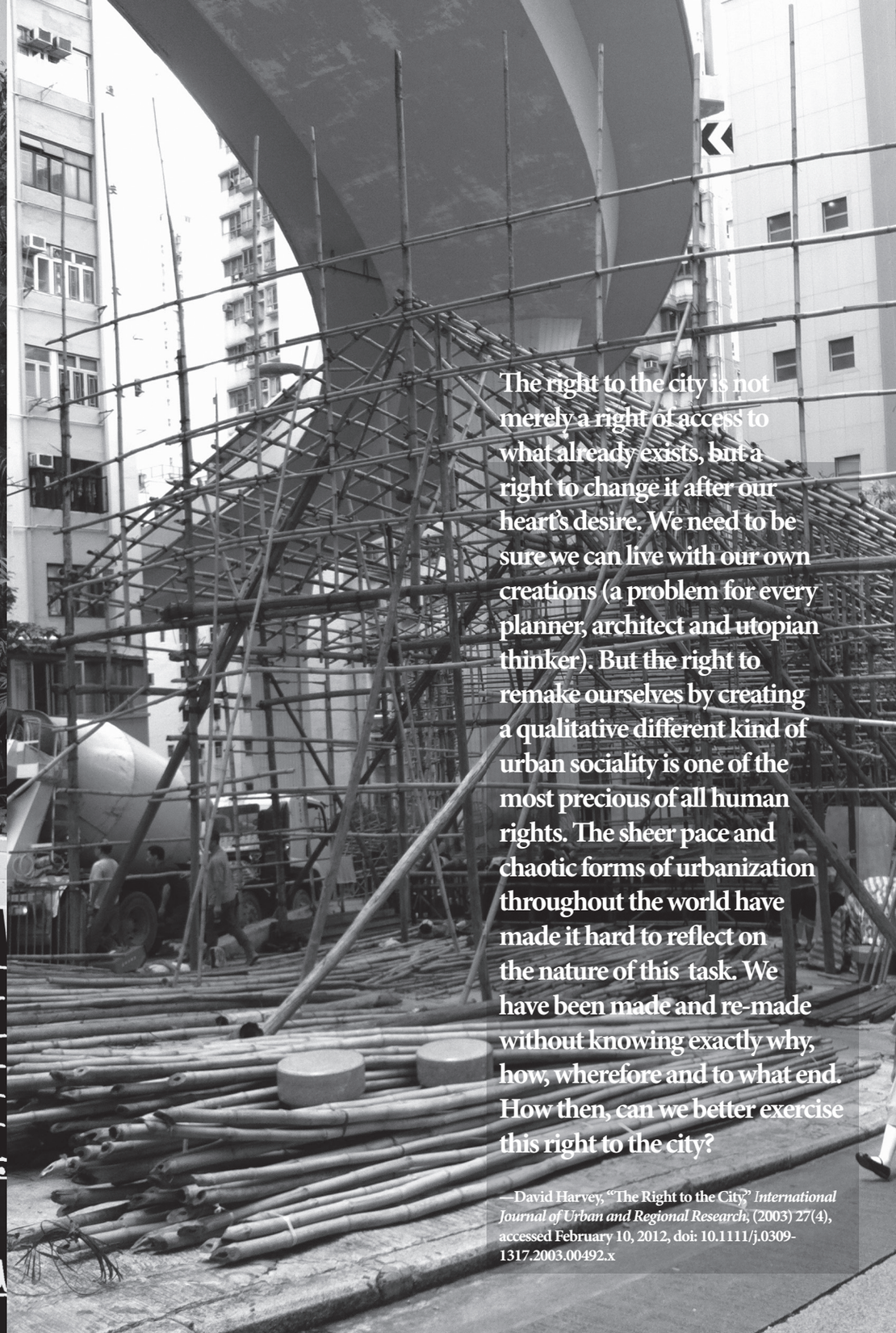
Shek Ku Lung Rd. Public Toilet & Bathhouse

These public toilets in Kowloon City began to appear in the 1990s when the district was undergoing dramatic environmental changes in the years involving the demolition of the Walled City. Of these, the two in the Walled City Park and Carpenter Road Park are designed and managed by the LSD. The other five are designed and managed by the FEHD. The architectural aesthetic of the two park toilets reflect the architects' attempt to integrate each toilet into the design of its respective park. One takes reference from the early-Qing Southern Chinese garden. The other is a family-friendly park with bicycle paths that lead to the historic Park. In contrast, FEHD's toilets are part of a building that contains one or more other functions, such as a bathhouse, a refuse collection point or access ramp. Their larger size is also attributed to the need for them to serve a larger number of residents living in the housing estates and the mid-rise apartments to the south.

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The right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it after our heart's desire. We need to be sure we can live with our own creations (a problem for every planner, architect and utopian thinker). But the right to remake ourselves by creating a qualitative different kind of urban sociality is one of the most precious of all human rights. The sheer pace and chaotic forms of urbanization throughout the world have made it hard to reflect on the nature of this task. We have been made and re-made without knowing exactly why, how, wherefore and to what end. How then, can we better exercise this right to the city?

—David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, (2003) 27(4), accessed February 10, 2012, doi: 10.1111/j.0309-1317.2003.00492.x

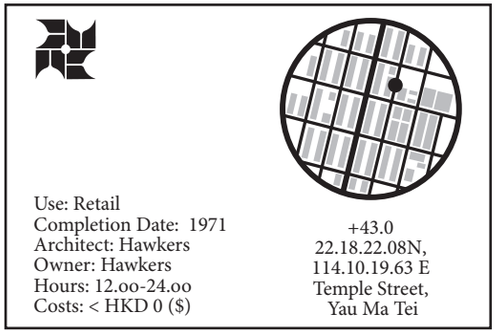


The way the hawkers occupy the ground is based on the principle of collectivity.

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How to Re-occupy the Street

Occupy the Commons
Yau Ma Tei



Dannes Kok

What Is the Price for a Piece of Land?

The question "What is the price for a piece of land?" can easily be answered by either a professional quantity surveyor or property agent who will offer a definitive, yet speculative, figure. Residents of Hong Kong have long been faced with the problem of severe land scarcity. Given the city's capitalistic nature and exceptionally compact living environment, the monetary cost generated by land value is tightly driven by supply and demand.

Is money the only means to possess our land? There have been several instances throughout Hong Kong's history in which alternative means other than monetary or material exchanges were sought in order to obtain and or occupy land. In 1935, a list of public zones such as Old Bailey Street, Nathan Road, and Temple Street was offered to licensed hawkers to occupy and operate their businesses within. All came from diverse backgrounds and held contrasting business objectives. Yet differences aside, these hawkers shared something in common – they were all successful in officially obtaining a piece of land via occupation of public spaces without payment of any form. Does this episode of spatial re-occupation illustrate any alternative ways of living in the city?

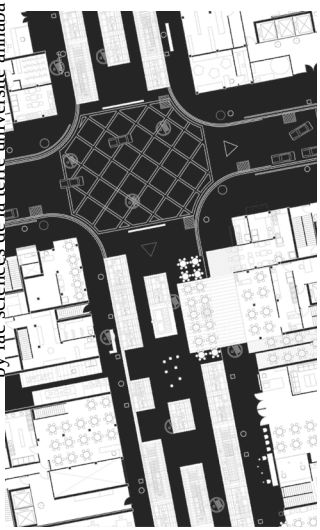
One of the earliest newspaper records of hawking can be traced back to the *Industrial and Commercial Daily Press* in

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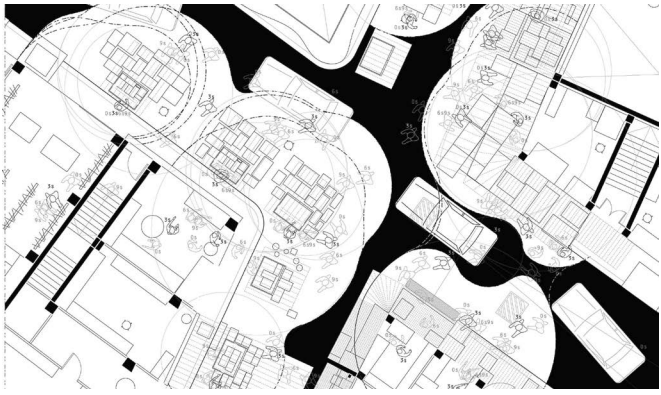
1929. The article describes the arrest of a hawker who was selling newspapers at the Yau Ma Tei Pier without a license. The hawker had illegally occupied a space at the pier with a wooden storage and sold newspapers atop of it without obtaining any prior permission. Formerly, hawkers were often an uneducated and unskilled labor force that occupied public communal spaces, selling food and other objects of necessity. Due to the influx of immigrants from the Chinese mainland from the 1940s to the 1960s, combined with Hong Kong's periods of severe unemployment in the 1970s, the number of hawkers grew exponentially.[1] Hawking, by stealing a space besides a building on the street, became the easiest and fastest way to earn money with the least capital investment during the early 20th century in Hong Kong. Due to the uncontrolled growth of hawkers in Hong Kong, an official license was established for these street proprietors that gave them the right to occupy certain designated zones. This shift in the hawkers' identity, from an unauthorized entity to an entitled one, illustrates the linked relationship of their anonymity and right to occupy a public space – a topic which has been subjected to vigorous regulatory alterations from the 1920s until today.

Taking a horizontal anatomy of Yau Ma Tei at three meters above the ground, up to Temple Street, we can discover not only the transition of a Monopoly-style game board of land parcels with an intense mixture of scales and typologies of urban blocks, but also the irrepressible existence of groups of hawkers. They have grown to become a recognized entity within the regulated urban environment, a public response to the unsatisfactory management mode of urban space in the city. [1]

The way hawkers occupy the ground is based on the principle of collectivity, which contradicts the labor theory of value by the liberal theorist John Locke. This theory has been the fundamental economic model for most developed cities and the common understanding of human inhabitation in a city. Locke stressed the importance of a fair and free market whereby the individual has to obtain the value he created in exchange for the equivalent value created by others. Furthermore, an individual who is unable to produce value does not possess the right to own property. In the case of Temple Street, it would mean the expulsion of those hawkers who unfairly used public territory for their personal use. On the contrary, the English socialist theorist David Harvey opposed this ideology in the free market argument, advocating instead for a variety of collective and common property arrangements in society. In order to meet insatiable human needs, there has to be a diverse mix of agencies – both public and private, collective and associational – to continually search for methods to organize production,



1 Temple Street Anatomy, Hong Kong, 2012.



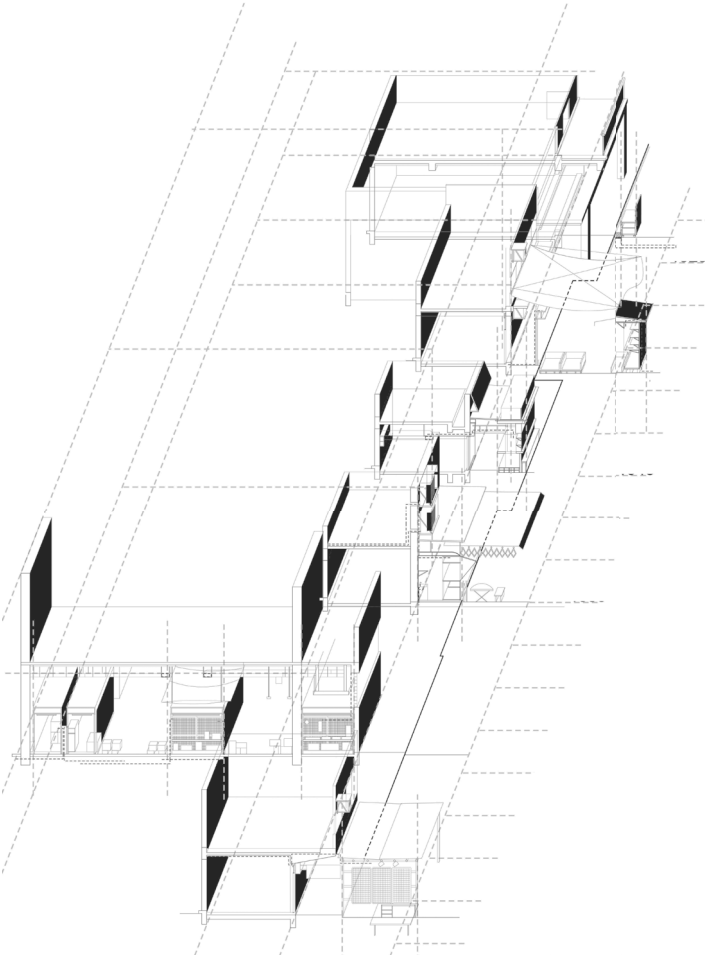
2 Timeline of Hawkers' Occupancy and Boundary Mutation, Hong Kong, 2012.

distribution, exchange and consumption. Harvey defines land resources like Temple Street as a type of urban common, that is, the common resources that all humans own together.

Furthering Harvey's argument, time is a governing factor in both the allocation of land resources and the protection of the commons from privatization. Playgrounds and roads are significant examples of such sites. They can be classified as types of urban commons, offering an open ground for collective usage and exchange, attracting various users to occupy these sites at different periods. From the several minutes that one sits on the public bench in Man Ming Lane Playground, to the several hours that drivers park their cars along Hi Lung lane, up to the several years that hawkers situate their booths along Temple Street we occupy urban commons at different moments and for differing durations. [2][3] What if we could occupy the commons collectively? Could we insist on the perpetual temporary occupation of these public spaces rather than allowing them to be subsumed as private properties obtained by monetary means? Under the guidance of a collective authority (this does not necessarily refer to the governmental body), the commons would be shared amongst each community formed by gathering individuals with similar interests. The units of sharing can vary from thirty minutes, three hours, three days, three weeks, three months, three years, or up to thirty years. Zones can be categorized according to their leasing period. For instance, some are specific to three hours' occupation, like car parks, sports grounds, and book fairs whereas some are specific to thirty years, like charity centers, kindergartens or hospitals. Hence, the criteria for legal occupation would no longer be restricted by the monetary value of the land, but instead evaluated by its contribution to the neighborhood, to the social needs of the residents (immediate and peripheral), to the future development and density level of the lived-in environment. Furthermore, every resident of the city is socially responsible

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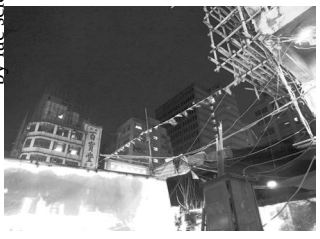
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3 Time Lapse Plan of the Street, Hong Kong, 2012.

for any changes or improvement to their lived-in environment. Their commitment to this responsibility largely influences their legal existence in the district, as opposed to being judged solely by their quantifiable wealth.

Another crucial factor in sustaining the collective and associational usage of urban commons is the social symbiosis. However, these in-between spaces that allow for sociability are continually in fluctuation given that Hong Kong's episodic waves of new developments cause ever-changing building boundaries. [4] Conflicts regarding the alternating boundaries occur regularly between hawkers and the Hawker Control Teams of the HKSAR Government. However, due to their irreplaceable social influence their existence in the neighborhood can be sustained. Within the Yau Ma Tei area, hawkers have been providing a constant supply of food resources and materials, at lower prices, to surrounding seafood restaurants, dai pai dongs and shops for decades. Consequently, living standards in the area are reduced, attracting both the elderly and younger generations to live around the Yau Tsim Mong District. Mutualistic relationships such as this can also be found in the natural

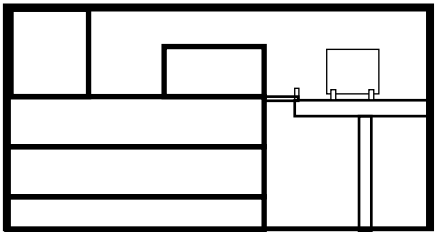


4 Social Symbiosis, Hong Kong, 2012.

world. On the seabed, the ocellaris clownfish protects the sea anemone from feeding butterfly fish, and simultaneously takes shelter within the stinging tentacles of the anemone, shielding itself from hungry prey. The two species share a symbiotic relationship that mutually benefits the other and in this case, they maintain each other's respective survival. Similarly, an extensive network of social symbiosis exists within Hong Kong. In 1962, newspapers reported on the organized fundraising campaigns held for relieving disasters in the New Territories caused by Typhoon Wanda (signal No. 10).[2] Activities were arranged along Temple Street, including the sixty-two booths of a charity bazaar and eighteen donation booths. Such kinds of social activities had been organized several times throughout the city, during various periods. This symbiotic relationship is unarguably an important aspect in developing a sense of sharing and community for the city. The story of the hawker at Temple Street illustrates an idea of collective occupation of our urban commons. It reveals the hidden potential for other means of occupying the city. The current model of land privatization according to the purchasing power of the owners therefore must be questioned, especially when society faces severe disparities in wealth, rank and resources. Thus, the question of how to occupy our urban commons ultimately demands a rethinking of the existing social structure.

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Luen Wan Rd. Public Toilet

Opening Hours: 00:00 - 24:00
Side of FEHD Kowloon Depot, Luen Wan Rd.



Luen Wan Road public toilet is located on the roof of the Mong Kok Government Office. It was built prior to the 1980s. The structure is situated in the buffer space between the government building and the flyover. The public toilet is accessible from the flyover along Yim Po Fung Street.

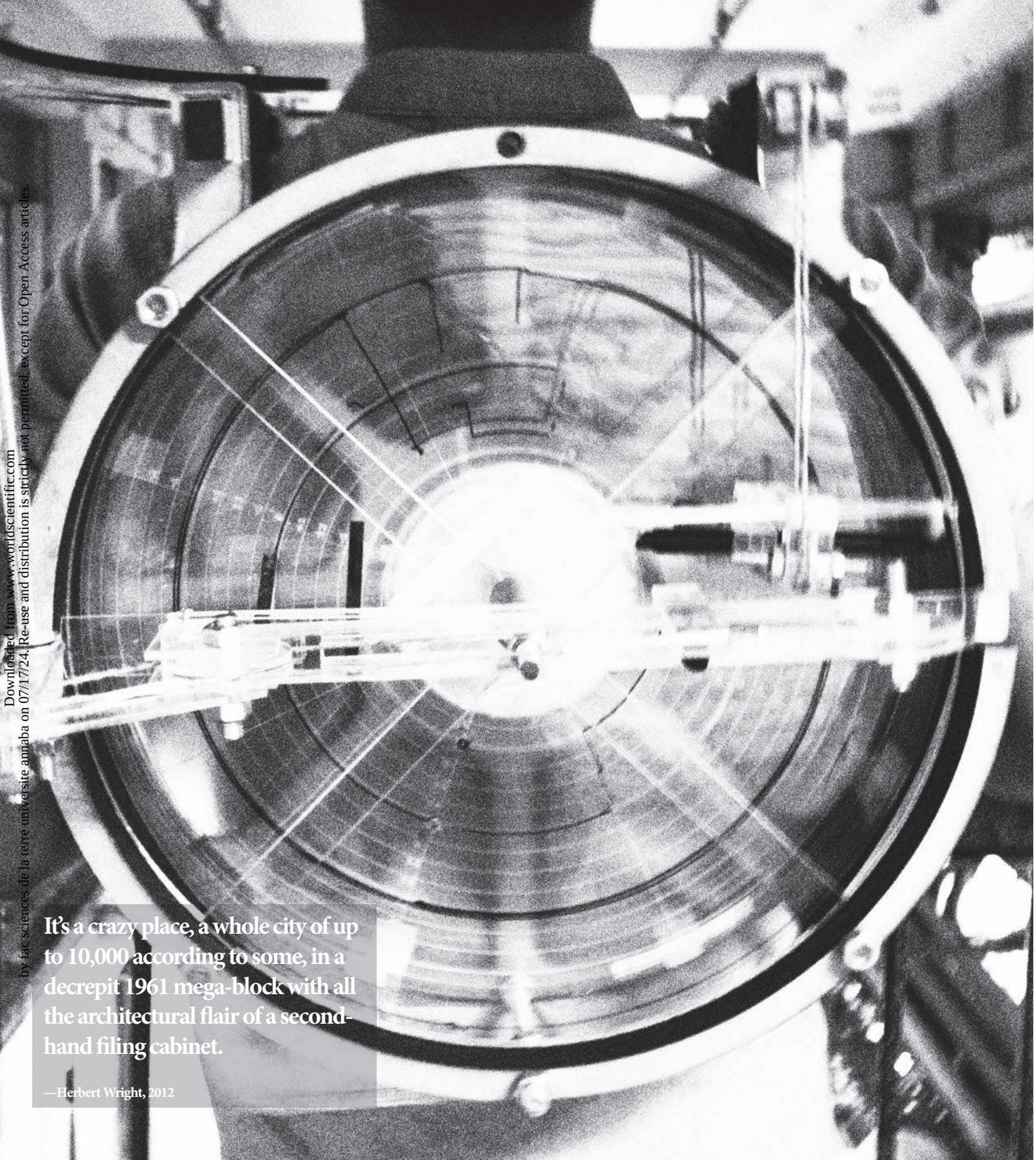
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Space melts like sand running through one's fingers. Time bears it away and leaves me only shapeless shreds. To write: to try meticulously to retain something, to cause something to survive; to wrest a few precise scraps from the void as it grows to leave something furrow, a trace, a mark or a few signs.

—Georges Perec, *The Species of Spaces*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Classics, 1975)



It's a crazy place, a whole city of up to 10,000 according to some, in a decrepit 1961 mega-block with all the architectural flair of a second-hand filing cabinet.

—Herbert Wright, 2012

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How to Measure Privately-owned Public Space

Dwell in a Carcass
ChungKing Mansions



Residential/ Commercial
Completion Date: 1961
Architect: P. Y. Lamb
Hazeland & Co.
Owner: The Incorporated Owners of Chungking Mansions
Hours: 00.oo-24.oo
Costs: < HKD 1000 ($)

+28.0
22.17.33.56N,
114.20.26.18E
36-44 Nathan Road,
Tsim Sha Tsui

Eunice Seng

THE DOCUMENTARY 10 x 100

01:	Width	59.12m;	Depth	82.53m
02:	Width	58.55m;	Depth	83.25m
03:	Width	58.43m;	Depth	82.46m
04:	Width	60.27m;	Depth	82.91m
05:	Width	59.36m;	Depth	83.06m
06:	Width	58.61m;	Depth	82.14m
07:	Width	59.05m;	Depth	83.75m
08:	Width	59.35m;	Depth	83.08m

They decided that eight times was enough. After all, all good things come in eights. It is not unusual for errors or discrepancies to occur in the measurement of something as wide as a building complex. What was disturbing, however, was that the difference between the largest and smallest width measurement was more than 1 meter; likewise, with the depth of the building.

This is a problem that the team did not anticipate. Measuring a building should be relatively easy, especially since they have measured many buildings during their student days, including all the summer internships they spent trudging under the scorching thirty-five-degree sun between the Island and Kowloon. Plus, judging from the drawings of this building

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and in fact, most buildings in Hong Kong, there could hardly be any unexpected types of rooms or spaces that require any special measurement devices. Aren't they mostly orthogonal, comprising of squares, rectangles, even trapezoids, and the occasional semi-circles? And then duplicated and multiplied?

The three had been chosen to undertake this task because of their ability to translate observations to analyses and to extrapolate conclusions very quickly in order to generate speculations and develop viable propositions. Most importantly, they work incredibly well as a team. Each possesses skills that complement those of the other two, and when opinions differ, they invariably opt to follow through each different path to prove its effectiveness or failure, rather than to compromise without even trying. Wouldn't that result in plenty of time and energy wasted? One would be compelled to ask. Well, not when you work at their speed and intensity.

They were systematic. They started to work immediately upon Exit D1 from Tsim Sha Tsui station on Nathan Road. They counted the number of footsteps from the exit to Mody Road, and then the number of footsteps to the edge of the building complex. One took a photograph at eye-level (1.4 meters from the sidewalk ground) with every step. Two took the backward view at the same level (he walked backwards from the station exit to the building entrance. Three navigated, counted and keyed the figures into the IPad. Ninety two steps and 184 photographs later, they reached the building's edge.

Their entry into Chungking Mansions was a little dramatic. J was shoved by a man carrying a large canvas. Her camera hit the tiled floor before her right knee did. She let out a cry as the lens broke – an unanticipated inconvenience indeed. Now the team had only one functional camera left. Plan B was needed. All three headed towards the fluorescent back-lit information directory board. V took a picture of it while A started to peruse his surroundings. He had an idea. He handed J and V an A3-size paper, each containing the ground floor plan of the building.

Instead of the front-back photo documentation that they had done for the exterior, A proposed taking the photographs while J marked the locations on the floor plan indicating where each photograph was taken; and V would mark the discrepancies between the building blueprints that they had obtained from the Building Department and the actual occupation of the floor area. They set off, returning to the entrance as the starting point for documenting the interior, then working their way from Block A to E. It took just over two hours to complete their first round of mapping the first three floors.

They had dressed carefully. A in T-shirt and khaki

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Bermuda shorts, the girls in T-shirts and jeans. All wore sneakers, which would be easier to run in, should running be necessary. Somehow the hustlers did not approach them. Perhaps they didn't look "foreign" enough? They had a little run-in with one of the thirty security guards patrolling the building. "What are you drawing?" he asked, peering over V's sketches and scribbles on the plan. "Oh, it's for an art design project," V lied effortlessly. It piqued his interest and he wanted to know more, so she gave him an impromptu art/architectural lesson.

The team made fifteen copies of the podium floor plans and two for each level above, which was the site of their focus. The idea was to be able to map the occupation of each floor plan through the day. Since about 5,000 people call the Chungking Mansions home, and another 10,000 pass through it every day, twenty-four-hour documentation was paramount. They checked into the New International Guest House, which they discovered in their research had received a "Top Clean Award" in 2010. They set three iPhone alarm clocks for 21:45 and proceeded to take a twenty five-minute snooze.

A woke up first to the sound of the first beep. They had an hour and fifteen minutes to eat dinner and set up the measuring equipment. After a quick thirty minute-meal of vegetarian curry at Saravana, they started to wander around the place. This was to be a quick round of "free-shooting" and note-taking. Each jotted down observations on the spaces they traversed that called out to them. The group documentation began at midnight. They started from Block A and went to E, from the ground floor to the second floor, repeating the same every two hours. At noon, they were ready to crash.

There were twelve more hours before they completed the twenty four-hour cycle. At midnight, they headed back to







1 Film Stills from *Metamorphosis: Chungking Mansions*, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, 2012.

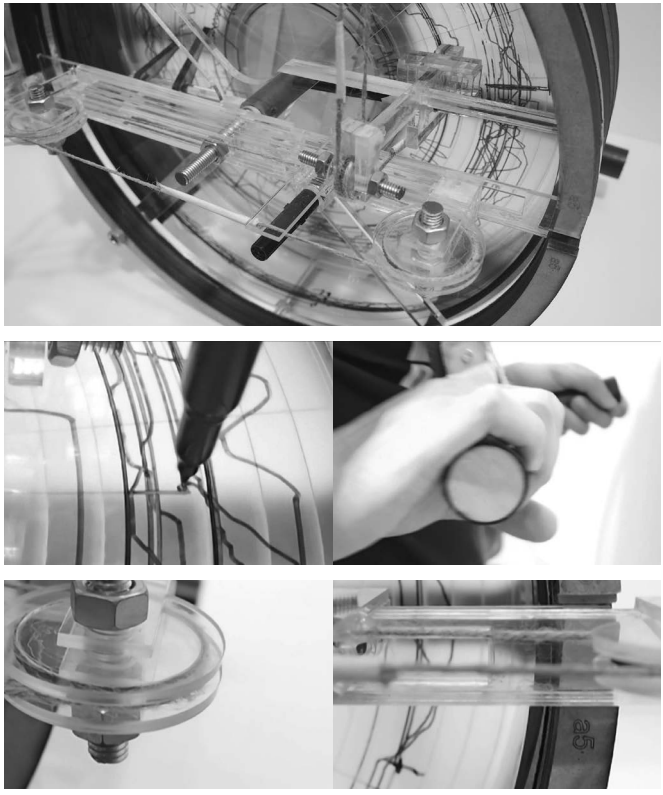
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their room. A uploaded all the photos. J scanned the sketches. V compiled the notes. An hour later, A looked up from his laptop, whispering "Let's eat, then sleep." Last night they had heard cries from the neighboring room so it was best to stay quiet. They made their way to the stairs down to the 10th floor elevator, equipment in hand. The man at the counter gave A a knowing look, but one less unnerving than the camera mounted above the two elevators.

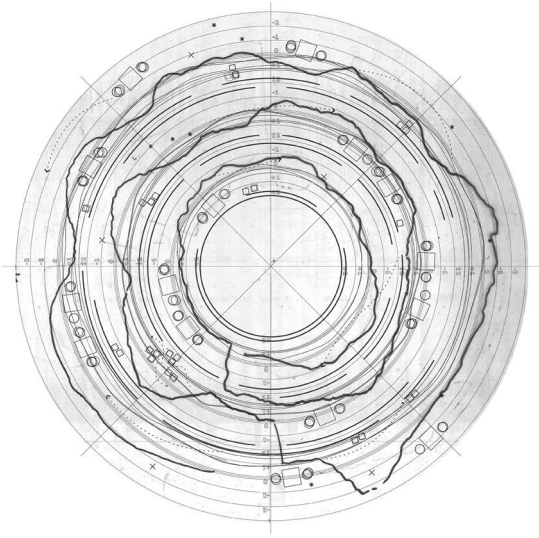
THE PROJECT 5 X 50

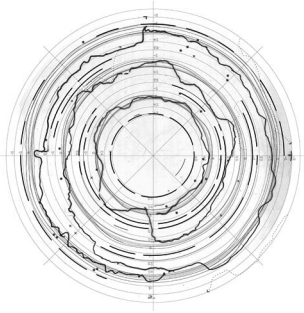
They lived in Chungking Mansions for one week, developing various methods of measuring and documenting its spaces. Inside-out, outside-in, bottom to top, down and up … Measuring became an intense daily routine, inhabitation a critical act. [1] They never left the building complex, maintaining their day-to-day existence with what it already offered. [2]

The eighth day arrived. They were woken by a loud banging on their door. They had overslept on the day their work was over! They had ten minutes to vacate the room. As they made their way down the building and past the shops, they stopped for a *nasi biryani*.



2 Film Stills from *Metamorphosis: Chungking Mansions*, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, 2012.





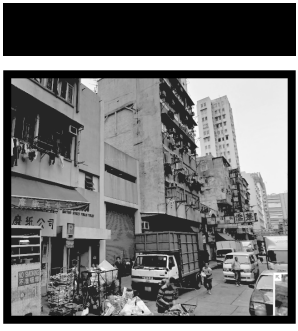
3 Analytical Findings of Chung King Mansions, *Metamorphosis: Chungking Mansions*, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, 2012.

"Are you not photographing and drawing anymore?" the man asked. "The guards have been watching you." "We'll be back," A responded. "What for?" "To design," V said matter-of-factly. "But there's no space!" he replied. The three were silent. They stood up and walked out of the building, each deep in thought.

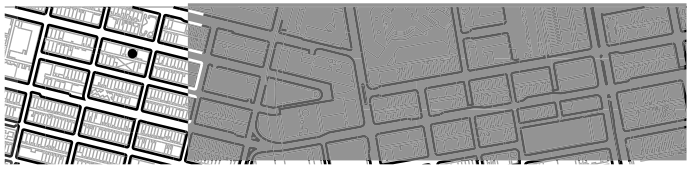
Back in the studio, analytical work began. A and J organized all the photographs in a matrix according to time and movement. V turned all the sketches into translucent layers and overlaid them with the earliest below. [3] Then she printed all 168 sheets and arranged them to correspond to the photographs.

People occupy and create spaces without thinking about the transformative quality of their actions. Proposal: a wearable drawing machine to record the interaction between the body and its immediate space.

After spending seven days inhabiting Chungking Mansions, the trio concluded that people occupy space and create places unthinkingly. Their proposal of a wearable drawing machine to record the interaction between the body and the space it traverses is a design act of heightened awareness. The body moves. The machine records.[1]







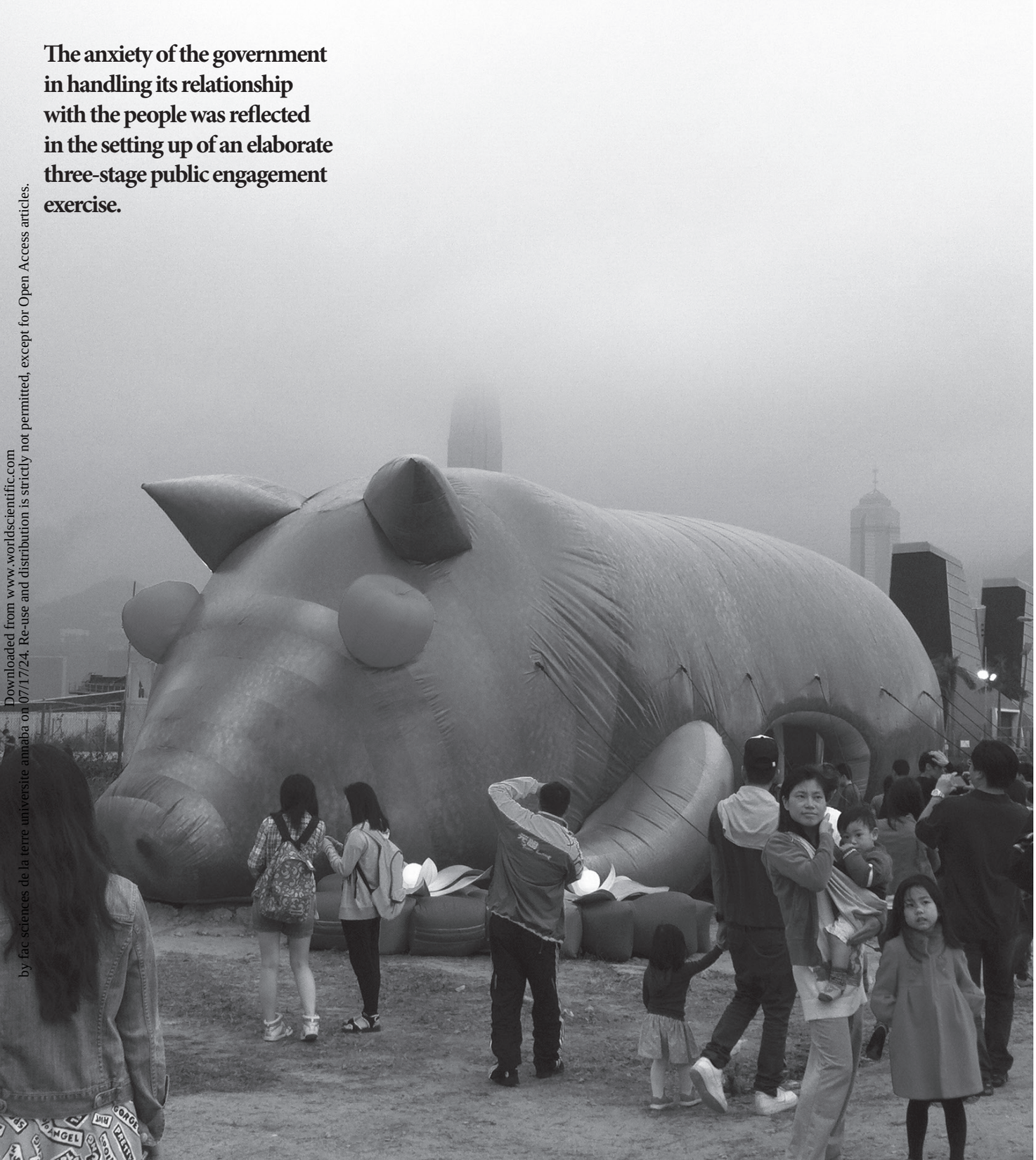
The city is the site where people of all sorts and classes mingle, however reluctantly and agnostically, to produce a common if perpetually changing and transitory life.

—David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012)



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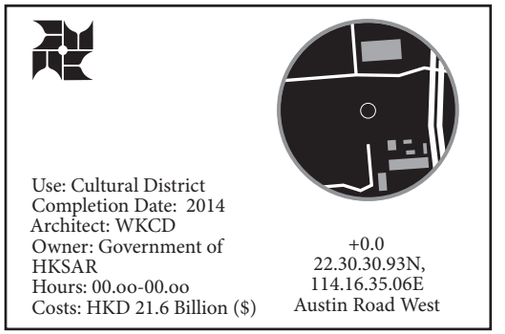
The anxiety of the government in handling its relationship with the people was reflected in the setting up of an elaborate three-stage public engagement exercise.



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How to Negotiate for a Cultural District

GET A DISTRICT
WEST KOWLOON



LAM LAI SHUN

Introduction

The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) development is one of the earliest and most prominent projects of its kind in Hong Kong since the territory's handover. As one of the few substantial plots of land located in a prime central urban area on the Harbor waterfront, there has been much speculation over the WKCD site. Since its conception in 1996, the project has been transformed from its initial top-down nature to one that is subject to a high level of public scrutiny, leading to its re-conception and re-engagement. This essay chronicles the numerous iterations of proposals that were developed over the decade, thereby revealing how the tensions between the global and the local, the government and the people, the wealthy and the poor, and also the underlying difficulty in defining post-colonial Hong Kong culture, affected the way architects envision the architecture of the Cultural District.

The Myth of the Cultural Desert

The origins of the Cultural District can be traced back to 1996. That year, the Tourism Board of Hong Kong conducted a survey targeted at tourists, who opined that Hong Kong lacked sites for public cultural events. The survey reflected the views of outsiders in the nineties, but the general perception that Hong Kong lacked "culture" – as the common phrase

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"cultural desert" implied – had persisted since the twenties and thirties.[1] From the late 1950s until the end of the 1970s, the British Government used this as the reason to build a number of cultural sites: the City Hall on the Central side of the Harbor waterfront, and numerous Town Halls in New Towns. Museums of history, science and arts were established along the Tsim Sha Tsui side of the waterfront in the late 1980s.[2]

But the idea of "culture" had been strictly limited to high culture. If one expands this notion to include other forms of culture, individuals and collectives in Hong Kong had been creating its unique everyday culture unconsciously since the city's colonization. In his book *Hong Kong has Culture*, Chin Wan argues that Hong Kong culture has developed a greater momentum since the 1950s,[3] when a huge population immigrated from the Chinese mainland and started to settle in the colonial entrepôt.[4] Towards the 1960s, the film and music industries began to flourish, even influencing popular culture within the greater Asia-Pacific region. In the movies, actors such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan quickly became known in the international arena. On the music scene, meanwhile, superstars such as Anita Mui and Leslie Cheung had fans around the world.

Scholars like Yeung Wing Yu argue that the term "cultural desert" was coined by "foreigners" because of a difference in identity and understanding of what culture encompasses.[5] "Foreigners" here refers not only to Occidentals, but also to those from other Chinese cities such as Guangzhou and Shanghai that had more developed cultural forms. What was also problematic was that this conception of Hong Kong was picked up by mainstream Hong Kong. The phrase reflected what the residents thought about themselves because of the relatively short history of Hong Kong (at least insofar as what it was said to have) as told through the colonial lens, the citizens' lack of confidence in local culture when confronted by others and the inability to recognize the uniqueness of its culture.[6] That most of the population came from Chinese cities that were much more culturally developed further fueled this perception.[7]

Despite the number of cultural sites built by the government in the seventies, I argue that in terms of the policies that were implemented, "culture" was not actually cultivated but intended as a means of recreation or, to borrow sociologist Wai-man Lam's use of the term "depoliticization," to suppress the political activism of citizens, whether by means of policy or by self-suppression.[8] By "culture" I am referring to culture in the social and anthropological sense deriving from its contexts and its material production.[9] When the notion is invoked, it usually refers to generally accepted types of high arts such as

classical music or dance of Western European origin.[10] This sidestepping of the cultivation or equitable acknowledgement of other (indigenous and hybrid) manifestations of culture led to the persistence of self-denial even after the handover. When promoting the Cultural District in 2005, the Secretary for Home Affairs said, "Hong Kong is a cultural desert, and the West Kowloon Cultural District will turn this desert into a fertile piece of land."[11]

The Rise of the Image (1996-2002)

What was the motivation behind the project of the Cultural District, if not only to cultivate culture? The WKCD development did not originate solely from the issue of cultural identity, but also instead in terms of economic forces and pressure from professional spheres. After the handover, the new government's immediate task was to deal with a series of economic crises. The region was hit by the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997; the local real estate market bubble burst in 1998. This was followed shortly afterwards by the global dot-com bubble bursting in 2000. Together with the development of Disneyland, the WKCD was officially proposed in the Chief Executive's 1999 Policy Address. On the one hand, they were to provide the economic impetus to revive Hong Kong's economy by attracting tourists from around the world. On the other, they projected the image to the global arena that Hong Kong's economy was still standing strong.

The Hong Kong Government favored ideas from overseas architectural offices. This was revealed in the composition of jurors, and the design and outcome of the competition for the conceptual masterplan of the WKCD held in 2001. To start with, half the members of the jury were international architects. Out of the 161 proposals submitted, 71 were by architects from or based in Hong Kong. The winning design was awarded to British architect Norman Foster. The internationally renowned architect is a familiar face in the city, having previously designed the well-known HSBC headquarters, the terminal building for Hong Kong International Airport and the Hung Hom Train Terminal. The major reason for this choice, as revealed by a report to the Legislative Council (LegCo), was the image presented by its canopy – "a unique landmark," "immediately recognizable with Hong Kong," and "progressive."[12] In other words, it fulfilled the criteria of establishing a positive image of Hong Kong as Asia's World City.[13] The canopy, however, was similar to the many commercial skyscrapers in the financial districts of Hong Kong that served global capital and was designed with copious use of curtain walls and glass facades; it portrayed an image of Hong Kong in the global, capitalist sense. As with Foster's

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other building projects in Hong Kong, the architecture was a showcase of Hong Kong's economic ability to undertake significant and technologically innovative construction projects, in spite of the recession. The "singularity of image" was also commended by the jury "for offering coherent visual authority."[14] This, as we shall see, would later become a critical point in undermining the proposal.

There were limited forms and channels for concerns to be raised by locals regarding the process or decision. Issues had already been raised with LegCo's Home Affairs Panel as early as December 1999 on the development's potential restrictions in the government's cultural policy planning, as well as the possibility of it becoming "a property development under the guise of an integrated arts, cultural and entertainment district."[15] The government responded by declaring that the Open Competition would not dictate the future development rights of the site. However, right from the very beginning, the project was caught between the tensions of global and local forces.

The Resistance of the Local (2003-2005)

The following years saw increasing resistance from the people as the project started to materialize. The government was struggling to improve the economic situation in Hong Kong, and attempted to gain greater political control over the territory. The people were already suffering from the economic recession, and the series of blows the government faced in 2003 further fueled the stress. The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and continued resistance to legislation based on the Basic Law's Article 23, which allowed the government to introduce anti-subversion laws to prohibit any form of dissent that could undermine the Central People's Government, led to an estimated record of half a million citizens demonstrating on July 1, 2003, and the subsequent withdrawal of the legislation. Some major executives in the government resigned as a result. It was in this mood of distrust that, in September, local developers were invited to propose development schemes based on Foster's original one.

The developers, in line with the government's agenda, took on the global premise of the project. The key renderings invariably comprised aerial views of the District from the waterfront. Not a single rendering presented the project from the street side to the north. In the close-ups, the spaces presented were generic – greenery, metal cladding, and glass façade – and adhered to a universal aesthetic of neutrality and expressionlessness. This is not surprising when one looks at the architectural firms that the three developers hired: Herzog de Meuron, Jean Nouvel,

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Cesar Pelli, and Tange Associates – architects who operate in the global field. The continued use of a unified image — the big roof canopy — and consistent architectural aesthetic suggested that the government did not take into account the councilors' early concerns insofar as the writing of the project brief was concerned. Instead, from 2003 it insisted that the project should be developed by a single developer to "centralize planning and coordination" and to minimize uncertainty and risk due to the participation of multiple players. To the councilors, this meant that the government was giving away yet another piece of prime land to the oligopoly of developers.

The proposals revealed another layer of complexity on the part of the developers in Hong Kong. By manipulating the project visuals that were shown to the public, the developers had attempted to hide the fact that there was a high proportion of residential development, and that the project was in essence a podium-and-tower development. Firstly, the renderings and models were presented in ways that played down the residential components. They were either made of clear acrylic or were rendered as translucent. Secondly, it was difficult to decipher the ground clearly due to the absence of shadows. The landscape plans did not show the level difference between the podium and the ground. Where a ground plan was shown, the delineation of indoor and outdoor spaces was ambiguous as both the interior of the podium and the outdoor pavement were rendered grey. Thirdly, despite the plot ratio of 1.81 set by the government, the developers proposed higher plot ratios of up to 2.5, which they argued was necessary "to ensure the cultural district is a vital, viable environment filled with activity… to expand the audience bases for the cultural facilities."[16] Yet the gross floor area (GFA) breakdown reveals that all the proposals contained a high percentage of GFA provided for profitable land uses such as residential, retail, entertainment, commercial, hotel, and office. Altogether, the percentages of these spaces range between 68.1 per cent and 74.9 per cent.

The prolonged debate via various popular media, and the political climate, saw an increased awareness among professional bodies and cultural activists. The proposals were not only criticized for the images that they represented or alluded to, but also for their inaccurate representations of economic realities. In the midst of the economic recession, there were concerns amongst the legislators that the canopy design would be too expensive in terms of construction and maintenance.[17] There was also widespread skepticism that such a landmark was necessary. In response, the government initiated a consultation exercise in 2004, but was criticized for its lack of representation

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because of the small number of proposals and the limited scope of citizen consultation. Citizens were invited to comment on the design, but not the process or nature of the project.[18] Faced with intense public criticism and resistance, the government finally announced in 2005 that a new round of consultation would start again.[19]

The Search for a Global-Local Synthesis (2008-2013)

In 2008, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) was set up. LegCo approved HK$21.6 billion of funding for it. Meanwhile, tensions between the government and people continued, most visibly in the several protests against the demolition of the Queen's Pier and Star Ferry in 2006 and 2007 respectively. The continued uncertainty of a pessimistic future on the cultural and political fronts induced a sense of nostalgia among the populace that led to a search for cultural associations in the city, including the ones with the former colonizer. The government's decision to demolish the landmark buildings associated with 150 years of colonial governance met with a strong reaction from the people. Thus, the government was anxious to find a way to handle its sensitive relationship with its people evident not only in the restriction of the plot ratio and residential component to twenty per cent, but also in the setting up of an elaborate three-stage public engagement exercise. In an attempt to "gauge the community's aspirations for and expectations on the planning of the WKCD as a whole," the first stage of the exercise, conducted over a period of three months in 2010, consisted of more than 120 meetings held with various groups of the public, and the collection of 6,688 questionnaires from "interested members of the public."[20] Imagine the sheer amount of paperwork!

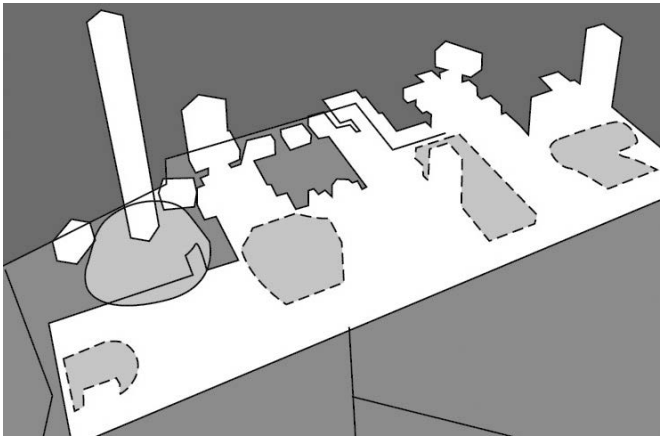
The predilection for ideas coming in from the international arena remained. Three architectural firms, two of which were internationally renowned practices (Foster+Partners and OMA), and the third a Hong Kong-based firm with projects in the region (Rocco Design Architects), were commissioned to develop masterplans for the WKCD based on the concepts that were distilled out of the exercise.[21] The schemes were eventually assessed by means of a questionnaire, based on their ability to address the aspirations raised in Stage One. The advantages of each scheme were extracted and combined to form a text-based Outline Zoning Plan.

The increased awareness and concern among the people did not go unnoticed by the architects. In particular, Rem Koolhaas of OMA wrote in the introduction to his proposal, *Project for a New Dimension*, "In my time in Hong Kong I have

witnessed the emergence of new generations staking a claim in the city, offering the contribution of a highly developed sensibility that combines political awareness, cultural versatility, and an ability to shuttle effortlessly between Hong Kong and global culture."[22] In avoiding a visibly unified building design, all three architects hesitated to define the formal aesthetic of the buildings, and struggled to reconcile the building form with the global aspirations of the project and the local specificities of the site. It was for the same reasons that neither the project brief nor the proposals could articulate the constituents or forms of culture they should cultivate. With regards to this difficulty, Hong Kong architect Rocco Yim suggested that Hong Kong culture was synchronous and all-encompassing, writing, "ALL... can happen simultaneously, in the same space and at the same time."[23]

The three architectural consultants tried to express difference and variety through their renderings in contrasting ways. In Foster's scheme, buildings were lit up with various colored lighting during the night. Using a more diagrammatic approach, Yim used distinct colors for buildings with varying programs. In OMA's scheme, programmatic variety was implied by the fragmentation of a larger building mass into abstract white cubes of different orientation, which echoes the concept of *lau bak* (留白), a common Chinese painting technique that allows room for imagination. [1] Furthermore, all three proposals represented the masterplan with some form of pop-outs that showed various activities happening at different times of the day. The emphasis on a narrative based on variety and simultaneity of activities nonetheless distracted the viewer from the formal qualities of the space.

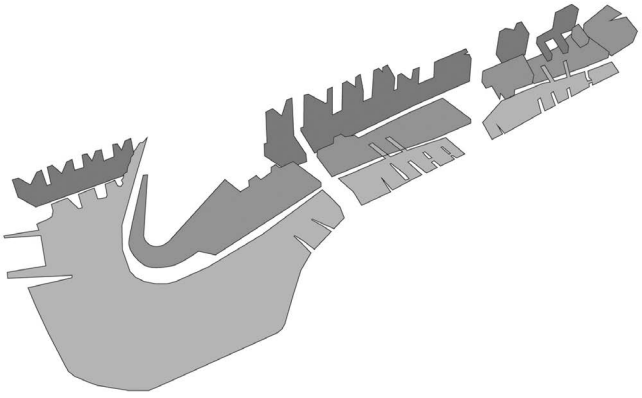
However, the architecture could not escape the fundamentally global nature of the project. The aerial renderings



1 Diagram of master plan based on the concept of Lau Bak by OMA, Hong Kong, 2013.

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2 Diagram of conceptual masterplan by Rocco Design Architects Limited, Hong Kong, 2013.

distantly presented the neutrality of the building masses in each scheme, albeit with different methods of visual representation. Of the three proposals, Yim's representations were most straightforward in expressing neutrality. [2] Buildings were rendered either as simple masses or with standard façade details (such as vertical timber louvers or glass facades). Other than the appearance of a couple of Cantonese opera singers, they were devoid of any "Hong Kong character." Most of Foster's representations present the buildings nestled among trees, partially hidden from view. The image was saturated with greenery: buildings with green roofs were camouflaged by the reflection of the trees, the effect dramatized in the bird's eye perspective. [3] Responding to the desire for green as expressed in the Stage One public consultation, greenery stood in for the glass façade and metallic cladding, and expressed the scheme's aesthetic neutrality. OMA's scheme was more explicit in trying to bring local elements into the project. In contrast to the muted simplicity of the buildings that stood for containers to be filled, ubiquitous local building landscapes and scenes of wet-market streets were collaged onto the renderings, in the attempt to sustain such "Hong Kong character" within the District.

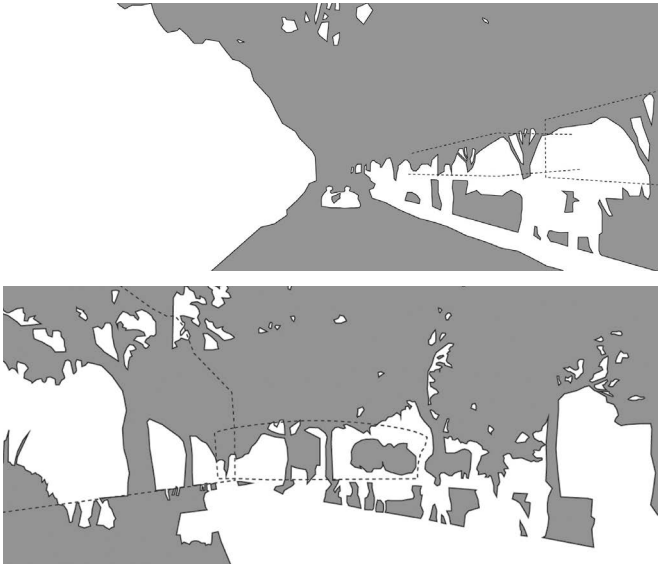
Despite the difference in design emphasis, there was a sense that all three schemes were fulfilling a check-list of items put forward by the Stage One exercises, rather than an attempt to propose meaningful schemes that contemplated the cultivation of culture in Hong Kong for a prime piece of land on the waterfront. Zhu Tao, architectural critic and Assistant Professor at the University of Hong Kong, criticized the three-month engagement exercise for being too short and difficult for the lay person to easily engage with.[24] He noted that the savvy architectural proposals were not didactically curated to allow for easy comparisons between the schemes. Hence, the public exercise maintained a veil of awe and mystery. The public merely

gazed at the proposals with their large models and drawings, not fully understanding them.

Return of the Global

The Outline Zoning Plan that was eventually drawn up from the three proposals seemed to freeze the political dynamics present at the site, but the WKCD is still susceptible to geopolitical forces. After debates and public scrutiny subsided, the global started to re-stake its claim on the site. Architectural competitions for the various museums on the site became more apparent in their favoritism towards internationally-known *starchitects* [1][2][3]. Each of the supposedly open competitions typically saw a shortlist of five global architects. Their Hong Kong local collaborators were routinely relegated to the management and detailing of the projects. Once again, the ratio of international jurors to local jurors was the same as that of the competition a decade earlier. Only very general renderings were publicized, and compared to the masterplans, much less information about the proposals was released.

The notion of culture remains elusive. The winning design for the Xiqu Center by Bing Thom Architects (now Revery Architecture) from Vancouver, and Ronald Lu from Hong Kong, unveiled in December 2012, was perhaps the most explicit in attempting to symbolize Chinese culture and art, through four "core principles" ("qi," "nature," "gateway and pavilions," and "courtyard"). Notwithstanding, these were abstract and do not reflect nor present a fresh take on Chinese opera theater. The construction of a temporary traditional Chinese



3 Illustration of Green concept by Foster + Partners, Hong Kong, 2013.

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wooden pavilion[25] in the middle of the cybernetic atrium was a particularly forced attempt to reconcile the dilemma between tradition and the contemporary, but nevertheless showcased it just as the Hong Kong Cultural Center and the Clock Tower did.[26] Arguably, the Xiqu Bamboo Theatre, designed by local architect Raymond Fung and which occupied the site for a brief six months, captured the atmosphere of the Chinese opera more vividly with its metallic roof and bamboo construction that adapted a traditional material and construction to contemporary building standards. Six months later, WKCD unveiled Herzog and de Meuron's abstract box for M+ museum. The extrusion of the inverted T-form was described as "a strikingly slim, semi-transparent vertical plane… atop an impressive horizontal slab."[27] Through the renderings, HdM intended the "semi-transparent" plane to act as a canvas for possible artwork. In the near distance, the 108-story International Commerce Centre, the symbol of global capitalism, offers a blank background for any artwork that is projected on it. Without specific compelling qualities of the place, HdM turned to "the underground tunnel of the airport express," which in terms of formal attributes is a "spectacular space… for art and design, installation and performance." Yet it stands for a neutral space, void of overt symbolism or meaning; a design that underlies the characteristic of a museum architecture as a container that does not compete with its collections.

In 2013, the WKCDA suggested increasing the allowable plot ratio of the development from 1.81 to 2.00, adding 77,000 square meters of "commercial" area, in response to economic inflation in recent years. This more than doubled the project budget.[28] The CEO, Michael Lynch, later revealed that this area would be given over to the rental of artist hostels and studios for creative industries. Nevertheless, skepticism and concerns over its actual use remained.[29] What is problematic is not only the persistence in commissioning internationally renowned architectural practices to develop "world-class architecture" that led to the spike in budget, but the way spaces that were crucial for incubating ideas were appropriated predominantly for economic sustainability. When the astronomical number is translated to the rental and sale of space, it is invariably a self-selective group who would be able to afford to use these spaces.

Closing the Loop

For a while after the long painful period of gestation, the public appeared to have lost interest in the development. Yet in June 2017, in a surprising, forceful move by the HKSAR government, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and the Palace Museum signed a Collaborative Agreement on the development

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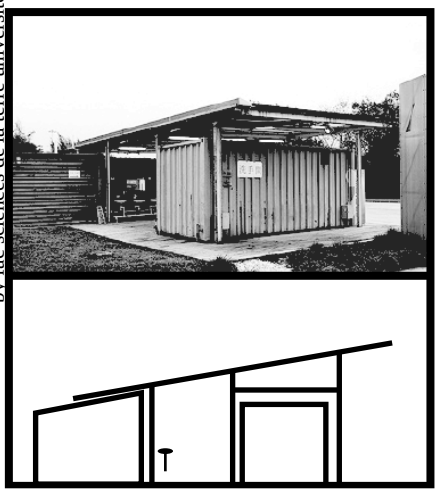
of the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM). As the Palace Museum was not in any of the three original masterplans, and the public was not consulted before its announcement, the move sparked a renewed and heated debate, heightened in the aftermath of the 2014 Umbrella Movement for political independence. It disclosed the government's attempt to cultivate a nationalist cultural environment agenda in favor of China under the guise of "strengthening Hong Kong's position as a cultural metropolis."[30] Architecturally, this was also expressed in the building design by Rocco Yim, who drew inspiration from the spatial sequence of Chinese traditional courtyards.[31] With its top-heavy geometric design, the museum resembled the traditional Chinese *ding* (鼎) vessel, although the architect denied the literal reference.[32] The building sections reveal that the spaces within are almost exclusively designed as galleries for the display of Chinese historical artifacts from the Palace Museum. The lowermost of the six floors contains a lecture theatre and activity rooms for research and education. The project is also a departure from the usual practice of appointing international architects and the direct commissioning of a local architect who has a track record of highly-visible projects in mainland China and who possesses a knowledge of its cultural traditions. Significantly, the HKPM is the latest demonstration of the tenuous geopolitics played out in the last piece of land on the Victoria Harbour front.

Meanwhile, with the projects progressing ever so slowly, and an impending "fiscal abyss," the critical question of how the design and deployment of space is used to cultivate an inclusive culture remains largely unexplored, although some local design competitions that nurtured local architectural talent to cultivate some idea of what it means to create spaces in Hong Kong, created two pavilions in the WKCD. [33] These projects were conducted on a manageable scale and allowed local designers to implement an architectural design that is critically reflective of the local milieu. A proper study of the educational facilities and studio spaces that allow for the cultivation of diverse activities by various groups remains overdue. The M+ Pavilion and Freespace in the Art Park were the first spaces to open in January 2016, and both do provide space for local talents to perform and exhibit their work. But the costly Xiqu Center, opened in January 2019, was criticized for being prohibitive to smaller local art groups due to its exorbitant rent.[34] One direct consequence is that it was unable to schedule any show in April 2019.[35] A newspaper article published two months after its opening points out that the operation of the Center has become an economic question of breaking even, and suggests that the building could have been

more economically designed and still become the "world class" venue it purports to be.[36] Collectively, public reactions to the WKCD projects point to the call for better constructed public feedback not only at the level of the master plan, but also of the architecture, spaces and programming of activities.

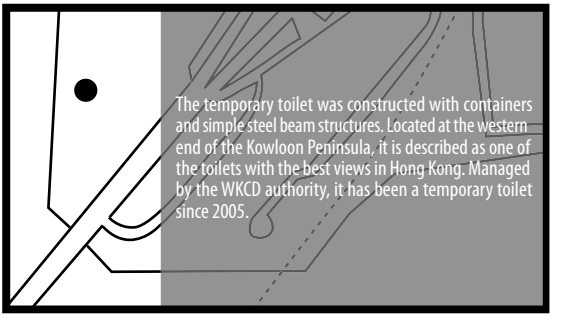
Given the transitional condition of Hong Kong on multiple fronts, the formulation of a brief that takes into account spatial attributes and economic viability, is much overdue. The WKCD development belies the tenuous geopolitics in the city and yet the project harbors the hope that the tenacity of its people will produce small battles won on the cultural front. To some extent, M+'s acquisition directive for Hong Kong and regional works, and the opening of Freespace for the incubation of local groups and the opportunities for regional and international exchanges and collaborations, are a small step in that direction. To date, the Artist Residence and Hostels and the "Art Commerce Exhibitions (ACE)" are yet to be realized. It remains to be seen how the architecture within the last piece of land on the Victoria Harbour front will be realized.

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West Kowloon Promenade Public Toilet

Opening Hours: 00:00 - 24:00
West Kowloon Cultural District



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The ultimate and defining moment of the twentieth century was the direct experience of the Real as opposed to everyday social reality - the Real in its extreme violence as the price to be paid for peeling off the deceptive layers of reality.

—Slavoj Zizek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five essays on September 11 and related dates* (New York: Verso, 2002)

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Batman got the villain and parachuted from Hong Kong to Gotham City. That night, Gotham and Hong Kong had shared the same imaginary world.

How to Create a City for Superheroes

Project a Spectacle
IFC / Ifung Building



Use: Commercial
Completion Date: 1961
Architect: Cesar Pelli
Owner: Sun Hung Kai Properties/ Henderson Land/ Towngas
Hours: 00.00-24.00
Costs: < HKD 10000 ($)

+480.0
22.17.6.0N, 114.9.33.00E160
8 Finance Street, Central

Sam Cheng

"Electronic telecommunications have so reformulated our perception of space and time that we experience a loss of spatial boundaries, of spatial distinctions. All spaces begin to look alike and implode into an undifferentiated continuum, while time is reduced to obsessive-compulsive repetitions."[1]

—M. Christine Boyer, *The Imaginary Real World of CyberCities*, 1992

In the dark of the night, he crouched atop the 416-meter-high International Finance Centre Tower Two (Two IFC), shot two or three anchors that held onto the glass curtain of the lower 201-meter-high One IFC down below, and glided swiftly through the air without making the slightest noise. Gotham City's hero took on the villain in the tower. The anchors exploded, the glass façade fell, and together they parachuted down over the glimmering Victoria Harbour. They caught the low-flying Lockheed C-130 Hercules, disappearing into the darkness before reappearing in Gotham City. That night, Gotham City and Hong Kong were of the same world.

The Dark Knight (2008), Christopher Nolan's Hollywood blockbuster and the second movie of his Batman trilogy, had stirred Batman fever in downtown Hong Kong eight months before its summer premiere in New York City. On November

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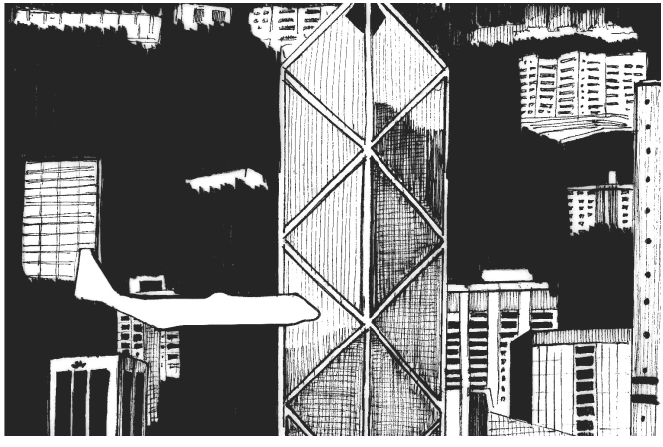
9, 2007, large crowds gathered throughout Central District in Hong Kong, occupying any space that allowed them a glimpse of the IFC towers and of the harbor. All were eagerly awaiting the appearance of the yet-to-be-seen DC Comics superhero in real life.

Sixty commercial towers in the district kept their lights on all night. Twelve bus routes were diverted, several streets closed and a Lockheed C-130 Hercules flew low across Victoria Harbour several times. [1] Every building in this part of the city played a role in *The Dark Knight*. The next day, images of Hollywood actors Christian Bale on the roof of Two IFC and Morgan Freeman on the Mid-Levels Escalator made headlines in major local media and news press. "Batman spends last night in 'the city of light'," the *South China Morning Post* reported.[2] [2] Momentarily, this sci-fi dystopian fantasy of Batman colonized a city notorious for its unimaginative high-rises.

Staging Hong Kong on Scene

Batman was not the first Hollywood hero to parachute from Two IFC. Angelina Jolie in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider – The Cradle of Life* (2003) had performed a similar act from the eighty-third floor of Two IFC into the harbor back when the tower was still a construction site. Completed in 2003, and designed by Cesar Pelli, Two IFC had been the tallest building in Hong Kong until it was superseded by the International Commerce Centre (ICC) in 2011. The tower earns its iconic role in representing Hong Kong as an open and accessible locale for businesses and tourists by virtue of its location, accessibility and international occupants, including UBS AG, BBVA, BNP Paribas, Commerzbank, and the Bank of America.

Projected as the major hub of the Hong Kong Airport Core Project in 1989, the IFC complex accommodates a train



1 Low-flying C-130 Hercules above Victoria Harbour in the filming of *The Dark Knight* in 2007.



2 Batman hovering from the IFC tower above the city at night. From scene in *The Dark Knight*, 2008.

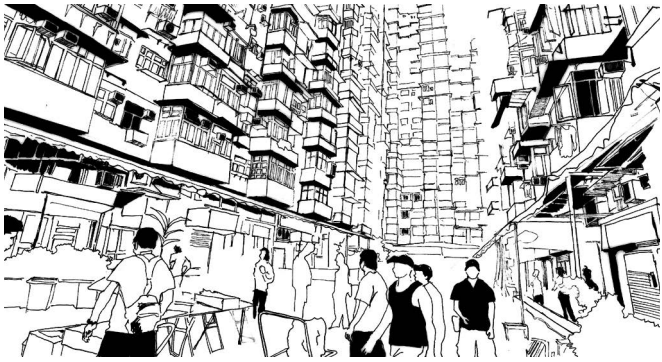
terminal for the Airport Express, a 2,000-square-meter mall and a public roof terrace. By train, it takes only twenty-five minutes to reach the airport, three minutes to the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal and twenty minutes to the High Speed Rail Terminal. By foot, it connects to the three-kilometers-long bridge system that links the whole Central Business District and the 800 meters outdoor Mid-Levels Escalator System that transports people along the steep natural slopes of the island. Featured in *The Dark Knight*, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, and many other major film productions, Two IFC has become Hong Kong's screen symbol as early as its year of completion. The generic glass tower became a representation of the self-styled Asia's World City.

Branding itself as Asia's World City, Hong Kong has been actively promoting itself on the global silver screen. In fact, the Hong Kong Government has invested 300 million HKD in the Hong Kong Film Development Council since 2007 to promote the Hong Kong movie industry in the global market, at the same time inviting overseas movie makers to film in Hong Kong, which was believed to be effective in promoting tourism in the city. Additionally, the Film Services Office, a designated department, was established in 1998 to provide comprehensive policy and technical support for both local and overseas film production in Hong Kong; past collaborations include *Pacific Rim* (2013), *Johnny English Reborn* (2011) and *Contagion* (2011). All in all, these government policies and efforts help transform Hong Kong into marketable narratives with the aim of appealing to global audiences.

Deconstructing the Shiny Facade

Between November 2002 and July 2003, the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) spread from the neighboring Guangdong region to reach 37 countries, infecting 8,273 people and claiming 755 lives around the globe. Within weeks, the rocketing number of infections and deaths, and the images of streets filled with people in white masks, spread fear across the globe. *City of SARS* (2003) was produced and released

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3 Yik Fat Building, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong. Drawing of *Transformers 4* filming in 2013

in the year of the epidemic. The film pioneered a number of SARS-related movies that followed worldwide such as *Contagion* (2011), one of the global blockbusters based on the theme of a viral outbreak.

To present a Hong Kong that is contagious, troubled and alienated, Steven Soderbergh, the director of *Contagion*, needed a new and contrasting image to the impeccable icon of glass towers. He chose a site invisible from the harbor, in a dilapidated part of Kowloon peninsula, a building so ordinary-looking that any new visitor to Hong Kong would possibly have missed it, even if encountering it by chance - the I-Feng Building.

The To Kwa Wan building was completed in 1971, accommodating 823 apartments and domestic workshop units within its unified, reinforced concrete structure. On the ground floor, there were automobile repair workshops, local restaurants, foot massage parlors and hair salons. On the upper floors, there were local doctors, Buddhist shrines, a Christian church and elderly homes. Exposed pipes, illegal structures and peeling paints could be seen from all sides of the 5,500m^2 island urban block. Despite its common appeal, the events that happened inside I-Feng had shocked the neighborhood - serial rapes in 1993, brothels in the 2000s, a pirated CD warehouse, a breaking news of kidnapping and murder in 2002, to name only a few. It was one of the most notorious buildings in the city. After its prominent appearance in *Contagion*, however, the eyesore became an icon.

Rough encounters

Michael Bay, the director of *Transformer 4: Age of Extinction* (2014) also filmed in the I Feng Building together with a number of similar locations. The encounter the team had while filming in the localities, however, was a rough one.

"'Zombie" Attacks Michael Bay on 'Transformer 4' Set', headlined CNN on October 17, 2013.[3] [3] During the film crew's short stay in Hong Kong, they faced a slew of paranormal difficulties, including an encounter with extortionists on the roof

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of the I Feng Building, smacking fists, roadblocks of debris, a rolled-over air-conditioning unit in Yick Fat Building, Quarry Bay, threats over money, falling debris (a flower pot, orange peel, plastic bottles and toilet paper tubes) on Ki Lung Street, Sham Shui Po, and a dire joke by an apartment resident in the area.[4] All of a sudden, the fictional characters from the comics, the Hollywood production crew and the local Hong Kong sub-culture were confronting one another face-to-face. Unlike Batman, who was carried away from *The Dark Knight Rises* in a C-130 Hercules transporter, the character Bumblebee from *Transformer 4* was stuck in the unsightly parts of the city.

To the surprise of many, not only was Bumblebee stuck in the rough parts of the town, Edward Snowden, the whistleblower who flew directly from the bomb-proof Kunia "Tunnel" Field Station (KFS) in Hawaii with top classified documents, was sheltering in these unlikely parts of the city after having dropped a bomb on the National Security Agency (NSA) of the United States from Hong Kong.

Uninvited arrival

"The World is Watching" headlined the *South China Morning Post* on June 11, 2013 – three weeks after Snowden had arrived in Hong Kong on May 20.[5] On the same day, the *Hong Kong Economic Times* published "The Hong Kong Version of 'A Traitor Counterattack' – Stay Tuned For The Finale."[6] The unexpected arrival of the whistleblower put Hong Kong under intense media attention and political pressure. The fact that Snowden had stayed in a Kowloon hotel reminded *Telegraph* reporter Tom Philips of the 1974 James Bond movie *The Man with the Golden Gun*, which was also set in the Kowloon of the time.[7] The surprising resemblance of Snowden's temporary stay in Hong Kong to Hollywood movie narratives fantasized the event, and fulfilled urban dwellers' desires to witness extraordinary events in an everyday environment.

Although well "ensconced" out of sight in the bedroom of a five-star hotel on Nathan Road for three weeks, Snowden had made his presence felt not just on major and minor press and media in Hong Kong, but all over the place in town – banners along the streets, posters on lampposts and post boxes, and LED screens on buses, trains and *cha chaan tengs*. These were hung along Queensway, Des Voeux Road, and the sloping Garden Road opposite the United States Consulate. His image was broadcast on the over-sized TV screens along Pedder Street, Canton Road, and at the shopping arcade Harbour City. **[4]**

By appearing in print and on TV screens, he avoided leaving footprints in the digital world and policing in the

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physical world. Via the countless Snowden images floating around in the city, global media attention, political pressures, chatter and rumors, and the physical space of Hong Kong were synchronized through the invisible flow of digital information.

The subsequent development of the story revealed the roughness and complexities in the perceived flat and interconnected world. The unimaginable scale of policing of information flow, the enigmatic handling of Snowden's departure by the Hong Kong government, his unexpected detention at a Moscow airport and the unreached destination of Ecuador reveals that in reality "superheroes" require the additional ability to maneuver in the rugged terrains of borders and politics.

Refuge in the grassroots

Snowden, assisted by humanitarian lawyers Robert Tibbo and Jonathan Man, applied for refugee status from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Yau Ma Tei the day he disclosed the PRISM project to the world.[8] In the office he was introduced to Ajith, a former Sri Lankan soldier and likewise an asylum seeker in Hong Kong. Ajith moved Snowden around the city under cover during the following ten intense days. Snowden first stayed with a Sri Lankan refugee family of three in a 150-square-foot unit in Lai Chi Kok. The US government filed charges against Snowden on June 14. After that, he moved and stayed with a Pilipino refugee family of three in a similarly cramped room in Sham Shui Po. Ms. Rodel, the forty-two-year-old mom of the family, took care of him and bought him an Egg McMuffin, Chicken McNuggets and a





4 Media coverage of Snowden in Hong Kong, 2013.

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cup of iced tea from a nearby McDonald's. She also brought a copy of the *South China Morning Post* (*SCMP*) newspaper for Snowden, with his face on the front cover. Four days later, he stayed with Ajith in his small room in Kennedy Town. On June 21, Snowden was charged under the US Espionage Act. In order to minimize his impact on his asylum-seeker hosts, he moved into the home of one of his lawyers, celebrated his birthday with pizza and fled Hong Kong on June 23.

Snowden could not complete his flight from Hong Kong to Havana via Moscow since the US authorities had cancelled his passport while he was aboard his first Aeroflot flight. He was stuck at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow for a month before the Kremlin granted him a temporary asylum status. Snowden had limited media presence during his first year's stay in Moscow, until the release of *Citizenfour*, a 113-minute documentary film directed by Laura Poitras, in October 2014. The documentary highlighted first-hand footage Laura had taken in Mira Hotel when the NSA mass surveillance program was disclosed to the world. The clips recorded in the furnished hotel room, where Snowden was talking with the investigative journalist Glenn Greenwald and the reporter Ewen MacAskill of *The Guardian*, communicated the intensity of the operation – the underlying apprehension throughout the discussions, the interiority of the room, and intermittent alarms ringing in the background that interrupted conversations. The delayed re-experiencing of the moments of the operation by the global audience has de-alienated the text-based techno-political discussion with spatial dimensions.

In September 2016, the blockbuster *Snowden*, starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, was released. Oliver Stone filmed it in Mira Hotel, on Nathan Road, and, to no surprise, across Victoria Harbour gazing at the IFC or across Kowloon Park gazing at the ICC. The movie reframed the Snowden narrative with fuller and more sensual qualities than any existing literature could reveal. The movie also surprisingly brought Hong Kong refugees into the picture. Asylum seekers in Hong Kong played a key but low-profile role in Snowden's critical twelve-day disappearance in town between the Mira and Moscow. Towards the end of the movie, the camera followed Snowden and entered into Hong Kong's rough spatial realities – grimy walk-up buildings, cramped interiors, wheezing air-conditioners, moldy plastered walls, and stinky light wells filled with rotting rubbish. A rough reality which almost every hero, fictional or real, has to go through in Hong Kong; or in other words, an almost required condition of hosting a hero there.

The city as image

> "Because architecture is seen as a purely photogenic set of objects, we get the same angles: looking down towards the harbor from the Peak, looking up toward the Peak from the harbour. It is as if it were necessary to hold on to the familiar for assurance that the city is real."[9]
>
> —Ackbar Abbas, *Building on Disappearance: Hong Kong Architecture and Colonial Space*, 1997

Not unlike the Snowden movie of 2016, almost every single blockbuster movie featuring Hong Kong imposes it upon the spectators to gaze at the Victoria Harbour at unsurprising angles, fearing they might miss the fact that "this is Hong Kong." For example, in 1960, Suzie Wong met Robert Lomax on a Star Ferry with Central in the background. The 1995 cyborg pier fights in *Ghost in the Shell*, with the low-flying airplanes throughout the anime, nostalgically reminded us of the now-closed Kai Tak Airport in the middle of the Harbour. The harbour performs as more than a backdrop – it *is* Hong Kong.

5 ICC Light Show, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, 2012.







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In movies, borders and barriers were subdued. For example, Batman from Gotham city (*The Dark Knight*, 2008), Lara from Santorini (*Cradle of Life*, 2003) and Johnny English from London (*Johnny English Reborn*, 2011) had all reached Hong Kong with no account of time and no differentiation of space. Through the cameras, Hong Kong was pulled into a global high-tech war set in 2025 (*Pacific Rim*, 2013) and co-living with cyborgs set in 2029 (*Ghost in the Shell*, 1995). This compression of space and time confuses the real with the imagined. These commodified stories omitted the hard realities of cultural, geographical and political roughness and gray areas that provide room for real and fictional superheroes alike to shelter in and take advantage of.

The city as spectacle

Hong Kong herself performs three times a day through the night shows that turn buildings into Tiller Girls. Since 2004, more than forty buildings on both sides of the harbor – including Cesar Pelli's IFC, Norman Foster's HSBC, IM Pei's BOC and KPF's ICC – dress up in synchronized LED chips and laser beams every night at 8 p.m. for the light show "A Symphony of Lights (SoL)," recalling Walter Ruttmann's filmic fascination *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* (1927). The daily fifteen-minute gaze flattens the city into a canvas that spans the length of the harbor, which holds the Guinness World Record for the "World's Largest Permanent Light and Sound Show." Coupled with the ICC Light and Music Show, which won the Guinness World Record for the "largest light and sound show on a single building" in 2013, Hong Kong city redefines the Debordian spectacle on a scale unimaginable half a century ago.[10] [5] The ICC show is staged twice a night, at 7:45 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., with the ICC, the tallest building in Hong Kong, a solo performer with animated images that move all over the 484-meter-tall, intelligent glass façade. The narrative was choreographed and animated by the Japanese lighting designer Hirohito Totsune who also animated the Tokyo Skytree. In Hong Kong, everybody is an involuntary tourist; everybody is colonized by the spectacle.

The photogenic quality of the harbor and skyscrapers has earned Hong Kong its fame and fascination. Some of the obvious and immediate benefits of staging a city as a spectacle include its attraction to foreign investment and tourism. However, by painstakingly involving the city, people and administration in producing one of the greatest spectacles on earth, Hong Kong will become more than simply an entertainment commodity. It will be a colossal missed opportunity if the city is content merely to be consumed.

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Deconstructing the spectacle

> "The ultimate and defining moment of the twentieth century was the direct experience of the Real as opposed to everyday social reality - the Real in its extreme violence as the price to be paid for peeling off the deceptive layers of reality."[11]
>
> —Slavoj Zizek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!*, 2002

Through the rough encounters of the *Transformers 4* film crew in To Kwa Wan, Quarry Bay and Sham Shui Po, and the marginal existence of refugees who hosted Snowden in the most critical moments for his personal safety, the locals and grassroots have demonstrated that the city offers so much more than a representation. Its roughness and wickedness is imperative to the sustenance of its survival. The complexities of Hong Kong society provide resilience in dire conditions, and the capacity for exceptions. These qualities are crucial to hosting a hero and being part of the game.

Snowden's choice of Hong Kong for disclosing the NSA information was a calculated one. According to Glenn Greenwald, who spent ten days with him in Hong Kong during the initial disclosures after June 2, in addition to ensuring his own safety from US interference, Snowden pointed out that his decision to disclose the evidence of NSA mass surveillance in Hong Kong was because its society had demonstrated values that he regarded as being important to him too - particularly the appeals to political freedom and a climate of dissent.[12] The culture of street protests and the annual commemoration of the deaths in the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown also made an impression on him. The relative political independence of Hong Kong from external influences had made it the first choice in Snowden's geographic considerations.

Hong Kong pioneers the production of metropolitan imageries in the mediated world and provides unique cultural and political qualities for exceptions in the physical world. The fluidity of Hong Kong in the fictional and physical world is an important asset to the city. It enables the city to readily impact global issues through creating new situations for the mediated culture and physical space. It is a confrontation of society with the spectacle - the deep socio-political history; surfacing suppressed cultures; the confrontations and interactions of ethnicities; and the increasingly ambiguous collective identity of Hong Kong that has opened up new capacities and opportunities to challenge the homogenizing global situations.

At the time of *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* in 1927, the

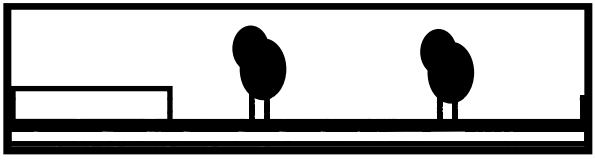
society of the spectacle was designed to mediate and consume. Whereas at the time of the light show "A Symphony of Lights (SoL)," the spectacle 2.0 will reinvent cities for the exceptions and confrontations of new conditions.

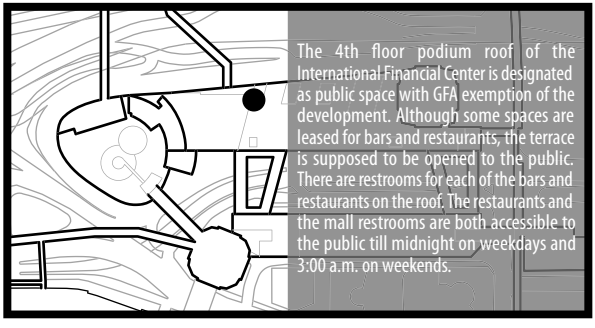
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International Finanical Center

Opening Hours: 12:00-24:00 (weekday),15:00-24:00(weekends)
Podium Roof , International Financial Center







The 4th floor podium roof of the International Financial Center is designated as public space with GFA exemption of the development. Although some spaces are leased for bars and restaurants, the terrace is supposed to be opened to the public. There are restrooms for each of the bars and restaurants on the roof. The restaurants and the mall restrooms are both accessible to the public till midnight on weekdays and 3:00 a.m. on weekends.



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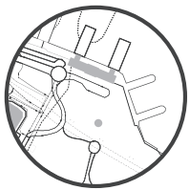


The scale of hijacks can range from small playground sandboxes, to human scale streets and even large infrastructure.

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How to Play Cyclically

Use Public Space
New Central Harbour-front



Use: Infrastructure
Completion Date: 2011
Architect: HKSAR Government
Owner: HKSAR Government
Hours: 00.00-24.00
Costs: N/A

+2.0
22.28.653.49N,
114.16.14.45E
Man Yiu Street,
Central

Renee Kwok

"For instance, we may need to resort to increasing the plot ratio of existing land as a short term measure to address the current acute shortage of land supply in order to achieve the housing supply target in the next ten years. Given the fact that any significant increase in plot ratio will have far-reaching implications for the overall planning of an area, the Steering Committee considers that, in order to address the root of our housing problem, the community as a whole will have to make some difficult choices and may need to accept trade-offs."[1]

—Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee, Building Consensus, Building Homes, Government Logistics Department, 2013 Administrative Region, *Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines*

Non-maximized spaces in Hong Kong are vulnerable to the processes of urban development and gentrification, especially since they are unable to defend themselves against the city's native tongue – the language of development. Megacities are multilingual. Their first language is economics and therefore, cities were conceived learning to *speak* in numbers. Quantification and abstraction of subjectivities into numbers were the fundamental mechanisms that created them centuries ago. Qualitative deductions and quantitative maximizing remain popular urban development proposals.

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Open spaces are constantly threatened by urban development proposals.[2] The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) project, Hong Kong's largest and most high-profile master plan to date, is an exceptional example of this. The Master Plan and respective Development Plan of WKCD was a product of numerous international competitions, lengthy public engagement exercises and a set of comprehensive statutory procedures.[3] At the Legislative Council meeting on May 20, 2013, a board member of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) questioned WKCD's low plot ratio concerning the overbudgeting of the project,[4] but the Secretary of Home Affairs dismissed the matter. This response emphasized the reluctance to revise the plot ratio set back in 2009, which had already undergone lengthy consultations and bureaucratic procedures with the authorities.[5] Any further changes would merely result in drastic delays in the project.

Additionally, open spaces within built projects are susceptible to being taken over by residential developments. In September 2013, the Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) Steering Committee proposed the acquisition of Open Spaces in existing public housing estates for redevelopment,[6] converting them into housing blocks. As indicated by officials in subsequent announcements, these sites of interest included Lek Yuen Estate in Sha Tin and Tai Yuen Estate in Tai Po. [1] Judging by figures alone, the proposal was well grounded and the steering committee presented it as a rational trade-off.[7] They tabled a thorough analysis that detailed the number of people on the waiting list for public rental housing (PRH) units, which totaled 234,300 general applicants.[8] Family and elderly applicants stood at 118,700,[9] some of whom were estimated to be living in 66,900 hazardous subdivided units (SDUs) when the study was conducted.[10] The figures gave the study a sense of authority and thus justified the otherwise, crippling proposal. The proposal soon faded since it failed to gain support from the public.



1 Aerial panorama of Tai Yuen Estate, Tai Po, Hong Kong, 2014.

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In both of these cases, the committee members proposed solutions that addressed the numerical problems. At the time of submission, the proposals seemed radical, but perhaps they were ideas worthy of further discussion and perusal. In the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address given last year, Carrie Lam proposed something even more progressive – a 1,700-hectare artificial islands reclamation project at Kau Yi Chau and Hei Ling Chau termed *Lantau Tomorrow Vision*.[11] The sheer scale and extent of *Lantau Tomorrow Vision* highlighted the acuteness of the land shortage. Perhaps the city would have reacted differently to the two proposals mentioned above if it had known that it would arrive at such a critical point. In both foresight and hindsight, it seems that retaining open spaces in the urban fabric as a permanent static piece of land on the Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) is probably not the best resolution.

Alleviating the pressing problem of land shortage has long been a priority for the Hong Kong Government. In 2010, the Government implemented a series of time-sensitive revitalization measures to facilitate the redevelopment and wholesale conversion of old industrial buildings.[12] The scheme aimed to provide more space to meet Hong Kong's changing social and economic needs.[13] Since its implementation, many unlikely recreational businesses and artist studios started setting up inside old industrial buildings. The low rental costs coupled with large rooms and high ceilings made it possible for companies to offer space-demanding activities like skiing and go karting. This was initially good news for the city as it meant more space for recreation. Unfortunately, speculative real estate potential followed soon after. The revitalization measures boosted the transactions involving industrial buildings in general and pushed up rents in a steep rise. In 2010, the average monthly rental cost was ninety-five HKD per meter square. Four years later, the average had risen to 139 HKD per meter square.[14] The rise in the average sale price was even more staggering, from 24,584 HKD per meter square in 2010 to 59,117 HKD per meter square in 2014.[15] As a result, artists and recreation businesses began to face the problems of escalating rents and eventual forced removal.[16]

Maximizing real estate potential is the current situation in the city. This implies that there will eventually be no room for activities that generate little or no profit - leisure and recreation for the general public. If that is the probable future, then the city and its inhabitants should come up with strategies for tackling this issue. If there is an eventual end to these spaces, then perhaps the response is an opportunistic, dynamic and temporal one.

The city's utilization of Mong Kok's pedestrian zone is an

The Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee 長遠房屋策略督導委員會 was formed by the Government in September 2012 to strategize on Hong Kong's housing direction for the next decade. The Steering Committee issued a consultation document on 3 September 2013 for the public to learn their findings and to understand their proposals. The document entitled "Building Consensus, Building Homes" outlines the possible ways of achieving the Government's noble vision, that is to provide adequate and affordable housing for every family in Hong Kong particularly the grassroots, lower to middle-income families and first time buyers.

Housing is a hot topic in Hong Kong. The level of interest is reflected in the media. Hong Kong must be the only city where the sales of flats are regularly included into its news broadcast. As soon as new residential developments are put on the market, the news media would track its sales, record its highest transaction price and religiously report it to the public over the course of three to four weeks. There is also a ritual of reporting on the sales and purchases of second hand flats [The Big Ten Estates W] every Monday morning.

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example of such. In December 2000, the Transport Department implemented part-time pedestrian schemes in Mong Kok to alleviate crowds. The intention was simple and the mechanism was straightforward. Tung Choi Street (between Argyle Street and Dundas Street), Sai Yeung Choi Street South (between Argyle Street and Dundas Street), Nelson Street (between Fa Yuen Street and Sai Yeung Choi Street South) and Soy Street (between Fa Yuen Street and Sai Yeung Choi Street South) were closed to vehicles between 4 p.m. and 12 a.m. from Monday to Saturdays, and from 12 p.m. to 12 a.m. on Sundays and public holidays.[17] This vehicular break voided the area of its usual traffic and the city took advantage of it. Salespeople, advertisers and street performers all came for a slice of the free pedestrian zone. The salespeople came with their pop up counters, the advertisers brought their rollup banner stands and the street performers wheeled in musical instruments, amplifiers and furniture. [2] Sai Yeung Choi Street South proved the most popular amongst these groups as it had the highest pedestrian traffic, as the street is one short block off Nathan Road - the principal road of Yau Tsim Mong District. It was perfect for the purposes of these groups. Bit by bit, they took over Sai Yeung Choi Street South and together turned the street into what the OZP refers to as Open Space – a space that is used "by the public for recreation and enjoyment."[18] The Mong Kok pedestrian zone serves as a good demonstration of place creation. It mirrors the process of game playing.

The concept of play is an activity of enjoyment and recreation, which often requires a certain level of engagement in a game. A game is a defined by set rules and agreed boundaries, both of which are freely elected by the participants and absolutely binding until a new negotiation is agreed upon.[19] As Roger Caillois writes in *Man, Play, and Games*, "In every case, the game's domain is therefore a restricted, closed, protected universe: a pure space."[20] These rules and boundaries are the most powerful instruments for play. Firstly, they allow for a play-space to be created and secondly, encourage participants to take a new reading of their surrounding environment that is superimposed over the original, physical environment. This overlaying condition separates the existing world, along with its original order, from the imagined make-believe world of games. Only when a game comes to an end does the occupied play-space then return to its original, unaltered condition of homogeneity and the separation ceases to exist. This cyclical nature of games is also found in sacred rituals. Likewise, rituals begin with the circumscription of a sacred space by an individual. "Sacrament and mystery presuppose a hallowed spot."[21] Therefore, the



2 Street Performance in Mong Kok, 2014.

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appointed border sanctifies and separates the sacred space from the profane of everyday life, both physically and ideologically. The ritual overlays a temporal utopia onto the mundane world. The hallowed spot becomes a protected universe of its own and operates in accordance with its perfect order. At the end of the ritual, the holy spot swiftly returns to being a secular space once again. [3] The nature of temporality is inherent in these cycles. As soon as they are created, their end is anticipated. It is this cyclical nature that allows these spaces to eclipse the existing condition.

In the case of Sai Yeung Choi Street South, the transition from street to Open Space began when boundaries were created by the Transport Department. Between the effective hours of the pedestrian zone, the street was isolated from the city's road network. Then the interested groups arrived and redefined new rules for the street and for themselves. From observation, the salespeople and their pop up counters usually occupied about three square meters (one and a half meters by two meters), the advertisers and their rollup banner stands took up about two square meters (one meter by two meters), and the street performers with their instruments and amplifiers filled at least six square meters each (two meters by three meters). Pockets of breathing space ranging from half a meter to two meters lay between each subjugation. It was apparent that each occupied spot unofficially "belonged" to the occupant, who could be found at the same location every night between the effective hours of the pedestrian zone. When the clock struck midnight and everyone packed up to leave, Sai Yeung Choi Street South then returned to being a part of the city's road network.

The above illustrates how salespeople, advertisers and street performers adopted the aforementioned cyclical mechanisms to transform Sai Yeung Choi Street South. While it is helpful to understand the cycle in its reduced and simplified form, it is crucial to comprehend all the subtleties that come with it. Thus far, contestation has been omitted from the description, which, importantly, is a key issue in this process. For starters, the cyclical phenomenon at Sai Yeung Choi Street commenced when individuals challenged the normal regulations of the street by occupying it for extensive amounts of time. Subsequently, these individuals competed with each other for the same shared space, turning the street into a place of constant conflict and negotiation. Arguments between the occupants were common, along with conflict between occupants and residents in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the residents of Sai Yeung Choi Street South and the street performers never managed to reach a consensus on the issue of noise pollution. In 2012 alone, 768 noise-related complaints were reported.[22]



3 Hallowed Spots and Play Spaces, Hong Kong, 2010.

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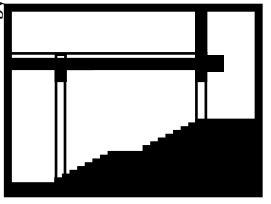
Various news sources reported that the noise levels detected in the area ranged between ninety and 100 dB.[23] As a response to the severe noise pollution problem, on January 20, 2013, the Transport Department limited the effective hours of the Pedestrian Zone to weekends and public holidays.[24] But this modification only aggravated the problem during weekends and public holidays. In 2016, 1,232 noise-related complaints were reported. In 2018, the nuisance finally brought an end to the part-time pedestrian zone at Sai Yeung Choi Street South and the scheme was terminated on August 4, 2018.[25] The temporary Open Space overlay was lifted from Sai Yeung Choi Street South and it quietly returned to being part of the city's permanent infrastructure. Residents and workers in the area rejoiced as the noise pollution was alleviated, whereas others who held contrasting interests felt defeated and were disappointed by the decision. Despite this defeat, the street occupants had already triumphed, having enjoyed eighteen years of Open Space at Sai Yeung Choi Street South by occupying it cyclically.

Amidst a contested city such as Hong Kong, perhaps the answer is to recoup Open Space through the cyclical processes discussed above. As proved earlier, it is possible for spaces to take on the cyclical nature of being and unbecoming. By fully understanding and exploiting these processes, it is possible to rethink the use of space in the urban fabric. Perhaps the city and its citizens could then begin to accept the reality of the declination of Open Space and instead focus on the idea of constantly searching for and seizing opportunities to experiment in, and of finding an area in which to create a space within, maybe getting kicked out and then restarting the process again. Eviction is inevitable; it is only by anticipating this fact of life that citizens can then liberate the way they live and perhaps even reconcile with the onset of the extinction of space in the city.

Author's Note:
After eighteen years, Sai Yueng Choi Street was reopened for traffic in 2018, due mainly to complaints against noises produced by the street performers.

Peking Rd. McDonald's

Opening Hours: 00:00 - 24:00 Sands Building, 12Peking Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui







As the first 24-hour McDonald's in Hong Kong when it opened in 1987, its provision of all-day washroom services has attracted congregations of different parties, such as "McRefugees" and "McGamers", ever since. The McDonald's appeared in Wong Kar-wai's 1995 movie Fallen Angels.

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Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when they are created by everybody.

—Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961)

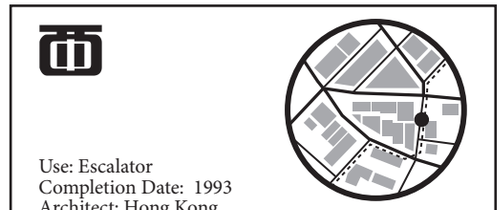
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How to Set Up a Beauty Salon Quickly

Occupy the Glocal Mid-Level Escalators



Use: Escalator
Completion Date: 1993
Architect: Hong Kong Highways Department
Owner: Government of HKSAR
Hours: 09.00-20.00
Costs: < HKD 0 ($)

+68.0
22.23.05.14N,
114.11.36.13E
Des Voeux Road, Central

Zhang Jingjing

A fictional interview with Re-Occupy Central conducted on February 29, 2013.*

**Re-Occupy Central is an imagined movement in Hong Kong with the aim of maximizing public space at the Mid-Level Escalators as a means of demonstrating against spatial and social injustice.*

Zhang Jingjing: Where did you get the idea of initiating the Re-Occupy Central movement? Does it have anything to do with the Occupy Central Movement of 2011-2012?
Re-Occupy Central: Well, the reason is very simple. We wanted to set up our own small business but you know the reality. Rents are as high as the skyscrapers, competition is as intense as the public housing system, and the individual is only a small drop in the Victoria Harbour… Even Sir Li Ka-shing will admit that it is more challenging today to initiate a business than it was during his time. As a global city, Hong Kong has witnessed tremendous social transformation leading up to the current polarization. I agree with Zygmunt Bauman’s comment that the cultural consequences of such mobility has, to quote him, “a radically different, opposite sense for, respectively, those at the top and those at the bottom of the new hierarchy; with the bulk of the population – the ‘new middle class’, oscillating

between the two extremes – bearing the brunt of that opposition and suffering acute existential uncertainty, anxiety and fear as a result."[1] I would say there is a connection between Occupy Central and us. We are inspired by their slogan and ideas, but for a different purpose. Occupy Central was against social and economic inequality, whereas our ambition is to make full use of the public space that originally everyone is entitled to, and doing so in resistance to Hong Kong's land law and the ruling class.

ZJJ: Domestic helpers also take advantage of the public spaces in Central. Do you see this as the same entitlement?
ROC: Yes. Domestic helpers gathering in Central District is the best representation of the coexistence of a global and informal economy in Hong Kong. [1] The very space that accommodates the financial elites also serves the foreign domestic helpers. The two classes are interdependent. People who enjoy the quiet and a green living environment in Mid-Levels rely heavily upon the services provided by domestic helpers. This phenomenon is somewhat similar to the rapid urbanization and large floating population in Mainland China.



1 Feast Sharing, Mong Kok Pedestrian Bridge, Hong Kong 2012.

The heavy daily traffic on the escalators between these groups of Mid-Level residents and domestic helpers gave us the idea of setting up small businesses in Central. We also chose the district because there are plenty of public spaces here, each of which exists in a variety of forms: from privately-owned-public spaces within malls to government-designated leisure playgrounds, and from elevated connecting bridges to symbolic squares. Yet these public spaces are designed with limited functions and designated for restricted activities that are far less diverse than the informal enterprises set up by the domestic helpers in and around their brown paper boxes. These include card games, picnics, grooming services, and so on. [2] One could even imagine how Central would be a much duller place without them. Michel S. Laguerre argues that there exists an informal city located just beneath and in the interstices of a formal city.[2] It emerges much earlier than the formal physical setting of a city and inspires the formalization of the space and the city.[3] The infrastructure in Central may have been built first, but the domestic helpers have long since expanded from its sole circulatory function to a multipurpose one.

As the commercial heart of Hong Kong, Central is conveniently connected to the remainder of the city, the Pearl River Delta, Mainland China and the rest of the world – a recognizable node in the global network. Because of Central's convenience and connectivity, our movement, Re-Occupy Central, is easily accessible to people from all over the world.

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There are more than 300 franchised bus lines that converge in Central. It takes no more than sixty minutes to reach Shenzhen, twenty minutes to Hung Hom where connections to Beijing and Guangzhou are located, and less than thirty minutes to the airport by the Airport Express. We strongly believe that such conveniences should be enjoyed by all levels of society and not limited to those in the production sector.

ZJJ: We know that domestic helpers have been occupying Central on Sundays for decades. Are you competing for space with them? Why do you choose to re-occupy the same spaces on Sunday as well?

ROC: One, because all the members are part-time volunteers; they all have to work during the week. Sunday is in fact the only possible time for the re-occupation. Initially, we were also worried about the potential chaos on Sunday. Yet this concern went away as soon as we went out looking for a proper location. The domestic helpers are so well organized. I'm not sure whether it is a result of self-organization from negotiations with building owners and the government but we could easily detect the boundary between the helpers' temporal domain and the rest of the public space even when large areas were occupied. Take for instance the ground floor of HSBC headquarters in which clear passageways are reserved in consideration of those who are not staying but passing through. [3] In our initial occupation, we picnicked amongst the domestic helpers on a small, hundred by seventy centimeter space (the size of a PVC mat) amongst them and received no complaints. In fact, we traded some of our *char siew bao* for some Filipino *siopao* with our neighbors who were having a birthday celebration.



2 Hair-cutting, Hong Kong, 2012.

ZJJ: Apparently you were the only non-domestic helpers gathered in the area? What was the response of the public?

ROC: Yes, we were. But we are comprised of many ethnicities, including Filipino and Indonesian. You see, this in fact becomes free publicity for us and gets us introduced to the public at zero cost. The city is hijacked by commercialism and is fully enveloped by billboards and advertisements. Most of the leaflets and package handouts end up disposed of as trash. The increasing production and distribution of these items only results in more waste for our landfills. Therefore, the most efficient advertisement and green publicity is by word of mouth. The more people talk about us, the more our movement is promoted.

Our time spent among the crowds of domestic helpers soon allowed us to move on from the initial test ground and to other sites. To date, we have already had a beauty salon, a day



3 Clear division detected in the gathering places of domestic helpers, Hong Kong, 2012.

spa, a dance school, a games room and a food kitchen serving traditional dim sum prepared by some of our volunteer mothers. On the upcoming two Sundays, we will be preparing a mobile library, various rest stations and a daycare center for those with young children such as myself.

ZJJ: That sounds very exciting. Do all the participants of Re-Occupy Central always plan ahead like you?
ROC: Most of the occupation activities occur spontaneously and are more situational. I tend to plan a little ahead to anticipate sites that could be physically more challenging.

ZJJ: How do you select the sites for temporary Sunday occupation?
ROC: Unlike Occupy Central, which took place in a single location, at the plaza of the HSBC building, selecting sites for our re-occupation is pretty much psycho-geographic for us.

ZJJ: Have you received any notices or experienced any forms of intervention from the government?
ROC: [looks thoughtful] No. Perhaps we have not grown big enough. I estimate there are about fifty of us occupying different places along the Mid-Level Escalators. Even though this number fluctuates, we seem to be steadily growing.

ZJJ: Is there a projected or anticipated end date to your peaceful protest?
ROC: No. You see, what we are doing is not protesting but rather we are merely claiming what belongs to us in the first place. We are utilizing the spaces, just as any inhabitant of the city has the right to. The inhabitants of the city should make full use of these spaces.

ZJJ: Who are your sponsors?
ROC: We don't have sponsors. In fact, we have learned from domestic helpers who have developed creative and adaptive strategies in utilizing paper boxes. [4] The required materials are cheap and easily available: a paper box of thirteen by nineteen inches and plastic ropes. It is easy to build, takes less than five minutes, and costs next to nothing. In addition, it is reusable and recyclable. The only concern is the wind blowing in from Victoria Harbour. To minimize the draft and still be comfortable inside, you will need to construct a higher wall out of paper boxes, especially if you are setting up between the building gaps. [5] Sorry, I'm afraid I've got to cut it short here. As you can see, I'm trying out a few new box configurations and will be conducting a "from-box-to-kitchen" demonstration in

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4 Process of Setting Up A Paper House, Hong Kong, 2012.

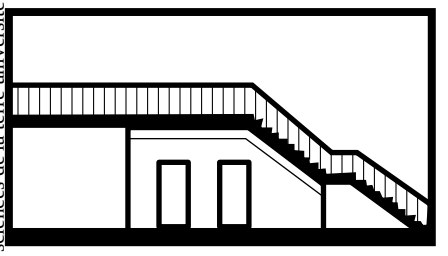


5 Finished Paper House, Exchange Square Bridge, Hong Kong, 2012.

the adjoining elevated walkway above Des Voeux Road, the southeast corner of Central Oasis which was previously Central Market. Here, could you help me hold onto this corner?

Author's Note:
Following the writing of this essay, and in the aftermath of the Umbrella Movement in 2014, the domestic helpers continue to use these public spaces meaningfully for their social gatherings on weekends. HSBC has since installed a semi-permanent exhibition of its history in the central position of its plaza. The resourceful crowds have adapted to the "re-allocation" and re-organized themselves accordingly.

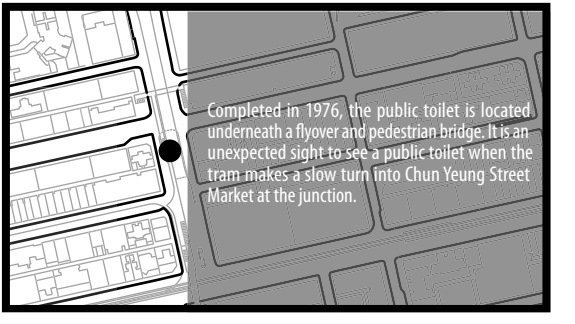
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Tong Shui St. Public Toilet

Opening Hours: 00:00 - 24:00
Junction of Tong Shui Rd. and Chun Yeung St.



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Your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse, and while you believe you are visiting Tamara you are only recording the names with which she defines herself and all her parts.

—Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, (Orlando: Harcourt, 1972)



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Externally marketed and branded as an image of the authentic with the tourist gaze turned local, Lin Heung has crossed over into that space of the hyperreal...

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How to Discover New Neighborhoods

Re-present Simulacra
Central



Use: Restaurant
Completion Date: 1926
Architect: ?
Owner: Lin Heung
Hours: 10.00-20.00
Costs: < HKD 40 ($)

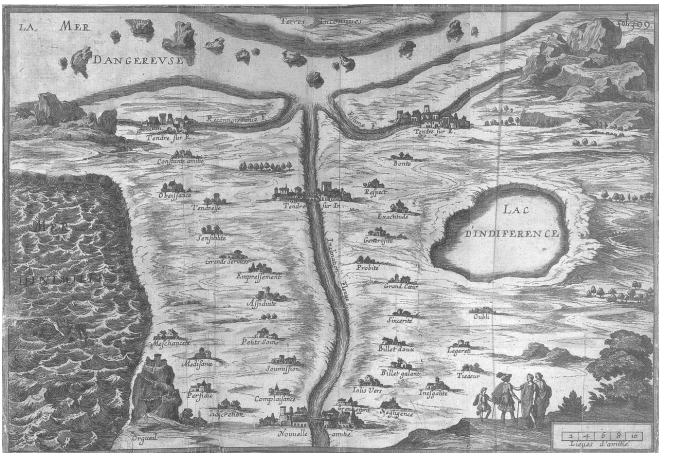
+5.0
22.28.42.5N,
114.15.34.73E
160 Wellington Street
Central

Steve Chen

The Lin Heung Tea House in Central has been around since the 1920s and has locals and tourists lining up for their delicious dim sum (but only before 3pm!). Finding it in a tourist book, and getting there with GPS maps, is one way to experience it, but there are other alternatives for understanding a locality.

The clichéd city is a city of representations, ghosts, and mirages, like the flat board-construction sets that utilize tromp-l'oeil effects to imitate a cityscape. The clichéd city is a form of shorthand, flattening the three-dimensional reality of the built environment. Hong Kong serves as a prime example of the clichéd city by the iconographic nature of its cityscape. It is both local and global, authentic and touristic, even though this binarism is insufficient in holding up to its own criteria. The identity of Hong Kong as a city-entity is that of a port – a space for the flow of goods and services – a site of facilitation, and what Ackbar Abbas calls a "para-site" that connotes both autonomy and dependence, where the autonomy is paradoxically a function of dependence.[1] This identity cements the functional logic of Hong Kong squarely in a market economy, a logic reified by the Hong Kong Tourist Association's logo. The vector graphic depicts a red, Chinese junk in Victoria Harbour set against a skyline of skyscrapers,

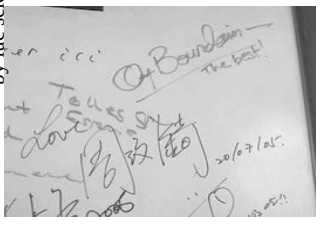
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1 Photographic reproduction of *Map of Tendre (Carte du Tendre)* in Madeleine de Scudéry's 1654-1661 novel *Clélie*.

literally manifesting the cliché of Hong Kong as a combination of British administration and Chinese entrepreneurship.[2] Ultimately, this imagery generates a smooth space in which the representation of a city, its exportable identity, is flattened into a single, two-dimensional narrative that simultaneously reveals the complexities and paradoxes of its geographical and economic situation. The resulting logo of Hong Kong becomes a cookie-cutter product due to the fact that each locality of the city is represented as an icon, emblematized to an extreme like luxury purses in a storefront.

Navigating this stage-set city is both a simple and wondrous operation, afforded by the innovations in mobile computing and GPS technology. "Pinch and zoom" has replaced the arcane drudgery of shifting one's gaze between a printed piece of paper and the cityscape that unfolds before one's eyes. Nowadays, technologies on the cusp such as Google Glass are attempting to merge the technological and experiential by mapping digital information onto the visual field.[3] This simple and direct method of getting from point A to point B has eliminated contingent experiences. It has taken wholesale digital way-finding that inscribes a mindless mapping of nodal content onto a field of representations. Contemporary backlash has created trends of nostalgia for a more primitive and analog way of living.[4] However, recovering the experiences of a city does not necessarily mean an anti-technological throwback to the past. In order to create a new and authentic experiences of a city, the Situationist Guy Debord proposed an alternative form of city movement through the theory of the *dérive*, "a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances."[5] Tracing back several hundred years to 1654, the French romantic writer Madeleine de Scudéry invented the *Carte du Tendre*, a fictitious



2 Antony Bourdain's signature in "10 Things To Do," Hong Kong, 2013.

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map based on themes and movements of love. [1] The spirit of *détournement*, the integration of cartography and mobility, and the strategic reengagement of readymade tools can offer a way to inflate the flattened icons of Hong Kong and activate a dimensionality that is congruous with the identity of the city.

Lin Heung Tea House has been a Hong Kong establishment for over eighty years. Situated on Wellington Street in the Central District of Hong Kong, Lin Heung is second on *Time* Magazine's "Hong Kong: 10 Things To Do,"[6] featured on Anthony Bourdain's TV series *No Reservation*,[7] and listed in most of the major tourist guides and blogs promoting Hong Kong. [2] Traditionally, tourism has been considered external to everyday life, marked by a gaze upon the extraordinary, like seeing an iconic edifice like the Eiffel Tower or particular signs like the stereotypical German beer garden. Tourism is examining the familiar in unfamiliar contexts or experiencing familiar tasks in unusual environments like visiting aborigines in their villages.[8] Colin Campbell argues that tourism is linked to consumption in that satisfaction stems from anticipation and imaginative pleasure-seeking rather than in the material pleasure of a product.[9] This sensation overwhelms even a local urban population that is quick to buy into an exponentiating hype over a place or product – such as crowded restaurants that attract more patrons who are drawn by curiosity by the existing crowd, or an interest in an ice-cream flavor because there is less of it in the container compared to the others. Fueled by word-of-mouth and the impact of social media notwithstanding, Lin Heung has also become a destination for locals, earning 446 smiley faces, 115 OKs, and fifty-six sad faces on OpenRice, Hong Kong's most popular user-generated restaurant review website and mobile application.[10] Tourism is now local, or inversely locals have transformed into tourists of their own city. Externally marketed and branded as an image of the authentic with the tourist gaze turned local, Lin Heung has crossed over into that space of the hyperreal where "it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody."[11] This sort of situation is all-too familiar in the ever transient Hong Kong, a city defined by the fleeting consumption of images, comprised of clichéd images. *Cha chaang tengs*, Buddhist temples, luxury brand malls, and skyscrapers all co-exist as tele-present representations of themselves. The tourist logo of the red junk, the ultimate image, becomes a form of moving-in-place. It perpetually sails on Victoria Harbour, moving across cultural, temporal, and geographical borders while forever remaining in the same coordinates. [3]

The acclaimed Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai has



3 Red Junk, Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong, 2013.

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4 Lin Heung Teahouse Exterior, Hong Kong, 2013.

capitalized on this identity through his hyper-stylized approach to filmmaking. The deliberate affectation of his maneuvers – slowed camera frame rates, bold and dramatic color swaths and visceral close-ups, oblique narrative structure, and choppy editing – construct moments that seem to be the past even before they have become the present. It is difficult to dissociate these cinematic techniques from the identity of Hong Kong since they do not necessarily feel Parisian nor are they characteristic of Brooklyn or New York, for instance. Giuliana Bruno describes such filmic memories as "fragments of an archival process embedded in our path, part of our own shifting geography."[12] If Hong Kong is marked by such a saturated sensory experience and culturally memorized through a psychic process, then this experiential dimension could re-enter into the mechanical and metric process of moving through the city.

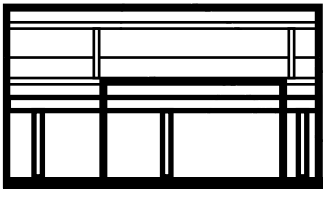
The geographer Trevor Paglen described the term "experimental geography" as "practices that take on a production of space in a self-reflexive way, practices that recognize that cultural production and the production of space cannot be separated from each other, and that cultural and intellectual production is a spatial practice... if human activities are inextricably spatial, then new forms of freedom and democracy can only emerge in dialectical relation to the production of new spaces."[13] The space of Lin Heung and its clichéd environs could be freed from its entrapped representation. The strategies are below the surface, as are those who operate in this modality:

"The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below', below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thick and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it."[14] **[4]**

Similar as to how the Tourist Association logo stands in as the idealized and clichéd representation of Hong Kong city, so too do mapping and cartography, in that they become the literal strategy for revealing a new city. Re-appropriating mobile technology wholesale for unusual ends subverts the touristic hunt for Lin Heung's street intersection and food-review data. New relationships in the urban environment are uncovered through synthesizing sensory information of mobile photography with technological data of EXIF (Exchangeable Image Format) files and GIS (Geographic Information System) data, embedded in images on new cartographic representations of the city. The *Carte de Tendre* mapped a fictive narrative and the *dérive* by Debord mapped a procedure, but the potential of the readymade smartphone allows mapping to follow mapping. The ultimate form of resistance is to use neutral tools to reverse flow and the production of images, to resist the flattened image of the city, to recover tools, uncover new relationships, and to discover a city.

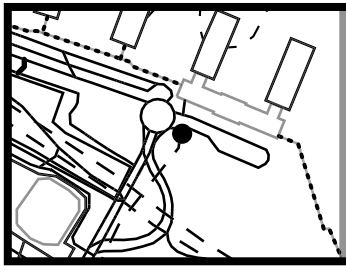
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Opening Hours: 00:00-24:00
Man Yiu St. Near No.7 Pier

Man Yiu St. Public Toilet



Man Yiu Street Public Toilet is located amid a network of pedestrian infrastructures. It is bounded by a footbridge overhead and a covered walkway in front. It opens 24 hours to serve the passengers of the nearby ferry piers, bus station and mini bus station.



If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational or historical or concerned with identity will be a non-place. The hypothesis advanced here is that supermodernity produces non-spaces, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which, unlike Baudelairean modernity, do not integrate the earlier places: instead these are listed, classified, promoted to status of 'places of memory', and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position.

—Marc Auge, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London : Verso, 1995)

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During its century-long existence, the residents of the Walled City, living testimonies to the dramatic political and socio-economic situation of the territory, resisted any threats to their right to reside in their property.

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How to Demolish a District

District Disparu
Kowloon Walled City



Use: Military Fort/ Vertical Slum/ Urban Blight/ Park
Completion Date: 1993
Architect: Colonial Government of Hong Kong
Owner: Government of HKSAR
Hours: 00.00-24.00
Costs: varies

-3.0
22.33.23N,
114.18.87E
Carpenter Road, Kowloon City

Eunice Seng & Renee Kwok

"In the convulsions of the commodity economy we begin to recognize the monuments of bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled."[1]

—Walter Benjamin, *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*, 1935

Hong Kong is now synonymous with its intensive high-rise building activity. The city's development *modus operandi* is to remove the old to make room for the new. Economic potential overrides sentimentality and nostalgia. With its upgrade to "Asia's Cruise Hub" at Kai Tak in 2013, the demolition of the old fabric of Kowloon City has intensified.[2] Since the opening of the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal in 2013, Hong Kong has amassed a compound annual growth rate of 29 percent for ship calls (245 in 2017) and 47 percent for passenger throughput.[3] The cruise terminal is bringing visitors and investment to the doorstep of this century-old area, but with that also comes property development's propensity for profit. Popular and expert opinion has been that this inevitable fate of the Kowloon City District was determined more than a century ago, well before the conception of the new cruise terminal. [1]

The scheme which triggered the district's eventual ruination and subsequent reappearance began in 1898, with the Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory. The



1 Kowloon City, Hong Kong, 2013.

1898 Number of garrison: 544

1899 The British drove out the Chinese officials based on the argument that officials were allowed to operate in the KWC but were not entitled to weaponry ownership. The Imperial Chinese protested but did not attempt to regain control of Kowloon Walled City. Subsequently, the area became the enclave that it was known for.



2 Kowloon Walled City model, Hong Kong, 2013.

treaty was unequal from the onset, as only one party seemed to derive any benefit from it.[4] At the time Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula were already ceded to the British Empire. In his analysis of the negotiations of the treaty, legal historian Peter Wesley-Smith highlighted the importance of the context and events surrounding it, namely colonial insecurity in Hong Kong and growing imperialist rivalry in China.[5] The British wanted to extend their jurisdiction boundary to include the New Territories and the Chinese took this opportunity to overwrite the two previous cession treaties.[6] Thus from October 20, 1898, the area known as the New Territories was absorbed into the colony of Hong Kong on a ninety-nine-year lease that was set to expire at the end of June 1997.

There was one clause that was the most problematic for the British. The Imperial Chinese government wanted to retain a presence within the expanded British-Hong Kong territory. Within the newly agreed British-Hong Kong boundary, an area known as the city of Kowloon (九龍寨城) was to remain under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Chinese. Accompanying this was a no-expropriation clause stating that "there will be no expropriation or expulsion of the inhabitants of the district included within the extension, and that if land is required for public offices, fortifications, or the like official purposes, it shall be bought at a fair price."[7] At that time, Kowloon Walled City was a fort and housed mainly Chinese officials. The British met with resistance when they began to take over the New Territories in October 1898.[8] Taking advantage of having crushed the essentially provincial rebellion by April 1899, the British attempted to occupy Shum Chun (present-day Shenzhen) and the Walled City. But at the time of the occupation in May, the small British battalion and volunteers found only the Viceroy and the remaining 150 of the original 700 residents. Once they secured control over the New Territories, they evicted the remaining Chinese officials.[9] An appendix was added to the 1898 Convention on 27 December 1899, which revoked Article 4 and stated that the Chinese officials within the Walled City should cease to exercise jurisdiction therein.[10] In the midst of drastic political exigencies, the Imperial Chinese protested heavily but did not reinstate administration over the area. [2]

By the end of Qing rule in 1912, the British had already claimed ownership of the Walled City but did not take over the administration of the area.[11] Subsequently, it became an administrative anomaly even more ignored than other squatter areas in the Colony, yet retained its symbolic Chinese identity. On the surface, the British appeared unable to manage the situation and could not control the activities of the population

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within. They could not do anything overly forceful without stirring up a diplomatic fiasco. In reality, the British undertook seemingly unpremeditated and reactionary measures in staging the decline of Kowloon Walled City. During its century-long existence, the residents of the Walled City, living testimonies to the dramatic political and socio-economic situation of the territory, resisted any threats to their right to reside in their property. In the ensuing historical reflection, we shall briefly recount six moments of confrontation.

RE-PRESENTATION

> "It is often thought that government reluctance to administer the area was the result of a legally anomalous and embarrassing situation.
>
> In fact, trepidation and embarrassment have always been due to a pragmatic appraisal of the political consequences of government interference in the area, aided and abetted in the post-war period by police corruption."[12]
>
> —John Steinhardt, *South China Morning Post*, June 20, 1987

When Kowloon Walled City became a political enclave in 1899, the transformation of its identity from Chinese military fort with a *Yamen* (magistrate's residence) to a site of urban blight underlined the British Government's case for its erasure. In the 1900s, it was hit by the bubonic plague and placed out of bounds for troops in the garrison. In the 1910s, the main news incidents concerned illegal gambling, opium trading, petty theft and robbery, building collapses and the occasional mention of the work of the Church Missionary Society stationed there. Legislative council meetings also include discussions on the construction of access roads to connect the Walled City with the rest of the city.[13] In the many subsequent decades, the British continued to steer Kowloon Walled City towards becoming the urban blight it is reputed to be.

When the government announced its demolition in 1987, the area was already notorious in Hong Kong and beyond as a criminal hideout filled with drug addicts and prostitutes. In addition to the illegal occupants and organizations, the entire site itself was an aggregation of illegal structures susceptible to fire and health hazards. Arguably, this stark image of illegality was the result of decades of careful cultivation. A combination of evictions by the Public Works and Police departments and

1854 Anti-Dynastic elements attached the Walled City. Before the British, the Kowloon Walled City was a dynastic symbol. Built to aid the defense of the Qing territory, it was targeted by Anti-Dynastic movements in the 19th centry.

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passive strategies such as continual reports on the Walled City as a physically and socially problematic area, the once-symbolic site of Chinese military power decayed, in official and public opinion, into a malignant "cancer" on Hong Kong's urban growth.[14]

ISOLATION

The British implemented a number of projects which isolated Kowloon Walled City and accelerated its urban decline. Historically, the Walled City had a close relationship with the South China coast.[15] During the Qing Dynasty, it was a coastal fort. In 1875, the Longjin or Long Tsun (Dragon's Path) jetty was built for the landing of visiting officials from Canton and the disembarking of troops.[16] The area prospered and grew as hawkers set up stalls and established trade connections. In 1892, residents and merchants in the area privately sponsored the extension of the Longjin jetty. As a result, the 700-foot jetty was extended by another 260 feet. By then, the Star Ferry had already been in regular service from Central to Tsim Sha Tsui for four years. The passenger ferry service had little impact on the operations of the Longjin jetty as the latter was supported by a local trading network. It played an important part in the Kowloon Walled City's ecosystem. In the 1910s, the Kowloon City District experienced rapid development. Large-scale reclamation projects in Kowloon Bay were carried out, including one led by a group of Chinese gentry and merchants for the construction of a luxury residential district that was left unfinished following the economic downturn and labor strikes in the early 1920s.[17] When the reclaimed part of the bay then

1668 Location first fortified and used as a signal station.

1810 A small fort was built at the waterfront adjoining the site.

1811 Cannons were mounted onto the fort to strengthen defence against pirates.

1847 The Kowloon Walled City came into being. A 13 feet high and 15 feet thick stone wall enclosed an area of 6.5 acres.

1888 Star Ferry began regular service from Central to Kowloon peninsula.



3 Location of Kowloon Walled City in relationship to Hong Kong's reclamation between 1855 and 1967.

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named Kai Tak Bund started being used by the British Royal Air Force as a temporary airfield, the government acquired the land. By then, Kowloon Walled City was left further inland and detached from the harbor. [3] The Longjin jetty had fallen into disuse. The loss of the jetty as a source of economic and trade connections for the predominantly local Chinese hampered the area's development.

Against Resumption, c. 1936

The isolation strategy worked in accelerating the decline of Kowloon Walled City. The population declined from 600 in 1898 to 500 in 1930. The British took this opportunity to clear the area. In 1933, they announced plans to demolish the Walled City, arguing from the socialist standpoint of the urgency of improving unsanitary conditions in urban areas.[18] In 1934, the British Government announced that it would rebuild "new village-type houses" at another site to the north east in Chuk Un for resettled villages of the Walled City as part of the Public Works program.[19] On the ground, the British had the Urban Council (newly formed in January 1936), which replaced the Sanitary Board. The Europeans had the Kowloon Residents Association, which a group of them residing in Kowloon set up in December 1919 to advocate for better urban amenities, infrastructure and management. The Chinese residents in the Walled City had no formal representation. Over 200 residents affected by the order, unwilling to give up their homes, petitioned Canton for the matter to be taken up by the Hong Kong Government and for the order to be cancelled.[20]

1933 - 1940 The British evicted all of Kowloon Walled City's residents apart from the elderly

The Chinese Government responded via its Foreign Office with three letters between 1933 and 1935 stating: "Kowloon City is Chinese territory, and Chinese are free to live there. The Hong Kong Government has no right to intervene."[21] The eviction order became a matter of contention between the Chinese and British Governments, compelling the latter to postpone the removal date until December 30, 1936. The dispute was taken as high as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nanjing which raised it with the British Ambassador to China and it was agreed that the removal date would be further pushed back until after Chinese New Year 1937.[22] Notwithstanding this, the British Government adhered to its ultimatum of December 30, 1936. On December 31, the British evicted the villagers and resumed the land for "public purposes."[23] The *Post* revealed that it proposed to lay out a "garden city." In correspondence between the British Ambassador in Nanjing, Ralph Stevenson, and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin after the Second World War, proposals for a park with a memorial hall dedicated to Dr Sun Yat-Sen and a garden of

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remembrance in memory of Allied servicemen who had fallen in the struggle against Japan were discussed. But these plans were not realized as the parties could not come to an agreement over their implementation and upkeep.[24]

1941 - 1945 Japanese tore down the wall and used the stone to extend the Kai Tak airport.

Towards the end of the 1930s, a complete reversal of events occurred. Between 1935 and 1941, Hong Kong had five governors, each of whom was re-deployed somewhere else amid the impending Sino-Japanese War and the eventual escalation into a world war. On December 25, 1941, two years into the war, the British surrendered Hong Kong to the Imperial Japanese. The Republic of China (ROC) was fighting its own war with Tokyo and suffering a crushing defeat followed by a full-scale civil war. When the Second World War threw the globe into turmoil, claims of jurisdiction over Kowloon Walled City gave way to greater wartime matters. During the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong, nearly all the buildings were demolished and in 1943 the granite wall of Kowloon Walled City was torn down and used as building material for the Kai Tak Airport improvements.[25] Without the wall, the Walled City's identity as a historical fort gave way to that of a massive city block, a form which would soon become the public's only memory of the area. Beyond symbolic representation, the shacks and huts were left defenseless and open to future raids.

Against Operation Walled City, c. 1948

> "The city became a cesspool of iniquity, with heroin divans, brothels and everything unsavory."[26]
>
> —Sir Alexander Grantham, Governor of Hong Kong, 1947-1957

Kowloon Walled City's Population

1898	600 Inhabitants
1930	500 Inhabitants
1940	2,000 Inhabitants (after the war refugees fled to HK)
1950	5,000 Inhabitants
1973	10,000 Inhabitants
1980	30,000 Inhabitants (after Mao's death, refugees fled to HK)

In 1945, the British reoccupied Hong Kong. The population had fallen from 1.6 million to 0.6 million by then, but had tripled by 1948.[27] The Walled City was rapidly repopulated by refugee squatters. Sino-British disputes over the Walled City were rekindled after the Occupation, amid the intensifying civil war in mainland China.[28] Despite the potential threat of an impact on Sino-British relations, the British authorities conducted the aggressive eviction of 400 residents on the northern fringe of the Walled City in early 1948.[29] Some 2,000 squatters who lived in wooden structures in the Walled City were issued eviction notices by the Public Works Department (PWD) on November 27 and expected to evacuate their homes within fourteen days, by December 11. Again, the Chinese Government sent the Special Commissioner of Foreign Affairs for Kwangtung and Kwangsi to discuss the matter with the Governor.[30] The

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conclusion of two meetings was the issuing of a statement in which the Chinese Government reaffirmed its declaration of September 16, 1946 that China had never waived her right in the civil administration of the old walled Kowloon City.[31] The matter was taken up in Nanking where the British Ambassador argued for the eviction of the Chinese "squatters" on the grounds of public health and fire safety.[32]

Presented as part of a colony-wide operation to remove squatters from various areas which were "a menace to public health," "Operation Walled City" had taken into account the probability of resistance. On January 6, 1947, the PWD Land Bailiff, assisted by 100 hired laborers and 150 armed police guards including a tear gas squad, began evicting the more than 400 "unauthorized" residents on the northern fringe of the Walled City.[33] Several people were injured when police attempted to deal with the evicted squatters whose makeshift homes had been demolished a week earlier.[34] The rioters found support in the Chinese mainland. The British Consulate-General offices and residences, and the headquarters of several British firms in Canton, were set on fire and students in Shanghai staged a two-day protest strike. The Secretary-General of the Kuomintang claimed that these were attempts by the Communists to exploit cooperation between China and foreign powers and place the National Government in an "embarrassing situation."[35] What began as a negotiation between the two governments quickly became an embarrassment that the weakened Nationalist Government wished to suppress. The dwellers, identified as "unauthorized tenants of the Crown land in the Kowloon Walled City", many of whom were new to the Colony, fought hard against their forcible removal but were eventually cleared by early January 1948.[36] Pushed into the diplomatic channels, the matter was soon relegated to yet another case of squatter clearance. Once again, proposals to turn the Walled City into a public park were discussed at the Legislative Council.[37]

RISING FROM THE ASHES

Meanwhile, the population had increased significantly as the Nationalist-Communist Civil War resumed in China. By the end of 1950, Hong Kong's population had reached 2.23 million.[38] With little or no money, refugees mainly settled in squatter areas. Kowloon Walled City was one of them. The Walled City, like other squatter areas in the Colony, grew as refugees from mainland China continued to flood into Hong Kong. The population of the Walled City went from 500 to 5,000.

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4 The architecture of the Kowloon Walled City prior to demolition, 1992.

Without its previous thick fortress walls, refugees squeezed in. The number of squatter huts increased exponentially, as did its related fire and health risks.

The ensuing decades saw unresolved disputes between the Chinese and British Governments stemming from the former's refusal to recognize British jurisdiction over the area, confrontations between factions within on the administration of the site, and conspiracies as to who really were the perpetrators pushing for its demise.[39] On January 12 1950, the day after a letter was published in the *South China Morning Post* warning of the serious hazards of fire breaking out in the Walled City, a huge fire destroyed hundreds of squatter huts, wooden semi-permanent buildings, a Chinese temple and a film studio in the Walled City.[40] Nearly 3,500 families consisting over 17,000 persons were registered as "homeless or frequently destitute victims."[41] The fire destroyed a third of the area, wiping out 2,500 to 2,700 squatter shacks. Another fire in 1953 destroyed 400 buildings and rendered over 3,000 people homeless.[42] There were later fires in the Walled City – the most substantial ones in 1966 and 1975 – which forced 1,500 and 1,000 people to flee their homes respectively.[43] Out of the ashes rose the infamously recognizable vertical slum that fascinated photographers, artists and architects.[44] **[4]**

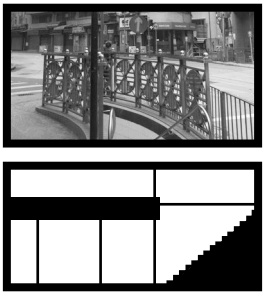
The fires did not discourage the refugees; instead, they paved the way for the building of an extensive aggregation of permanent and semi-permanent structures of concrete, brick and wood, and the labyrinthine spaces within. While rapid building took place inside Kowloon Walled City, the British did not intervene as they stated that they were "not in a position to mark out sites and re-plan areas for squatters except on Crown Land."[45] Their attention was given to an even greater fire that took place on Christmas Eve of 1953 at Shek Kip Mei which rendered 53,000 people homeless, and led to the launch of the Colony's first resettlement program, which led to the public housing policy and the establishment of the first Housing Authority in 1954.[46] Two years later, in 1956, the Hong Kong Building Ordinance came into effect. The Ordinance allowed the

British to render the majority of prior-constructed buildings and structures illegal. Henceforth, with each new addition, Kowloon Walled City became "more illegal."

Anti-resettlement, Anti-demolition, c. 1963

In the early 1960s, government officials drew up plans to develop the Walled City for the construction of Tung Tau Resettlement Estate. It conducted two phases of registration for households and businesses in 1962. Some 200 householders met and declared that the Walled City was "Chinese territory" so the Government had "no right to eject them."[47] This time, they appealed to the Chinese community in mainland China and the Communist Government entered the fray by supporting the "Kowloon City Anti-Demolition Committee," which was set up in response to the British Government's attempts to demolish a corner of the city for the Tung Tau resettlement estate. In July 1962, eleven representatives from the Committee, each claiming to represent a street in the Walled City, appealed to the government to shelve the development plan.[48] Despite protest against the government's resettlement policy, demolition began in November. By late December, the Resettlement Department reported that the majority of those affected had accepted the clearance cards to be resettled.[49] However, through the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, the people demanded compensation and title to the premises in which they were to be resettled, proposing that the Government should either 1. Rescind the removal order and allow them to remain in their existing places for the next ten years 2. Allocate alternative building sites comparable to their existing sites on a thirty-year lease in addition to taking care of the removal expenses and new building costs 3. Compensate them for the land based on current land prices in the Kowloon City area.[50]

Ad interim, Peking protested the demolition and the matter was taken up with London. The *South China Morning Post* took the position that Peking's intervention on behalf of the small group of landlords "whose use of their property rights had



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long been a public scandal, instead of supporting the colonial authorities in their resettlement efforts for the benefit of the greater population of three and a half million, was uncalled for".[51] Even the Senior Advisor to Chiang Kai-shek in Taipei chimed in by suggesting that this was part of China's scheme "to create tensions in the Far East on its own Cold War against the democratic nations."[52] Britain responded to Peking's protest by halting the demolition in "the general interest of good relations."[53] The two local groups—Kowloon City Anti-Demolition Committee and Kowloon Walled City Tenants Committee of the United Nations Association (UNA)—endorsed Peking's protest, with the latter advocating for the improvement of the Walled City area.[54] The delayed demolition also saw the clearance of other areas near the Walled City halted over the matter of demands for more compensation.[55] With no further resettlement, the episode again ended in a diplomatic stalemate. The residents, taking advantage of the indefinite delay, set up a new association called the Kowloon Walled City Kaifong Welfare Advancement Association, focused on the promotion of welfare among them.[56]

EXCLUSION

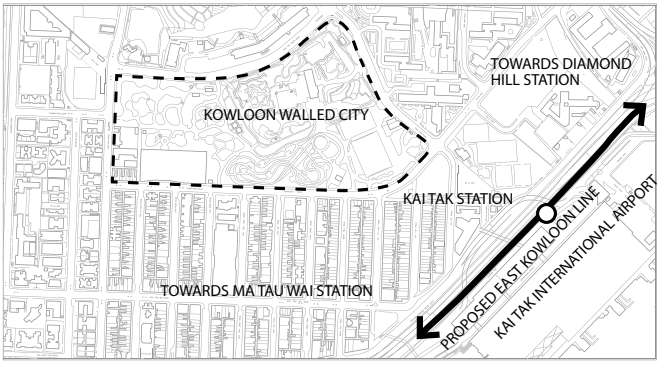
Despite reaching a population of 10,000 in 1971, the exclusion of the Kowloon Walled City from Hong Kong's development was built into the Government's infrastructural plan. In 1965, the British commissioned transportation consultants Freeman, Fox, Wilbur Smith & Associates to conduct an eighteen-month



5 Original MTR Scheme, known as Initial System, proposed by Freeman Fox & Partners 1967.

a) Kong Kow Line - Mong Kok / Waterloo/ Jordan / Tsim Sha Tsui / Admiralty / Chater
b) Kwun Tong Branch - Mong Kok / Shek Kip Mei / Kowloon Tong / Lo Fu Ngam / Wong Tai Sin / Diamond Hill / Choi Hung / Kowloon Bay / Ngau Tau Kok / Kwun Tong / Kwun Tong Tsuen / Ma Yau Tong
c) Tsuen Wan Branch - Mong Kok / Sham Shui Po/ So Uk / Cheung Sha Wan / Lai Chi Kok / Lai King / La Sap Wan / Kwai Chung / Tai Wo Hau / Tsuen Wan / Tsuen Wan West
d) Island Line - Kennedy / Whitty / Sai Ying Pun / Western Market / Pedder / Admiralty / Wan chai / Valley / Tin Hau / North Point / Quarry Bay / Sai Wan Ho / Shau Kei Wan / Chai Wan Quay / Chai Wan Central
e) East Kowloon Line - Diamond Hill / Kai Tak / Ma Tau Wai / To Kwa Wan / Ho Man Tin / Hung Hom / Mariner / Rumsey

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6 The Airport Connection was foregone and prevented the Kowloon Walled City from benefiting from the MTR.

feasibility study of Hong Kong's mass transportation. Their final findings and proposals were published in 1970 in a paper titled "Hong Kong Mass Transit Further Studies Final Report".[57] The report consolidated thorough research that included the consideration of everything from site investigations to architectural detailing. Freeman, Fox, Wilbur Smith & Associates proposed a comprehensive road system and a railway network that comprised: a) Kong Kow Line (south from Mong Kok to the Island), which includes the Kwun Tong Branch (east from Mong Kok) and the Tsuen Wan Branch (north-west from Mong Kok); b) Island Line and c) East Kowloon Line.[58] [5]

The Kong Kow Line and Island Line were constructed over time and developed into today's Tsuen Wan Line, Kwun Tong Line and Island Line. The East Kowloon Line was omitted entirely. One may think that deviations from the original proposal would be expected given that it was a twenty-year projection. Why did the Government decide to omit the East Kowloon Line? After all, the East Kowloon Line was supposed to serve a very important place - the Hong Kong Kai Tak International Airport.[59] In their final report, the consultants had stressed the importance of serving the airport: *"it is important and must be served..."*[60] To Freeman, Fox, Wilbur Smith & Associates, this was rationalized from the economic and infrastructural standpoint. To the Government, on the other hand, serving the airport also meant serving Kowloon Walled City. The Kai Tak Station would have been only 500 meters away from Kowloon Walled City. [6]

Furthermore, news of the Government commissioning consultants to conduct a HK$6 million eighteen-month study of Hong Kong's aviation future that included finding possible sites for a new airport was released in September 1973, following years of complaints over Kai Tak's capacity limitations amid the burgeoning tourist and aviation industry in the 1960s and 1970s.[61] Despite the recommendations by US aviation consultants, the need for a new airport was conflicted, with the government stating the uncertain economic climate as the

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reason for reconsideration in 1975.[62] Meanwhile, Kai Tak airport was experiencing increasing flight activity and two buildings had to have their top sections torn down for obstructing airport flight paths.[63] *Post* writer John Steinhardt postulates that China did not make undue anti-colonial capital out of this incident perhaps because "an assertion by Beijing of Chinese sovereignty in the City could be taken to imply British sovereignty over the rest of the colony."[64]

In September 1976, the Government "revived" the proposal to build a second airport, following a public plea by the former general manager of the Kai Tak Airport in July that year.[65] In 1981 the government launched a twenty-two-month civil engineering design study, only to shelve it in 1983 due to the high costs.[66] Meanwhile, the Rural Council (Heung Yee Kuk), a statutory advisory body representing establishment interests in the New Territories, recommended a new airport at Deep Water Bay on the Chinese mainland side of Shenzhen instead of the formerly proposed one.[67]

The new Hong Kong airport was back on the agenda when preparations for the Shenzhen airport began in 1987, the same year the Walled City was slated for demolition.[68] By 1989, after over two decades of stonewalling, the "new airport" had become known as a thickening plot as more parties involved, such as Hopewell Holdings and the continuing presence of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), began to surface.[69] Finally opened for commercial use in 1998, Hong Kong International Airport came last after two other international airports – Shenzhen (1991) and Macau (1995).[70] Whereas the opening of the MTR in 1979 reinforced post-war decades of new town development in the New Territories, the new airport was embroiled in the same networks of contesting politics as the Walled City.[71]

CATALYST

> "The Walled City of Kowloon has no visible wall around it, but it is as clearly defined as if there were one made of hard, high steel. It is instantly sensed by the congested open market that runs along the street in front of the row of dark run-down flats — shacks haphazardly perched on top of one another giving the impression that at any moment the entire blighted complex will collapse under its own weight, leaving nothing but rubble where elevated rubble had stood."[72]
>
> —Robert Ludlum, *Bourne Supremacy*, 1987

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As the new airport "plot" regularly took front page in the years leading up to the 1997 handover, the Walled City manifested the inextricable refugee and housing problem. In 1980, the British implemented their final blow. On 24th October 1980, the British ended the Touch Base Policy (抵壘政策). Previously this policy had granted immediate residency to refugees and immigrants whether they entered legally or illegally. The end of this policy meant that subsequent refugees and immigrants had no right to reside in Hong Kong. The British adhered to a strict practice of immediate deportation. In order to avoid capture, refugees and illegal immigrants turned to the Walled City. This caused a huge influx in its population, which reached a peak at 33,000 in the late 1980s.[73] With the Touch Base Policy as a catalyst, the Walled City fast forwarded towards its ultimate degeneration into an "urban slum," described by David Wilson, the governor ushering in the transition, as a "major eyesore."[74]

Housing Invasion, c. 1987

In the first half of the 1980s, the fate of the Walled City continued to be a frequent subject of public discourse. *Post* writer Olivia Sin made a bold claim that the Walled City was "no longer a political problem" in her update of the changing political realities of the eighties and the future development of the area.[75] Local Hong Kong representatives advocated for the development of the Walled City to be worked out by the Sino-British joint liaison group well before 1997.[76] After years of being described as "cancer," "hell," a "terrible place" and "a slum city," in late 1986, after a series of negotiations, the two governments came to an agreement on the demolition of the Walled City.[77] The announcement in early January 1987 was quickly followed by the setting up of a special Housing Authority committee to facilitate compensation and rehousing during the clearance.[78] Pledging that it would ensure homes for all those affected by the clearance, and that no one should be made homeless, the Housing Authority announced the intention to intensify its public housing program to build 140,000 flats, which was 20,000 flats in excess of the normal annual production target of 40,000 flats.[79]

On January 14, 1987, a large group of 360 staff from the clearance and squatter control section of the Housing Authority scoured the 300 buildings up to fifteen stories high to register all the residents.[80] This was followed by visitations from the committee and the creation of some three hundred temporary posts in four government departments – Housing, Building and Lands, the City and New Territories Administration and the Registrar's General Office, to work on the Walled City

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clearance program.[81] The registration produced 83,000 units, of which 1,000 were commercial. That November, the Hong Kong Government officially announced that the site would be demolished in three stages over the next three years and redeveloped as a park.[82] This time the realization of the park was imminent. A *South China Morning Post* commentary summed up the creation of a park as a pragmatic act of political diplomacy:

> "Although the decision to turn the site into a park is a practical one – it avoids any potential awkwardness over land titles – it has a symbolic significance. A peaceful park where children can play, or where the elderly can sit at ease, provides a clear symbol of Hong Kong's hopes for the future."[83]

At the time of the announcement, the city's urban renewal program was already in full force and in terms of compensation the Walled City was no longer seen as an exception. Compensation for the landlords and house owners were in accordance with existing criteria for urban renewal, and not given special preference. Resigned to the reality of the Walled City's demolition, the residents made a last-ditch effort to challenge the compensation scheme. In the months following the first registration for compensation exercise, more than four thousand of the ten thousand families were suspected of claim fraud.[84] Concurrently, shop owners protested the inadequacy of the compensation in terms of allowing them to afford to establish their businesses elsewhere.[85] The Housing Authority acted quickly and by late 1988, the compensation matter was largely resolved, with residents getting priority in purchasing flats under the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS).[86] It also introduced a policy to charge better-off families whose household income exceeded twice that of the waiting list income limits double rental as part of the attempt to accommodate the resettled families. In October, the Governor announced that 4,200 of the original 33,000 residents had accepted offers of rehousing and the government's plan to turn the Walled City from a health hazard into a public amenity.[87] At the same time it began a study on the best way to demolish the Walled City.

The first of 17,000 families to leave the Walled City in early 1989 moved to newly purchased homes under the HOS and Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS).[88] According to the Deputy Secretary for District Administration, an average of seven families moved out each day.[89] In October 1989, over 2,200 premises in the Walled City were vacated.[90] [7] In



7 "$50m to Level Walled City in Kowloon," *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, September 5, 1989.



8 "Walled City Shop Owners in Protest," *SCMP*, October 24, 1991.

1990, the Government conducted a study on the effect of its demolition by explosion on navigation at Kai Tak airport but the anticipated "world's biggest demolition project using controlled explosives" was halted for fear of disturbing Kai Tak's flights and the neighboring residential estates.[91] Another reason for dropping the proposal to demolish the entire agglomeration of buildings in one explosion, and going instead with conventional mechanical demolition, was in response to the Antiquities Advisory Board's recommendation to retain the Qing relics, in particular the *Yamen* and cannons.[92]

But 500 of the remaining families protested by refusing to leave during the third and last phase of the removal project.[93] Despite the Housing Authority increasing their compensation costs by over 15%, citing increased costs as the reason, many shop owners protested as the amounts were not even sufficient to purchase another much smaller space elsewhere.[94] [8] By then "dark, dank and depressing," the Walled City counted only about 932 people as its inhabitants in September 1991.[95] Fifty households defied the November 28 eviction order and were given a five-day reprieve, at the end of which seventy residents staged a protest in Central. When interviewed by the *Post*, the Chairman of the Residents Association said: "Even the Vietnamese boat people are better off than us. They are illegal immigrants and no force was used when they were repatriated. We are Hong Kong citizens and the Government pushed us out of our homes."[96] Defying repeated removal ultimatums, thirty-six households held out until the very end when eviction officers went in and forcibly removed them from the premises in phases between January and June 1992.[97] In the final month, the residents staged a series of showdown protests. A group claiming to represent the remaining businesses protested outside

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9 Tung Tau Tsuen Road divides the Walled City Park and Mei Tung Estate to the north, Hong Kong, 2019.

the New China News Agency in Happy Valley, publicly accusing Beijing of "betraying" them.[98]

The last collective act of defiance was the building of shanty huts right outside the condemned area on Tung Tau Tsuen Road to the northeast of the Walled City.[99] **[9]** In the ensuring eighteen months, a series of protests by former residents took place, beginning in July 1992 when the last twenty "defiant former Walled City residents" were removed from the sidewalk of Tung Tau Tsuen.[100] Another angry protest occurred in January 1994 when twenty-one former residents who had set up home in a garden were evicted. The last of these took place in December 1995 when the makeshift huts of eleven former residents on the pavement next to the newly completed park were torn down.[101] With the disappearance of the people from the Walled City, the neutralization of the "territory within a territory" was complete, and as reiterated in public discourse, signaled "a new era" of bilateral relations. A writer on *Ming Pao News Daily* articulated its demolition as the disappearance of a historical quandary:

> "With the new rapport between China and Britain, the symbolic significance of the Walled City has vanished. This is the right time to solve the historical problem as things will become more complicated if it is left until 1997."[102]

The solution to "the historical problem" was to eradicate it, to literally make it disappear. The drawn-out process of eviction, negotiation, clearance, renegotiation and demolition came to a forced moment of rest when the Park was completed in September 1995. The ceremony was officiated by the colony's last governor, Chris Patten, who called it an "oasis of leisure" amid the surrounding urban sprawl that "should inspire the restoration of more historical sites."[103]

REAPPEARANCE

> "In Hong Kong I'd seen huge matte black butterflies flapping around the customs hall, nobody paying them the least attention. I'd caught a glimpse of the Walled City of Kowloon, too. Maybe I could catch another, before the future comes to tear it down.
>
> Traditionally the home of pork-butchers, unlicensed denturists, and dealers in heroin, the Walled City still stands at the foot of a runway, awaiting demolition. Some

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kind of profound embarrassment to modern China, its clearance has long been made a condition of the looming change of hands.

Hive of dream. Those mismatched, uncalculated windows. How they seemed to absorb all the frantic activity of Kai Tak airport, sucking in energy like a black hole."[104]

—William Gibson, *Wired*, 1993

The future arrived in 1994. After surviving three government clearance attempts, the demolition of Kowloon Walled City began in March 1993 and was completed in April 1994. Ten bulldozers and extractors reduced the entire area to 150,000 tons of rubble. In its place, an early Qing Dynasty *Jiangnan* garden was constructed.[105] [**10**] Designed by the Architectural Services Department, the park put a diplomatic end to a century of jurisdiction deputes and obliterated the symbol of defiance. Divided into eight scenic zones with individual characteristics, the 31,000-square-meter park effectively negates the previous lived experiences within. Despite being decried as an urban blight, Kowloon Walled City possessed a distinctive identity of urbanity and human tenacity for survival. It was a local landmark and a draw for tourists seeking authentic experiences and places of cultural identity. To cultural theorist Ackbar Abbas, the ostentatious commemorative efforts in the form of Ian Lambot's and Greg Girard's voluminous *City of Darkness* seemed to suggest that the new interest in the "local" was the symptom of an emerging post-colonial awareness in the 1990; the situation was likely to be much more ambivalent. Appealing to Frantz Fanon's point that "it is the colonialist who becomes defenders of the native style," he wrote that "when the native style and culture are bracketed and separated out as a special category, they are effectively re-contained and lose whatever potential they might have had to stir memory. Preservation is not memory, Abbas asserted. "It is selective and tends to exclude the dirt and pain."



10 Qing Dynasty Jiangnan Garden, Kowloon Walled City Park, Hong Kong, 2013.

The Walled City disappeared and reappeared as a Chinese park. Its proponents and the Hong Kong English media heralded the proximity of its design to the original luxurious Jiangnan gardens of the elite, replete with long winding covered walkways, pavilions, rockeries, stone paving and wood carvings, all invoking literary imagery. [**11**] Constructed by Mainland contractors, the themed park contains mostly materials and plants from South China, and comprises eight landscape features: the Yamen, the Old South Gate, the Mountain View Pavilion, the Chess Garden, the Garden of Chinese Zodiac, the



11 Covered walkways in a Jiangnan Garden setting, Kowloon Walled City Park, Hong Kong, 2019.

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Hong Kong's Development

1888 The Star Ferry began regular service from Central to Kowloon peninsula.
1910 Completion of the Kowloon-Canton Railway.
1925 Completion of the Kai Tak International Airport.
1956 Building Ordinance came into effect.
1974 Touch Base Policy. 抵壘政策. Refugees who were able to make it into the city of Hong Kong were immediately granted residency.
1976 Mao's death. People fled from China to escape the potential political instability.
1979 MTR initial system opened.
1980 Touch Base Policy ends.

Hong Kong's Jurisdiction Timeline

1644 Qing Dynasty Under the rule of Imperial China.
1841 Treaty of Nanking. 南京條約. The first of the three unequal treaties 不平等條約 affecting Hong Kong's jurisdiction. Hong Kong Island was ceded to the British.
1860 Convention of Peking. 北京條約. Kowloon Peninsula, south of Boundary Street, was ceded to the British.
1898 Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory. 展拓香港界址專條. Hong Kong as it is now geographically defined, including Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories and other outlying islands, was leased to the British for ninety-nine-rent-free-years.
1941 The British surrendered Hong Kong to the Japanese.
1945 Hong Kong was handed back over to the British.
1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. 中英聯合聲明. The Chinese and the British agreed that Hong Kong will be handed over to the People's Republic of China at the end of the ninety-nine-years lease, 1th July 1997.
1997 Hong Kong was handed over to the People's Republic of China. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region came into effect.

Eight Floral Walks, the Kuixing Pavilion and the Guibi Rock, and the Guangyin Square (on the site of the original square which was the only open space in the Walled City in the 1950s. Three existing wells were kept to provide water for gardening. By adopting the early Qing garden style, the well-intentioned Architectural Services Department worked on the one key historical aspect that linked the demolished Walled City to its namesake park – its extraterritorial status began during the Qing dynasty. Other than that, there is no relationship, physical or cultural, with the former military enclave that became an urban enclave for working-class citizens, the undesirables, the destitute and refugees.

For whom was the Park built? As one of sixteen public parks in Hong Kong, it is meant for leisure use by the general public in land-scarce urban Hong Kong. At the announcement of its demolition in 1987, the residents already identified themselves as Hong Kong citizens. Referring to the incongruence of places and architecture such as the Park, Flagstaff House and the Repulse Bay Hotel to the history of their respective sites, and to Hong Kong's nascent post-colonial status, Abbas attributed the simultaneous disappearance of cultural identity with the reappearance as preservation to Hong Kong's situation of the 1990s. He wrote: "Culture as preservation, which is what a lot that currently passes in Hong Kong for post-coloniality amounts to, can only be a form of 'kitsch.'"[106] But is not this so-called post-coloniality an unrealized condition as one power hands over the territory to another? Literally and ideologically, "decolonize" and "recolonize" seem more befitting in the lexicon of disappearance and reappearance.

Planned obsolescence in the name of redevelopment is written into the Kowloon City District. Perhaps redevelopment is a camouflage. With twelve declared monuments, it would seem that the Hong Kong government may be already deploying a range of strategies to counteract development in the area. Perhaps the Hong Kong Tourism Board is already planning an elaborate marketing campaign for the area. Perhaps passive policies and mechanisms are already being put in place to protect and retard the aging of this eccentric, richly-layered old town. In March 2018, the *South China Morning Post* paid a special tribute to mark the twenty-five-year anniversary of its demolition. The authors of *City of Darkness* (1993) and retired Chief Superintendent Eric Lockeyear who served in the then Royal Hong Kong Police from 1963 to 1996 were interviewed. While photographer Girard and architect Lambot recalled the tightly-knit communities and vibrant colors, Lockeyear saw its demolition as "one of the greatest leaps in improving the lives

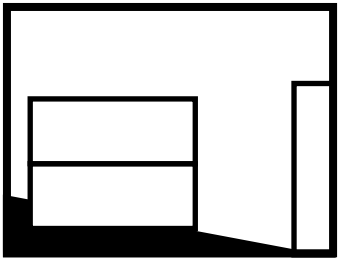
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of thousands of Hong Kong people."[107]

The fate of the Walled City is not accidental but was it inevitable? History has shown that when motivated by politics or individual need for survival, intervention and transgression can arise at any time, at any point and at any scale. They are two sides of the same coin. In response to each addition or strategic omission, the city and its people have fought hard to reserve their right to accept or resist the vicissitudes of redevelopment. As the spectacle of the *City of Darkness* continues to circulate, together with the nostalgia and fascination of an urban past that was less safe yet seemed more exciting, less sanitary yet richer in its variegated spaces, this perpetual imagination of its ruination remains the most unhindered description of the suspended status of Hong Kong's post-coloniality.

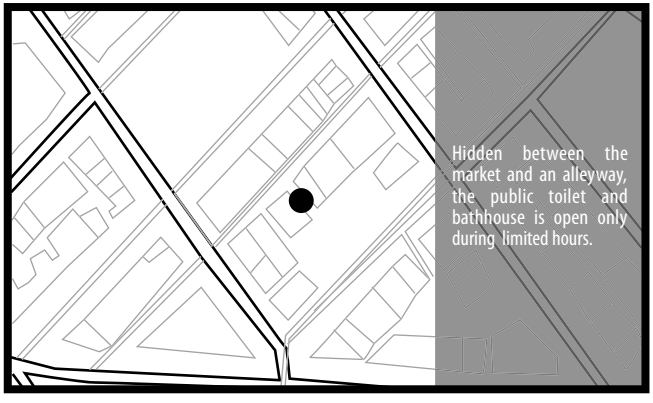
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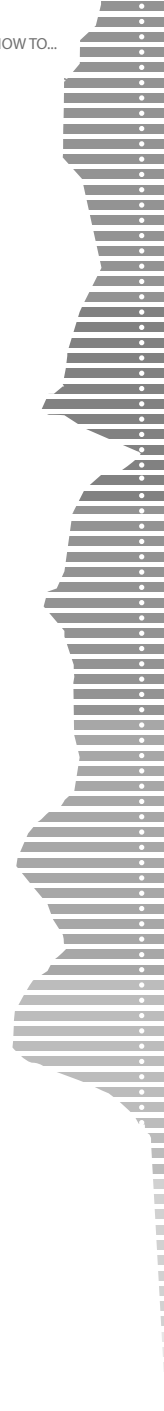
HOW TO…
A Reflection

The battle cries of the social activists to take to the streets and the spaces of liberation envisioned by the neo-avant garde groups of the 1960s have been the go-to sources for curators and artists of many Asian art and design events in the new millennium. Of late, guerrilla art and protest art where artists express themselves anonymously, have gained traction.

The 1960s witnessed many architects producing megalomaniacal visions of walking cities, space pods, monumental grids, and networked environments. Intended to liberate city dwellers from the sterile post-war environments of monotonous urban blocks and large housing projects, they proposed to place the liberated subject in capsules within mutable megastructures and psychedelic multimedia-filled environments. Technologically-charged, these social visions were predicated on new architectural forms. The architectural critic Reyner Banham called them "dinosaurs of the modern movement." Paradoxically, play was contained within totalitarian environments. The notion of freedom was wired to a heavily technological aesthetic. When the sociologist Henri Lefebvre called for a revolution of the environment, alternatives offered by groups like the Situationists, Superstudio and Archigram remained primarily academic.

Utopia was denounced by architectural historian-critic Manfredo Tafuri when he described the architectural project as an accomplice to, and product of, capitalist development in his book, *Architecture and Utopia* (English ed. 1976). Historican-architect Colin Rowe's attempt, in his 1984 book *Collage City*, to demonstrate that all cities are composed of overlapping utopias is seen at best as an historical apology to a generation that witnessed modernist utopia's failure to live up to its self-avowed promise of social emancipation. And when Michel de Certeau offered ways to thwart "the system," in his *Practice of Everyday Life* (English ed. 1984), the impossibility of any real revolution against capital was no longer questioned.

Toward the end of the second millennia, the site of utopia shifted in the global imagination. The Chinese city became the popular site for the modern utopia. Whilst the authors of *The Architecture of Everyday* invoked Lefebvre to make a case for the ordinary, banal, anti-monumental and non-heroic architecture in the American built landscape, it was the city blueprints of the French



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architect Le Corbusier that planners referred to in their design of the new Chinese city. The rational and monumental plan could be readily implemented on a large tract of cleared land. Post-1990s Shenzhen exemplifies the modern plan. In contrast, Hong Kong, with its differentiated geography and a history entangled between two empires — the most violent confrontations occurred during the leftist riots of 1967 — is the prodigal city that continues to thwart any master plan till this day. The deeply corrugated, extruded towers of Hong Kong embody a highly differentiated mass, distinct yet ubiquitous.

Dense and conducive for acupunctural-type schemes and interventions, the present city offers the preconditions for the kinds of utopia heralded by the allied west in the 1960s, with a renewed focus on the individual both in terms of a single person and collective representation. Seen through a longitudinal lens, the 2014 Umbrella Movement may seem to many as simply a recapitulation of a decades-old cry for individual right to the city. Transversely, it embodies the inexplicable paradoxes in the global emancipation movements where the state of affairs is uncertain and unpredictable. It is within this context that the ten essays in this chapter have been written. Each essay divulges the inherited and inherent burdens of its author and the period.

Written just months before the start of the protests in September 2014, each of the ten "how-to" essays contemplates a specific place in Hong Kong. Each presupposes the very act of inhabiting and moving about in the city as a potentially creative endeavor. Each attempts to map the spatial ramifications of such creative acts of resistance — be it self-conscious, hyper-conscious, subconscious, or all of these — through particular narrative techniques, ranging from the fictional, semi-fictional, documentary and instructional. Collectively, recalling Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, the essays present a glimpse of the human endeavors that underpin Hong Kong.

Resistant City thrives on the situationistic, participatory, and generative utopian thrust of design projects, but rejects totalitarian tendencies. The twenty-first century is witnessing a consolidation of the Pearl River Delta as a megaregion of intense migratory movements, business transactions, and intensified collaboration, which calls for diverse and multi-scalar approaches. Rather than setting itself against capitalist development, Resistant City operates within it, co-opting the soft and hard-sell techniques of Hong Kong's commercial culture that permeate every level. It focuses on a designed and calculated impermanence to produce new materials and dialogues between the cities. A site of contesting identities, and imbued with an underlying pragmatism, Hong Kong is Resistant City. Mobilizing archival research, fieldwork, observations, analyses, design visualization and practices, the how-to essays are ten of a myriad of other takes on urban praxis.

Eunice Seng, May 4, 2019

DISTRICT GEOGRAPHIES



NORTH

As its name suggests, the North District (22°29'41"N 114°08'17"E) is located in the northwestern part of the New Territories. The district occupies an area of 168 km² and contains a population of 304,134 (2011), which reflects its relatively low population density compared to other districts (2,228/km²). In addition to the 2013 Developmental Scheme of the Northeast New Territories, the development agency expects to build a new **modern town** in the North District by exploiting the vast lands of the northern New Territories.

The North District neighbors Shenzhen and is separated from it by the Shenzhen River. It is well known for its two border crossing facilities – Lo Wu (once the busiest border crossing facility in the world – 9.3 million people used it between 2006-2007 – but now superseded by the Gongbei Port between Macau and Zhuhai) and Sha Tau Kok (the historical Chung Ying Street within the area is a **shared administration** area between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, and was a sensitive contact point for Communism and Capitalism during the Cold War). Sheung Shui Station (one stop before the border crossing facility at Lo Wu Station) received frequent media coverage in recent years as the place where smugglers operating between Mainland China and Hong Kong gathered to pack and unpack outside the station. Due to the high demand for smuggled goods, the prices of many daily necessities in the area skyrocketed, with some like baby milk formulas and Yakult (a health drink) regularly out of stock. A series of **protests**, mainly organized by netizens, took place outside the station in September 2012 and were dubbed the "Reclaim Sheung Shui Station Movement."



YUEN LONG

With a population density of 4,178/km² the Yuen Long District (22°26'40.09"N 114°01'2.88"E), located in the northwest of the New Territories, has an area of 138.43 km² and a population of 578,529 (2011). Nowadays, its Cantonese name, *Yuen Long,* refers to the limits of the original market town, Yuen Long New Town (also known as Yuen Long Plain, or Yuen Long District). Since the 1970s, two new towns have been developed in Yuen Long, the only one of Hong Kong's eighteen districts to see this. Historically, Yuen Long used to be a traditional market town. However, since 2004 it has rapidly been developing. The West Rail project and other major infrastructural projects have totally transformed Yuen Long from a plain market town into a very dynamic district which now refers in particular not only to Yuen Long New Town, which developed between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, but also Tin Shui Wai New Town, which was established primarily for residential purposes in the 1990s.

In 2012, the Development Bureau's determination to eradicate **unauthorized structures** throughout Hong Kong encountered the greatest resistance in New Territories villages. The resistance came from the **indigenous clans** communities, who mostly lived in the Yuen Long District. After the 1967 Communist Riots in Hong Kong, the colonial government specifically put forward the New Territories Small House Policy in 1972 in order to gain political support from the indigenous clans. The policy allowed male descendants of indigenous clans to build their own houses without paying land fees and rates to the Government. In terms of **building control**, this historically lax monitoring of conditions in village houses created a gray area for such housing, which led to the rampant construction of illegal additional floors (the maximum was three floors), additional rooftop structures, extension of windows or balconies, and other features.

Tin Shui Wai New Town is frequently labeled the **City of Sadness**. The area's social problems feature frequently on the news and in the public media due to the concentration of poor people and new **immigrants** residing in the district's public housing, a result of erroneous housing policies in the 1990s. The presence of Tin Shui Wai in popular media includes Hacken Lee's 2006 pop song *Tin Shui – Wai Seng (天水–圍城)*, Ann Hui's movies *The Way We Are* (2008) and *Night and Fog* (2009), and Laurence Lau's *Besieged City* (2008). The town is portrayed as an **isolated**

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community in these works. In *Night and Fog*, the storyline revolves around a real domestic violence case in 2004 that cost four lives, whereas **Besieged City** touches on juvenile problems and **domestic abuse**.



TAI PO

The Tai Po District (22°27'03"N 114°09'51"E), located in the Eastern New Territories, has an area of 148.05 km² and a population size of 296,853 (2011). It has a considerably lower population density of 2,181/km² compared to the overall density of Hong Kong, which was at 6620/km² in 2012. It was not until the Qing Dynasty that Tai Po's name was changed from *Da Bu*. In 2005, Tai Po was honoured by the World Health Organization, which ranked it as the 90th safest district in the world and the 3rd safest in Hong Kong, after Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun. Tai Po has its own **Industrial Estate**, built in 1974, the first to be established Hong Kong and one of the largest amongst its counterparts in the city, accommodating a number of public media headquarters, e.g. *ATV*, *SCMP* and *The Oriental Press*.

The **cooked food stalls** in Tai Po Municipal Building are the largest amongst the twenty-five stalls operated by the Government around Hong Kong. It is a very popular place for visitors to look for a variety of authentic local food in one single place. The arrangement within the hall for the food stalls is reminiscent of **Dai Pai Dongs** (大排檔) where one could buy a dish from one stall, a drink from another, and sit freely. The seating arrangement in the hall is flexible and some spaces are even **time-shared**. For example, during lunch the spot is occupied by the seats of a fast-food stall while at night it may be occupied by a dessert stall. The only difference from a Dai Pai Dong is that the hall is air-conditioned and on the second floor of a building. Amongst many other typologies that were intended to replace Dai Pai Dongs – all slated for eventual removal due to their sub-standard environmental conditions – the cooked food stalls in the Municipal Buildings seem to be better received.



TUEN MUN

With a population density of 5,773/km², an area of 84.45 km² and a population of 487,546 (2011), Tuen Mun (22°23'32"N 113°58'12"E) is the westernmost continental district of Hong Kong – located about 32 km from the Kowloon Peninsula, 7 km southwest of Yuen Long and 18 km west of Tsuen Wan. The Tuen Mun District was originally named Castle Peak New Town and later adopted its historic name, Tuen Mun, after its construction in the early 1980s.

Tuen Mun is located on the western side of Hong Kong. Given that Hong Kong's prevailing winds blow easterly, it is on the downwind side of the city. In order to reduce the effect

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of **pollutants** inhibiting the health of Hong Kong people, many air-polluting industries, such as power plants, landfill sites and one of the proposed incinerators are located along the western coastline instead. As a result, most of the population of Tuen Mun resides to the east of Castle Peak, while most polluting industries are located to the west.

Due to its relative proximity to Shenzhen and distance from the city center, the district's relatively **low land prices** attract a lot of **immigrants** from Mainland China. The Tuen Mun Central Park frequently attracts individual or group performances, and many people join in **mass dance** practices as their regular exercise routine. It is therefore not uncommon to find huge crowds of people gathering in open spaces within the park. However, due to noise complaints from neighboring residents, the park had to tighten its surveillance of the performers. According to the Noise Control Ordinance, noise cannot exceed 70db. As a result, surveillance staff at the park have set up potted plants and **barriers** in areas where performances originally took place, and suggested that gatherers move to open areas further away from nearby residents.



SHA TIN

With a population of 630,273 (2011) and an area of 69.46 km², Sha Tin (22°23'14"N 114°11'43"E) is the most populous district in Hong Kong and has a population density of 9,173/km². During the pre-colonial era, Sha Tin was called Lek Yuen, which literally means "the source of clear water" or "trickling". However, it is interesting to note that Sha Tin did not become the common name for the district until the establishment and regular use of the Sha Tin Station that became part of the Kowloon-Canton Railway network in 1910.

Sha Tin today is famous for the **elevated walkway system** that links a number of shopping malls and real estate developments centered on the train station since 1982. This model of private development is **replicated** in a number of other new town developments in Hong Kong. One of the most prominent examples is the YOHO Town development plan in Yuen Long (2003) by the same developer, Sun Hung Kai Properties.

In Fo Tan, an industrial area in the Sha Tin New Town development plan, many factories and industrial lofts have been left vacant due to the migration of manufacturing industries to mainland China during the 1990s. Since 2000, a number of artists and designers have taken advantage of the relatively low rents in the district, the proximity to mass transit and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. A local vibrant **creative community** is gradually developing. Every January, the collaborative open studio event named **Fotanian** attracts crowds of art lovers and the general public to the district for dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

Located in the North of the New Territories with an area of 136.39 km² and a population of 436,627 (2011),



SAI KUNG

Sai Kung District (22°22'53"N 114°16'14"E) has a population density of 3,201/km². This district was known as Sai Kung from the beginning of the Ming Dynasty since it was the only harbor to have been used during the seven voyages of Zheng He (鄭和). In the last three decades, Sai Kung has seen an increase in the number of younger immigrants, most of whom are concentrated in Tseung Kwan O New Town. Thus, Sai Kung has gradually become an extraordinary place, turning it into a **melting pot** of diverse cultures from various areas such as southern Fujian, Hakka, Chaozhou, Guangzhou, Europe, America and so on.

More than forty percent of the land in Hong Kong is designated as protected green areas. Of these, the **country parks** within Sai Kung are regarded as the most popular sites for visitors. In 2009, the Hong Kong Geopark was inaugurated, and in 2011 it became part of the Global Geoparks Network of UNESCO – affirming the scientific research and tourism value of the volcanic and sedimentary geographic features in this 50 km² area of the district.

Sai Kung is less known for its already demolished **political enclave** of Guo Ming Dang (國民黨) political refugees. The shanty town in Tiu Keng Leng (調景嶺), within today's new town area of Tseung Kwan O (將軍澳), once accommodated around

10,000 political refugees who had escaped from Communist China in the 1950s. In the area, there were always banners and Taiwanese flags all over the place, and on October 10 each year (the National Day of Taiwan), flag-raising ceremonies and large-scale celebrations used to be held. However, in 1996, the whole shanty town area was demolished, just one year before the return of sovereignty over Hong Kong from Great Britain to the People's Republic of China.

TSUEN WAN

Occupying an area of 60.70 km², and with a population of 304,637 (2011), Tsuen Wan (22°22'53"N 114°16'14"E) has a relatively moderate population density, at 5,019/km². Most of the residents are concentrated in Tsuen Wan Town and enjoy the highest salaries in the New Territories. Tsuen Wan was not only traditionally named "Qian Wan" (荃灣) for the shallow water of the bays in this district, but also used to be named "Quan Wan" (淺灣).

The **tallest mountain** in Hong Kong, Tai Mo Shan (大帽山), is located at the intersection of Tsuen Wan, Yuen Long and Tai Po districts. On the south slope of the mountain, within Tsuen Wan district, there are clusters of Buddhist and Taoist Temples due to the good **Feng Shui** (風水), according to local belief. The Yuen Yuen Institute is one of the largest temples in the area and one of the few in Hong Kong dedicated to the three major Chinese religions of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

The problem of the **wall effect**, created by the linear development of towers above train stations, in Fo Tan, Tai Wai and Tung Chung for example, has been highly controversial in Hong Kong. There have recently been disputes over the proposed real estate development above Tsuen Wan West Train Station. Since the station is located next to the waterfront, and the demand for housing is a prioritized agenda for the administration of Hong Kong, a higher **plot ratio** (5.8 for the plot TW5 of Tsuen Wan West) is allowed on this prime site (compared to 3 for Kam Sheung Road, one stop from Tsuen Wan West), despite the research documents prepared by the University of Science and Technology for the District Council of Tsuen Wan showing how the proposed development would adversely affect the wind conditions of, and the views of, neighboring inland areas.

KWAI TSING

Kwai Tsing (22°21'18"N 114°05'02"E) is part of the New Territories, with a population of 511,167 (2011) and an area of 21.82 km². The population density in Kwai Tsing (23,426/km²) is relatively high for Hong Kong, with the majority of the residents here among the third least educated, and with salary below average.

Kwai Tsing is the logistics center of

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Hong Kong. Not only does it have the majority of cargo port facilities, the famous Tsing Ma Bridge is the only access to the Airport from the downtown area via road traffic. Ma Wan, one of the islands that the Bridge connects to, was designed as a **green community** in 2000, without any road traffic. Water traffic is the primary means of external transportation for this island. Mei Fo Sun Chuen, since 1968 another development project in the district, is a mega housing estate that accommodates **the greatest number of towers in the world**. It contains ninety-nine towers within an area of around 0.25 km^2, a staggering cluster compared to the thirty-five towers of Stuyvesant Town and the fifty-six of the Peter Cooper Village in New York City. The site originally accommodated oil retention facilities of the Mobil Group.

In 1965, Mobil developed the area with New York companies Galbreath Ruffin Corporation and Turner Construction Company. Mei Fo Sun Chuen lays down the pioneer private estate planning **model for middle-class communities** in Hong Kong. Subsequent developments on former dock facilities, such as Taikoo Shing (since 1977) and Whampoa Garden (since 1985), shared a similar development approach.

WONG TAI SIN

Located in Kowloon, with an area of 9.36 km^2, Wong Tai Sin is the only district in Hong Kong that is totally landlocked. It has a population of 420,183 (2011) and a high density of 44.891/km^2. Residents here are the least educated and receive the lowest incomes in Hong Kong. Originally, it was named "Zhu Yuan" (竹園) and the district derives its name from the Wong Tai Sin Temple.

Eighty-five percent of the population in Wong Tai Sin lives in **subsidized housing**, while 16.7 percent of the total population is elderly. The Wong Tai Sin Temple and Chi Nin Nunnery are famous institutions for religious practices. Wong Tai Sin Temple is the only Taoist temple in Hong Kong that conducts Taoist marriage services and was the first to provide live broadcasts of the worship hall for online worshippers in Hong Kong.

The demolished Tai Hom Village (大磡村) in Diamond Hill was originally a **squatter area**, which was cleared in 2001. The demolition operation encountered **violent resistance**, including on-site **protests** and suspected **arson**. The area was famous for **film production** studios during the 1940s and 50s. To the west of Tate's Cairn Tunnel once stood the Tai Koon/Diamond/Hong Kong/Kin Sheng Studio (大觀片廠/鑽石片廠/香港片廠/堅成片廠), while to the east was the Wing Wah/Dian Mao/Golden Harvest Studio (永華片廠/電懋片廠/嘉禾片廠), where movies for overseas viewers featuring Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan were made. The respected local actor Qiao Hung (喬宏) lived at Stone House No. 4 in Tai Koon Yuen (大觀園), which had a development of 22 luxurious houses within Tai Hom Village and is the only building preserved in the whole demolished area.

KOWLOON CITY

Located in the west of Kowloon with a population of 377,351 (2011) and an area of 9.97 km^2, the Kowloon City District (22°19'42"N 114°11'30"E) has a density of 36,178/km^2 and the third most educated residents in Hong Kong. Residents in this district enjoy the highest incomes in Kowloon. Interestingly, it is said that Kowloon City was firstly named "Ba Long" (八龍) by an emperor when he traveled here, a place that is surrounded by mountains from eight directions. Consequently, he named the wonderful place "Jiu Long" (九龍) as emperors in ancient China were usually treated as *Long* (dragons).

Kowloon City was famous for being home to the **Kowloon Walled City** until its complete demolition in 1994. The Walled City was originally a military outpost of the Qing Government and became an administration enclave after the Japanese surrender in 1945. The British Government had failed to enforce law in the area due to the dispute over the right of administration within the City. Building activities within the area were hence **unregulated**, except for the height restriction imposed by **air-traffic control** for the then operating Kai Tak Airport, which terminated its operations in 1998.

In 2011, a fire in To Kwa Wan that

took four lives drew society's attention to the safety problem of **subdivided apartments** in the substandard, shoddily constructed buildings. Research by the DAB (Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress in HK) conducted immediately after the fire found that in one of the buildings in To Kwa Wan, the original fourteen apartments were subdivided into forty-six units, and that one was divided into seven. According to the report prepared by the Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee in May 2013, there were 170,000 people living in 70,000 subdivided flats in Hong Kong. The Government is considering regulating the subdivided flats by issuing licenses for apartment owners.



SHAM SHUI PO

With a relatively high population density of 40.174/km² in Hong Kong, Sham Shui Po (22°19'51"N 114°09'44"E) occupies a comparatively small area at 9.48 km². Comprising a predominantly working-class population of 380,855 (2011), with the lowest average household income and residents who are the fourth least educated in the entire territory, it is virtually the poorest district in Hong Kong. Sham Shui Po is historically named after the deep-water wharf that used to be heavily utilized for the transportation of people and goods.

Sham Shui Po is famous for the **street market** on Ap Liu Street that sells all sorts of electronic products and second-hand goods. After the 1953 **Shek Kip Mei Fire**, victims of the fire in the squatter area lost not only their homes but also their previous means of livelihood. A large number of them chose to carry on small businesses along the nullah at Nam Cheong Street. Since the Government could not immediately provide jobs for them, it designated the street as a **hawker area**. Subsequently, people began to dwell in the hawker stalls and the street gradually became a shanty area.

According to a 2010 survey conducted by the Society for Community Organization, more than half the **homeless** in Hong Kong are in Sham Shui Po district. In recent years, the District Council of Sham Shui Po has been very active in holding events that promote local culture and non-mainstream ways of living. In 2012 for example, local residents in Shun Ning Road launched a Sham Shui Po **Rooftop Culture Festival** to promote the culture of rooftop living on the one hand, and to disseminate the inhabitants' concerns over redevelopment plans proposed by the Urban Renewal Authority on the other.



YAU TSIM MONG

Located on the western peninsula of Kowloon, the Yan Tsim Mong District (22°19'17"N 114°10'21"E) occupies its core urban area. With a population

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of 307,878 (2011) and a relatively small area of 6.55 km², it has the third highest population density amongst all the districts. Historically, there were formerly two districts in this area – Yau Tsim and Mong Kok. In 1994, the two were combined with another, with the new name being a combination of each acronym of the three major areas: Yau Ma Tei, Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok.

Since 2000, Sai Yeung Choi Street South in Mong Kok has been designated as a **pedestrianized area**. This has turned the already busy shopping destination into one of the most popular places for tourists, booth stalls and street performers. Every day from dusk onwards, performers of all kinds occupy the street, attracting audiences of passers-by. These **performances** include mass dances, band gigs, acrobatic acts, theatrical dramas and so on.

Unbeknownst to most Hong Kongers, the **Cultural Centre Complex** in Tsim Sha Tsui next to the Star Ferry Pier is one of the favorite spots for the homeless (street sleepers). These nocturnal occupants begin populating the place after 10 p.m. when crowds clear and those who work in the Complex leave for the day. Thus, the general public does not encounter these "**street sleepers**" in the complex. They are by and large invisible to the rest of the citizenry. According to the Society for Community Organizations (SOCO), more than 100 people dwell in the area during peak seasons. The favorite spots include the single-loaded corridors on the second floor of the Museum of Art and the monumental colonnade on the periphery of the Cultural Centre.



KWUN TONG

Located in the easternmost part of Kowloon, Kwun Tong (22°18'48"N 114°13'33"E) has a high population density of 56,303/km², with the third largest population of 622,152 (2011) within an area of 11.05 km². The average income is below that of the Special Administrative Region. It is said that the name "Kwun Tong" can be traced back to the Northern Song Dynasty, when the government owned salt work facilities that were set up here. Since salt work brought huge revenues to officials in the area, local people called the place *Guan Fu Yan Tang* (官富鹽塘) and it was later called (官/觀塘).

In the past ten years, forty-six percent of constructed **new office space** in Hong Kong was built within the district, which supports the continued economic growth of the city. With the launch of the Energizing Kowloon East Office (EKEO) in 2012, the Government proposed that, together with the Kai Tak Redevelopment Plan, the region would become another business hub to enhance the **competitiveness** of the city.

The original industrial neighborhood is undergoing rapid **restructuring**. In addition to the Government's effort to promote green buildings in the area, other local efforts exist to reuse the industrial spaces creatively within the district. The HK FARM is one such community, with a creative institution is based on a **rooftop farm** in Ngau Tau Kok. Their public outreach activities include beekeeping and planting workshops, visitation tours and so on.



ISLANDS

With the largest area of 175.03 km², and the least population at 142,327 (2011), the Islands District (22°15'40"N 113°56'46"E) has the third youngest residents and a density of 807/km². The Islands is named after its geographical situation, consisting of more than 20 islands along the southern and southwestern part of Hong Kong. The Outlying Islands are notable for a relaxed way of living compared to that of both Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula.

The Islands are good destinations for outdoor activities on the weekends. An afternoon of hiking or biking trips are popular choices for those who wish to take a break from mundane city life. The Islands are well known to **tourists** for the Disney Resort on Lantau, and best known for Norman Foster's terminal building at Chek Lap Kok International Airport. The younger people in Hong Kong, however, are more interested in renting **holiday homes** for a few days in places such as Tong Fuk and Cheung Sha on Lantau, or on Cheung Chau Island, a sought-after escape from their shoebox-sized homes! Backpackers have the option of **camping in the wild** on Lantau

if they find hotels in Hong Kong too typical or too expensive, or if they simply wish to avoid consumerist travel. The Government's Pui O Camp Site is one of the most popular destinations for campers, to the extent that visitors may be hard-pressed to find a spot to put a tent, as they have to compete with vacationers from mainland China during one of the long Chinese holidays.



CENTRAL AND WESTERN

With the third lowest population of 251,519 (2011) and a density of 20,089/km² due to their relatively small size of 12.52 km², the Central and Western Districts (22°17'12"N 114°09'18"E) have the most educated residents and the second highest incomes in the SAR. One, Central District is the heart of the **business district** and the core urban area of Hong Kong. For another, Western District covers Shek Tong Tsui, Kennedy Town and Sai Ying Pun, and is part of the **City of Victoria**, the earliest urban settlement in colonial Hong Kong.

The Central District is famous for its **skyscrapers** including the HSBC headquarters building by Norman Foster, built in 1985, and the Bank of China Tower by I.M. Pei, completed in 1990. While the public and commuters can roam freely in the plaza, under the belly of the HSBC building, the use of this **public space** is maximized on weekends and during public holidays, particularly by South-East Asian domestic helpers. The helpers **occupy** this architectural icon of the Hi-tech movement with their creative uses of corrugated cardboard, staking out almost every single vacant spot along the **public covered walkways** and parks for their weekly social gatherings.

Central and Western are not only the financial center of Hong Kong, but are also the political center of the city. The Government Headquarters, Legislative Council, High and Supreme Courts and Government House are all located within the district. Being geographically significant, the district is the site of many **mass protests and petitions**. The annual protest march on July 1 (the Establishment Day of HKSAR) is one of the most well-attended. According to the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme, around 500,000 people participated in the July 1 protest in 2003 compared to 90,000 in 2013. Recently, in 2014, Occupy Central occurred, a civil disobedience movement that was the subject of serious debate within society and which took place in Central with the key agenda of universal suffrage.



WAN CHAI

With the second lowest population of 152,608 (2011), Wan Chai District (22°16'47"N 114°10'18"E) has the second most educated residents, and the third oldest, amongst all the

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districts. It occupies an area of 10.02 km² and has a population density of 15,230/km². With its residents commanding the highest incomes in the territory, according to the Census Report in 2011, it is characteristic that Wan Chai is the only district that has developed without any public housing estates.

Wan Chai is famous for its **adult entertainment** industry along the coastal area, developed in response to the frequent visits of US naval vessels which used to dock along this part of the harbor. Wan Chai is also famous for the Racecourse in Happy Valley and the Hong Kong Stadium, which holds important events such as the 2009 East Asian Games and the annual Hong Kong Rugby Sevens. Since 2004, local resistance to the **redevelopment** proposal for Lee Tung Street (利東街), also known as the Hay Tip Street (Wedding Card Street, 囍帖街), had attracted a lot of media attention. Not only was the petition highly visible, with white and yellow banners hung all over the area, the issue gained popular culture media attention through renowned Hong Kong singer Kay Tse's song, which was eponymously named after the street. Although the whole street has been demolished for redevelopment, the movement prompted residents in other sites going through the process of **negotiation** with urban redevelopment bodies to unite and raise public awareness. **Renewal TV** (舊區更新電視台) is one such online platform that provides support and facilitates dialogue between the stakeholders of old buildings undergoing the process of acquisition by developers.



EASTERN

The Eastern District (22°17'03"N 114°13'27"E) has the second highest population of 588,094 (2011) with a density of 31,116/km² within an area of 18.9 km². The Eastern District used to be fishing villages, quarries and dockyards. It is now mostly residential, with some industrial areas and several large shopping malls.

The land use of the area has been changing rapidly due to the high demand for office and hotel floor space in the central areas of Hong Kong. Taikoo Place in Quarry Bay is composed of 10 interconnected Grade A office towers. Although it was originally an industrial area, the developer Swire Properties took advantage of the district's connectivity to mass transits and proximity to the Eastern Harbour Tunnel and gradually transformed the area into a **business district** through the **reconstruction** and refurbishment of existing buildings.

The premium venue for **Cantonese opera** in Hong Kong, Sunbeam Theatre in North Point, is situated two metro stations away from Taikoo Place. The owner of the property had attempted to terminate the land lease contract to the theatre in 2005, and again in 2012, due to business considerations. The operation of the theatre today is an uneasy compromise after very difficult negotiations between the property owners and cultural celebrities and certain political figures in society. The latter wanted the continued operation of the theater because the issue arose just before the Chief Executive election of the HKSAR in March 2012, and it would be a very decent act to save the theatre from closing. The new contract would end in 2016, the same year as the expected completion of the Chinese Opera House in **West Kowloon**. In early 2012, an agreement between the landlord and the Cantonese opera theater operator was reached which allowed it to stay open at a monthly rental cost of HK$1 million.



SOUTHERN

Facing the South China Sea to the south, and backed by hills and reservoirs, the Southern District (22°14'50"N 114°09'32"E) enjoys a density of 7,173/km², with the fourth lowest population of 278,655 (2011) in an area of 38.95 km². The development of the Southern District is limited by insufficient traffic capacity in the area, particularly Pok Fu Lam, where development is restricted by the Pok Fu Lam Moratorium requiring the Government to reject development applications in the area if the proposal increases traffic demand. Moreover, some of Hong Kong's most popular **beaches** are found in this district. The eastern half of the district is semi-rural while the western half is partly residential and partly industrial.

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The Southern District is well known for a variety of **tourist destinations** such as Ocean Park, Repulse Bay, Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and the Chinese Junk Restaurant. Historically, many **boat dwellers** parked their "homes" in the Typhoon Shelter in different parts of Hong Kong – Aberdeen Shelter is just one of many. Another less known area in the district is the Pok Fu Lam Village. Unlike their counterparts in the New Territories, indigenous villages on Hong Kong Island do not possess the same housing rights. Hence, descendants of the villagers cannot not build the three-story small houses that village residents in the New Territories were entitled to. Due to the influx of immigrants in the 1950s, when squatter structures were built around the farmhouse on the original farmland, the organization of the village resembles a shanty town rather than a farm village. Most of the structures built on the original farmlands were regarded as **temporary structures** during the last survey on squatters by the government in the mid-1980s, which means the majority of the structures in the area could be compulsorily acquired by the Government if the area was included in a development plan. The uncertainty of the duration of ownership deters people from living in the area. However, the relatively low land price has attracted a lot of **new immigrants** into the village – many of whom are South-east Asians. In order to maintain social ties within the village, and to sustain cultural practices, from 2010 the village committee re-established the long-halted **tradition** of the Fire

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NOTES

HOW TO RECLAIM URBAN SPACE SUBCONSCIOUSLY

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HOW TO MEASURE PRIVATELY-OWNED PUBLIC SPACE

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EPILOGUE
Resistant domestiCities

Within architectural and planning histories, resistance to the city predominantly has taken the forms of escape, rejection, annihilation or replacing it with a completely different paradigm. Such instances of utopia as a form of resistance, reaching as far back as Plato's *Republic*, Confucius' Datong and Taiping; and the social arrangements and environs of More and Bacon, which were embedded in the socialist movements of the nineteenth century (as criticized by Marx), exemplified by the work of Fourier, Cabet and Owen, and popularized by Bellamy, Morris and Howard at the beginning of the twentieth. Since the 1900s, architects like Tony Garnier, Bruno Taut, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier have attempted to rationalize and give utopia concrete form through planning blueprints. To that end, Wright's Broadacre City and Le Corbusier's Radiant City remain the most referenced plans organizing how people should live, work and play in the city for the greater part of the twentieth century. This is largely due to the wide circulation and didactic character of the planning ideas and the socialist ideals they embodied.[1] Such utopias have since been decried outmoded as they run counter to an increasingly diverse and globalized world. The prevailing ideology venerates the logic of the market, and the majority of the population has little confidence in the ethical imperative of their governments.[2]

Utopia appeared to have been momentarily resuscitated and emerged from the social and political upheavals of the 1960s, only to be completely dismantled by the end of the decade throughout many parts of the world. The 1960s, Fredric Jameson argues, concluded at the end of the Vietnam War along with the dissolution of the Bretton Woods agreement in 1974, replacing old narratives of emancipation with new forms and agendas. Amongst these were the struggles to end racial and gender inequality, as witnessed by the liberation movements in North America.[3] The year 1968 was a momentous one for developed nations in the western hemisphere as workers and students took to the streets in Europe, and cities across the United States became sites of the Civil Rights movement. Asia in the 1960s was in the throes of decolonization and countering the threat of Communism was part of the process of nation building. In South and Southeast Asia, the exhilaration of independence saw India taking the lead in 1947, followed by the formation of the Federation of Malaya in 1957, and then of Malaysia in 1963 to include Singapore,

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Sabah and Sarawak, only to face to violent conflict in Borneo on the borders of East Malaysia and Indonesia known as *Konfrontasi*.[4] The end of Indonesia's oil boom in 1982, rising labor costs, lower worker productivity, and increasing industrial unrest saw a spike in labor exports, which led to waves of Indonesian domestic workers finding employment in the "Tiger" economies of Asia.[5] By 2016, there were almost 160,000 Indonesian domestic helpers in Hong Kong.[6]

In Hong Kong, British-led industrialization confronted the ongoing Cultural Revolution in the north, leading to increasing racial and ideological tensions. According to Hong Kong Government statistics, 51 people died, 832 were injured and 1,936 were arrested in the riots between the pro-Communists and the colonial government.[7] In contrast, the leftists claimed 26 people died and 4,979 were arrested between May and December 1967.[8] The aftermath saw the first wave of migration by those who had lost confidence in the colony's future and the numbers peaked in the years approaching the handover in 1997. Adding to the tensions, following the end of the Vietnam War, 143,700 Vietnamese refugees were resettled in other countries and over 67,000 migrants were repatriated between 1975 and 1999.[9] At its peak in 1979, over 68,700 Vietnamese boat people arrived in Hong Kong.[10] They were housed in nine camps scattered across Hong Kong. From 1982, the government set up closed camps in remote Outlying Islands. The Boat People waited in these camps while being monitored and screened by the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department to validate their refugee status claims.[11] Pressure on the British colonial government's handling of the Vietnamese refugee crisis was magnified by the handover in 1997. Between 1975 and 1999, over 140,000 people were resettled. In 2000, the last camp, housing over a thousand people, was closed, with the Hong Kong Government offering them identity cards to initiate integration into local society.[12] While twentieth century Hong Kong has a long history of refugees that dates back to 1949, the Vietnamese crisis put the people's resilience and tolerance to the test. However, in view of the Occupy Central protests (October 15, 2011 to September 11, 2012) and the Umbrella Movement (September 28 to December 15, 2014), migrant workers and refugees remain in "Democracy's blind spot" as those causes are taken up by a largely Hong Kong Chinese citizenry.[13]

Notwithstanding this quandary, Hong Kong's historical experience with displacement and the displaced reverberates today. For the remaining population in the territory who identify themselves as "Hong Kong people," 1967 and 1997 left a renewed sense of resilience.[14] If there is one trait that could be attributed to the collective, it would be this pragmatist attitude – one that permeates the home and the workplace and pervades the city. Hong Kong's present built environment, with most of the high-rise buildings

dating back no further than the 1960s, is the consummation. Behind the physical forms and spatial configurations of the architecture lie zoning regulations, building codes and land valuation, all of which buttress the pragmatist rationale, which architects commonly and conveniently label "the developer's logic." It is this finger pointing and side-stepping that premised the questions raised in this book. To investigate the city through its architecture, one has to first excavate the histories of its development, observe, document and analyze the latent and invisible through inventive methods to visualize the ways in which individuals and collectives inhabit, adapt to and resist the demands imposed on them by the city. It seeks to comprehend the tactics used to withstand the relentless onslaught of development and their motivations. Hong Kong's urbanism is a history of resistant adaptations and adaptive resistances that produces an urban character of tenacity and resilience that operates on multiple levels, not least public demonstrations by the urban masses.

(AN)OTHER OCCUPATION

Between October 15, 2011 and September 11, 2012, protestors camped at the atrium plaza of the HSBC headquarters building in Central. The occupation protest was Hong Kong's response to the global Occupy movement against corporate excess and economic inequality. Owned by the bank, the plaza was deeded during its construction in 1983 as a public space.[15] Underlying the fight against the tyranny of capitalism were brewing anxieties over the coming transfer of power to the Chinese state.[16] The occupation lasted ten months, until the bank took the case to the High Court and an injunction was granted for the protestors to be completely cleared by August 27, 2012. A small group of protestors stayed, vowing to remain despite the ruling. Amid loud protests and scuffles with the police, the remaining campers were forcibly removed on September 11, fifteen days after the eviction deadline.[17] And in a rare gesture of private ownership, the plaza was sealed for a clean up.[18] Previously, the public plaza had been shut only when there was the threat of a typhoon. The individuals and groups that expressed the most concern over the closure were the foreign domestic workers who used the public space for their weekly gatherings.[19] In April 2013, the secretariat of the Occupy Central Movement (OCM) was formed and the first meeting was held in June at the University of Hong Kong. This was followed by further meetings and opinion polls on the proposed occupation of Central as a collective act of civil disobedience to pressure the government for an electoral system in Hong Kong decided through a democratic process that adhered to international standards of universal and equal suffrage.[20]

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In anticipation of the occupation of Central, HSBC locked up its plaza for renovations from September 2014.[21] It reopened in January 2015, to coincide with the bank's 150th anniversary, where an exhibition was staged at the renovated plaza, which featured a large historical map with mosaics and engravings showing the old seashore line and the locations of key buildings in Central in 1910.[22] Concurrently, between September 26 and December 15 2014, the collective occupation of public spaces advanced from the spaces around the Central Government Offices to the highway in Central and Admiralty and on the major thoroughfares of Causeway Bay and Mong Kok in Kowloon – the three major political and commercial centers of Hong Kong. The longest duration of occupation occurred in Admiralty and Causeway Bay, where protestors camped from September 26 to December 11, and from September 28 to December 15 respectively.[23] What was originally planned as a civil disobedience campaign, named "Occupy Central with Love and Peace," of road sit-ins by students and activists gave way to a protracted seventy-nine days of mass protests and street occupation that became known as the Umbrella Movement. The name was adopted following the police-civilians run-in on September 26 where the protestors used their umbrellas to counter the teargas that was sprayed at them.[24] In anticipation of the end of the occupation, Benny Tai, one of the three initiators of Occupy Central with Love and Peace, called for the extension of the spirit of occupation from the streets to the practices of everyday life that resist governmental administration. In a *New York Times* op-ed, he stated:

> "Blocking government may be even more powerful than blocking roads. Refusal to pay taxes, delaying rent payments by tenants in public housing estates and filibustering in the Legislative Council, along with other such acts of noncooperation, could make governing more inconvenient. No government can govern effectively if the majority of its people are unwilling to cooperate."[25]

The Umbrella Movement was extensively covered by local and international media especially social media, which provided blow-by-blow live accounts of events as they unfolded. Most focused on the political, social and economic impact of the protests on the city. In the aftermath of Occupy, a plethora of publications covering general and specific aspects of the protests appeared. All fell within the scope of documentary and historical and critical reflection. Of these, Jason Y. Ng's *Umbrellas in Bloom: Hong Kong's Occupy Movement*, with illustrations by Daniel Ng, an architect, offers first-hand accounts of the 2014 mass protests.[26] It presents Ng's attempt to preserve memories, analyze "the movement" and reflect upon

the possibilities for the city's future and the tenacious spirit of its citizenry.[27] He emphasized that the word "movement" is preferable to "revolution" as it is more akin to the fifteen-year American civil rights struggle than the "one-off regime change in the Arab Spring" of late 2010. This stance is reinforced by pro-democracy student activist and Scholarism founder Joshua Wong in his foreword to the book in which he points out that the territory's thirty-year pro-democracy struggle had set the stage for the Occupy Movement. Acknowledging the importance of the book as the first chronicle of the Umbrella Movement in the English language, Wong writes: "the world will see that citizens awoken by the Umbrella Movement will continue their fight against Goliath, and that they will take that fight from the streets to the voting booth and into the legislature."[28]

Like Tai, Wong sees the mass occupation of the streets as an extroverted form of protest primarily as a means to an end. Notwithstanding the numerous maps, illustrations and artworks that have been produced and presented in publications – the most poignantly aesthetic of these is arguably Michael Wolf's photographs of the yellow umbrellas captured in *Hong Kong Umbrella* of 2015. The now symbolic artifact has become the frame through which the pro-democracy Umbrella Movement is culturally understood.[29] What about the other artifacts – the rally platform, the placards, the banners and posters, the slogans, the chants and the tents? Or the largest infrastructural and spatial artifact that was occupied for seventy-nine days and throughout that duration, simultaneously functioned as house, garden, park, plaza and more? As highlighted by Jeffrey Hou, Sabine Knierbein and the authors in *City Unsilenced: Urban Resistance and Public Space*, recent urban resistance tactics around the world share commonalities that foreground the temporary use of, and the transformation of the meanings and capacity of, public space: a square, a plaza, a park, a street, a pavement, and in Hong Kong's case, a highway and its adjacent streets.[30] By bringing together a cross-disciplinary group of scholars to examine the spaces, conditions and processes that continue to profoundly impact the everyday social, economic and political life of citizens and communities, Hou and Knierbein question the significance of such urban resistances on public space, and appeal to their readers to rethink the role of public space.[31]

Prior to the 2011-2012 Occupy Central movement, the HSBC plaza was already experiencing a form of space-time modulation with the weekend occupation by foreign domestic workers who found this centrally located, privately owned public space a viable location for gathering. The arrival of the Occupy campers challenged the limits of this negotiated public space and added to the already tenuous but tolerated balance of weekday-weekend occupancy by bank staff and foreign domestic workers respectively. The phenomenon of the latter

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1 Sunday gathering of foreign domestic helpers sitting on corrugated cardboard mats at the Central elevated walkway towards the IFC. Photographed on October 2, 2014.

occupying sheltered public spaces on Sundays began in the 1980s as tens of thousands gathered on plastic, canvas and cardboard mats in the shadow of high-end hotels, bank buildings, atrium courtyards and rooftops of shopping malls and luxury brand storefronts. The majority come from the Philippines and Indonesia, with a smaller number from Thailand. In recent years, along with new transit-integrated developments like the International Finance Centre (IFC) mall in Hong Kong's Central District and Elements mall at International Commerce Centre (ICC) Kowloon, and the extension and upgrading of elevated walkway networks (especially in Central, Tsim Sha Tsui, Olympian City in West Kowloon, Tai Kok Tsui and Tsuen Wan), the need for weekend gathering spaces for the increasing number of foreign domestic workers in the territory persists.[32] [1] During spectacular moments of protests occupation, the tensions among the diverse stakeholders on public land are heightened. Yet, there exists an unspoken understanding and acceptance in their differing motivations for occupation.

What kinds of architecture and urbanism are produced when daily life meets snafu? The intensified and dynamic use of public space in Hong Kong – a modernist inheritance with genealogies that go back to the republics and socialist utopias of distant pasts and geographies – calls for multi-perspectival inquiry of the very same mechanisms that underwrite the urban development of the city. An architectural and socio-spatial analysis is pertinent. Informed by the temporary home-making strategies of the first Occupy Central at the HSBC plaza, and the expanded domestic configurations of the subsequent Occupy movement in Admiralty, the analysis focuses on the architecture and *that* physical space that was subject to the infill of new meanings and symbols. The multifarious publics whom the city's public spaces are meant to accommodate are claiming back their places. [2] At the time of the occupation, these reverted from the ornamental and symbolic back to the actual and the practiced. In lieu of a conclusion, I shall share crucial lessons learned on how individual citizens and collectives make their temporary homes in the city: public (space) housing by the public.

2 A supply station lined with corrugated cardboard on Connaught Road Central during the Occupy MovementPhotographed on October 2, 2014.



OTHER URBANISMS

"The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are

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> walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other.
>
> Escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible."[33]
>
> — Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984

Michel de Certeau did not anticipate the camera drone. The app-controlled flying robot that is now indispensable to the mass urban movements occurring in cities across the world is presenting new visions of urban collectives and the occupation of extensive infrastructure spaces that have until recently been understood simply as transitions between destinations. In the drone age, the spectacle of the "ordinary practitioners of the city" as it is put on a repeated media loop is reworking the very spaces that are designed for nonhuman speeds and processes: vehicular flyovers, roads, tunnels, electricity generators, pipelines and containers. Anthropologist Marc Augé has named these spaces of transit and information "non-places," to describe those nameless or yet-to-be-named transits, in-between and waiting spaces in airports, hotels, motorways, computers and cash machines, where contemporary urban dwellers are spending the majority of their lives.[34] The forced shutdown of the flyover for occupation instead of vehicular traffic in late 2014 opened a crack into the realities and possibilities of urban space. It revealed the conflicting ideologies and stratified dimensions of modern life in Hong Kong.

HIGHWAY: PUBLIC SPACE

There are 2,107 kilometers of roadway in Hong Kong; 442 kilometers of this is on Hong Kong Island. In 2018, there were over 784,000 vehicles on the roads.[35] There are 15 major road tunnels, 1,349 flyovers and bridges, as well as 1,292 footbridges and subways in

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Hong Kong.[36] On Hong Kong Island, the earliest route out of Victoria went around the west end of the Island to Aberdeen. On the north shore, Harcourt Flyover, a dual three-lane road, runs from Central to Causeway Bay. It connects to the Island Eastern Corridor, a dual three-lane expressway that extends 9 kilometers eastwards to Chai Wan. Construction was completed in October 1989. The corridor is mainly built on elevated structures along the shoreline and as a ground-level road on reclaimed land.[37] On October 1, 2014, it was estimated that 2,170 meter-length of roads were occupied by protestors who demanded universal suffrage.[38] Between September 28 and December 11, 2014, the Harcourt Road Flyover in Admiralty and other major thoroughfares in Causeway Bay and Mong Kok were occupied and transformed into encampments of tents and timber huts. At its peak, there were over 2,000 tents set up on Harcourt Road and Tim Mei Avenue.[39] The majority was occupied and others were for let at no cost. Only registration was expected. The densest occupation occurred at the 600-meter section of highway and roads surrounding the Central Government Complex and Tamar Park on the Victoria Harbour side, flanked by Tim Wa and Tim Mei Avenues.

In a city where the lack of public space has become an irrefutable fact and a regular subject in media discourse, the occupation of the flyover fulfills, albeit momentarily, the longing for public space and the spatial representation of the public sphere. On the one hand, the transformation of Harcourt Road and Flyover into a temporary settlement adds to the chronic frustration with the inadequacy of public parks and open spaces in the densest parts of the city where children can run free.[40] On the other, the extended use of the public spaces in the immediately adjacent private buildings during the occupation – United Centre, Admiralty Centre, Queensway Plaza and Lippo Centre in particular – offers a window into the developmental history of privately owned public space in Hong Kong since the 1950s.[41] Over half a century later, the sub-tropical territory is already well known for its people-filled public spaces in air-conditioned private developments.[42] Arising amid ongoing crises of housing shortage and contestations between private development and public space in which the latter has been substantially subsumed by the former, aerial views of a well-used fully pedestrianized Harcourt Flyover formulate an urban manual for public space and public housing.[43] Designed and built by individuals who were mostly strangers to one another until they chose to dwell together in a space not intended for human inhabitation, Harcourt Road and Flyover became "Umbrella Square," an apotheosis of bottom up communal space.



3 Barricades on Connaught Road Central demarcate the occupied territory. Photographed on October 26, 2014.

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Throughout the Umbrella Movement, and especially in the initial weeks of occupation, the metal, bamboo and plastic barricades that were deployed to cordon off the sites of protest very quickly became defensive barriers, and even objects of offense at the height of confrontations between the police, protestors and anti-occupy protestors.[44] [3] From cordoning to occupation to settlement, the barricades marked the territory of the commune. [4] [5] The crowds reconfigured the road and flyover into a public park setting. [6] People walked, cycled, scootered, roller-bladed, and skateboarded along the entire stretch. For most of the days, many people living in Causeway Bay and working in Central District walked this linear public park. Drivers and commuters became walkers. De Certeau saw walkers as voyeurs, pointing out that walking on ground level, "weaves places together" and is a spatial practice that cannot be captured simply on a map.[45] The stretch of road was dotted with first aid booths, and bottled water and amenities supply booths, recycling stations, electronic device charging stations, study kiosks, chairs, tables and benches. These became increasingly organized as time went on. One month into the occupation, an urbanism resembling that of a housing estate began to materialize.



4 Close-up of the barricades on Connaught Road Central demarcate the occupied territory. The barricades comprised metal road barriers, traffic cones, umbrellas, tents, tape, plastic bags and other found materials. Photographed on October 26, 2014.





5 Left: Hotel Mandarin Oriental (left) and HSBC headquarters building (right) from the barricades on Connaught Road Central. Photographed on October 26, 2014.

6 Below: Planting of Sanseviera (commonly known as the snack plant) in highway pavement markers on Harcourt Flyover within the occupied territory, by Hong Kong-based research and design collective group Hour25. Photographed on October 13, 2014.



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HOUSES AND YARDS

First to land on the asphalt-paved ground were the tents and first aid and supply booths that were quick demountable wooden and aluminum-framed structures with stretched canvas tops and sheets on the sides. These were of various sizes and were run by volunteers, many of whom did not know each other before the occupation. By the end of the first week, hundreds of individual tents had been set up. Most were brought to the sites by the protestors themselves and stocked by anonymous donors. By this time, the operators of the original booths had increased. One booth, on Tim Mei Avenue, grew from a team of three to fifteen people on round-the-clock shifts. When interviewed by the *South China Morning Post*, one of the booth managers, Dinna Chan, shared that people who did not know each other initially became "like a family" through the shared experience.[46] Like the one-stop convenience store in the housing estate, these booths stocked water, food and sundries in addition to goggles, face and gas masks. The tents, with occupancy of one to two, began to be treated as small individual dwellings with familiar traces of domesticity.

The homes on the Admiralty site fell roughly into five categories. [7] The most numerous were those that were fully enclosed for maximum privacy and introverted. A variant of the previous was the open-front type whose occupants preferred a window to look out of. Then there were the trios – three identical tents tied together with weighted bags; and the tents under a bigger tent whose occupants required added privacy and further protection from the sun's direct glare. The most striking homes were the group of three wooden structures invoking the imagery of a primordial dwelling aka the "primitive hut," located right under the landscaped pedestrian bridge that links the Central Government Complex and Admiralty Centre. Draped in white fabric, each around two square meters in floor area, these were built and placed there for anyone who wished to stay in them. By late October, the three wooden dwellings were inhabited.[47]

Many of the dwellings contained addresses or identification cues. Some were simply numbered from 1 to the 100s, while others were geographically derived with addresses identifying the location they were at, such as 1A, 1B and 1C Connaught Road Central, or 2, 3A and 3B Tim Mei Avenue, or 2-1 and 2-2 Harcourt Road. Seemingly empirically, these addresses were significant in that they named the roads taken and occupied during the protests. Other addresses were inspirational, such as "1 Lennon Lane," or aspirational, such as tents labeled "Hong Kong People Democracy Road" and "True Democracy Road." From anonymous donors came numbered and identical tents that were lined along the concrete flyover barrier akin to militaristic configurations. These were easily identified as they came in deep forest green color and military camouflage green, each with the tag "Freedom Quarter" on the front. [8]



7 Left Page and Above: The variety of temporary homes in the occupied territory range from highly personalized ones to uniform rows of identical tents. Photographed between October 26 and November 13, 2014.

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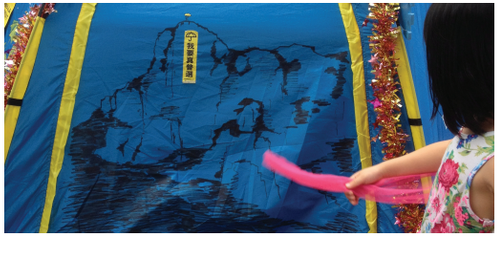












Among the most eye-catching Occupy dwellings were the satirical tents, three of which I shall discuss. The first was an orange-colored tent covered with detailed drawings depicting a brick house and a curved tile roof with two dormer windows, one each on the left and right, and the address "Hong Kong Camp" in the center. In each of the three large windows, a caricature of the leader representing the three major religions in Hong Kong – Christianity, popular Confucianism/Buddhism and Taoism – was presented in a domestic setting, replete with a sanitary plumbing pipe on the exterior of the house. On the left, a caricature of Jesus was pinching his nose and hunched over a sink reading a twisted version of a horse-betting newspaper in a toilet with tiled walls. Underneath his window outside the house, in front of him, were a Christmas tree and jack-o-lanterns of carved-pumpkins. Inside the middle window, the Han general Guang Gong (also known as Guan Yu) who symbolizes prosperity and protection was sweating in the kitchen trying to stuff a turkey, presumably for a Thanksgiving meal. On the right, a Taoist priest holding an exorcism stick was in the middle of conducting a rite in a room full of miniature objects such as the bridge for the dead. Outside his window sat a stool named "one bench," taken from a speech by the territory's former Chief Executive, Leung Chun-ying, who had said that with his government, he would take a stool, a book and a pen to listen to public opinion.[48]

The second was a blue tent with the address "No. 2014 Hong Kong People Democracy Road" that contained drawings of typical house fronts such as a mail box stuffed with Halloween paraphernalia and a hanging sign on the left that said "travel safely." A small horizontal sign above the entrance to the tent stated, "A Taoist priest lives within." Right below it, a vertical sign read, "rid-evil residence." On either side of the "main door" was written, "I want true universal suffrage" and, "no love for fake people." The third was a green tent covered with a reflective silver sheet on top, with the address, "No. 1840 Camp 777 Road." The year 1840 saw discussions begin between the Qing Chinese and British Governments on negotiating the ceding of territory to Britain. As with all Taoist households and police stations in Hong Kong, a framed drawing of Guang Gong guarded the front "door." Other than the many vertical yellow "I want true universal suffrage" signs in various sizes, on the right were a cleaning mop and the Pokemon character Pikachu that appeared to be holding a blue marker pen with a note for anyone to leave a message. Informed and acutely in touch with the unfolding of ongoing events, the owners of these tents combined the aspirational and satirical to personalize their individual tents and add to the collective visual noise of the occupation.

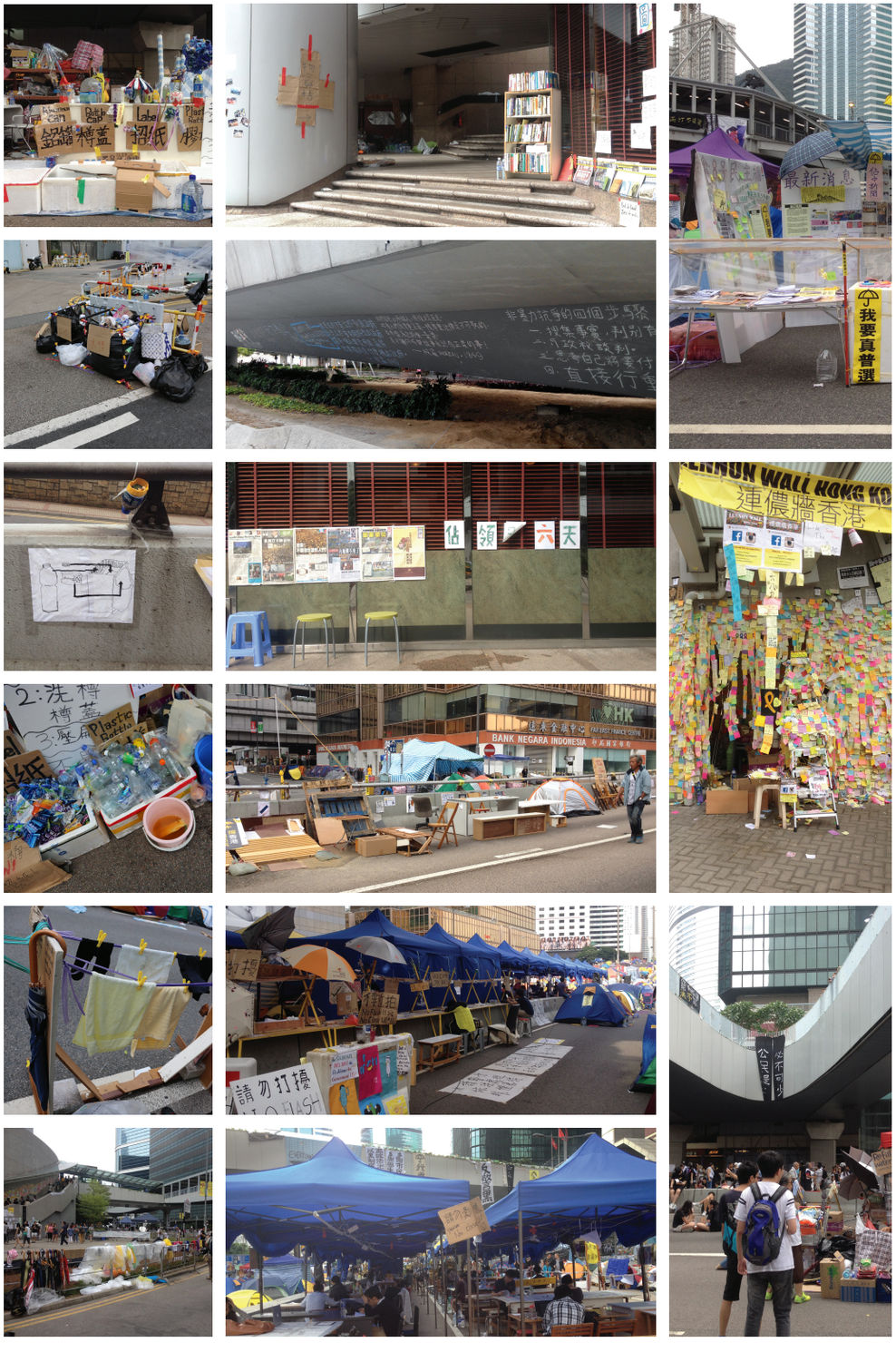




8 Organized rows of tents with names and addresses with wide corridor clearance for pedestrian movement in the occupied territory. Photographed on November 13, 2014.



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The polytheistic and polychromous character of these temporary homes is an extroverted appeal for diversity and individuality and is ultimately an expression of the cries for universal suffrage.

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

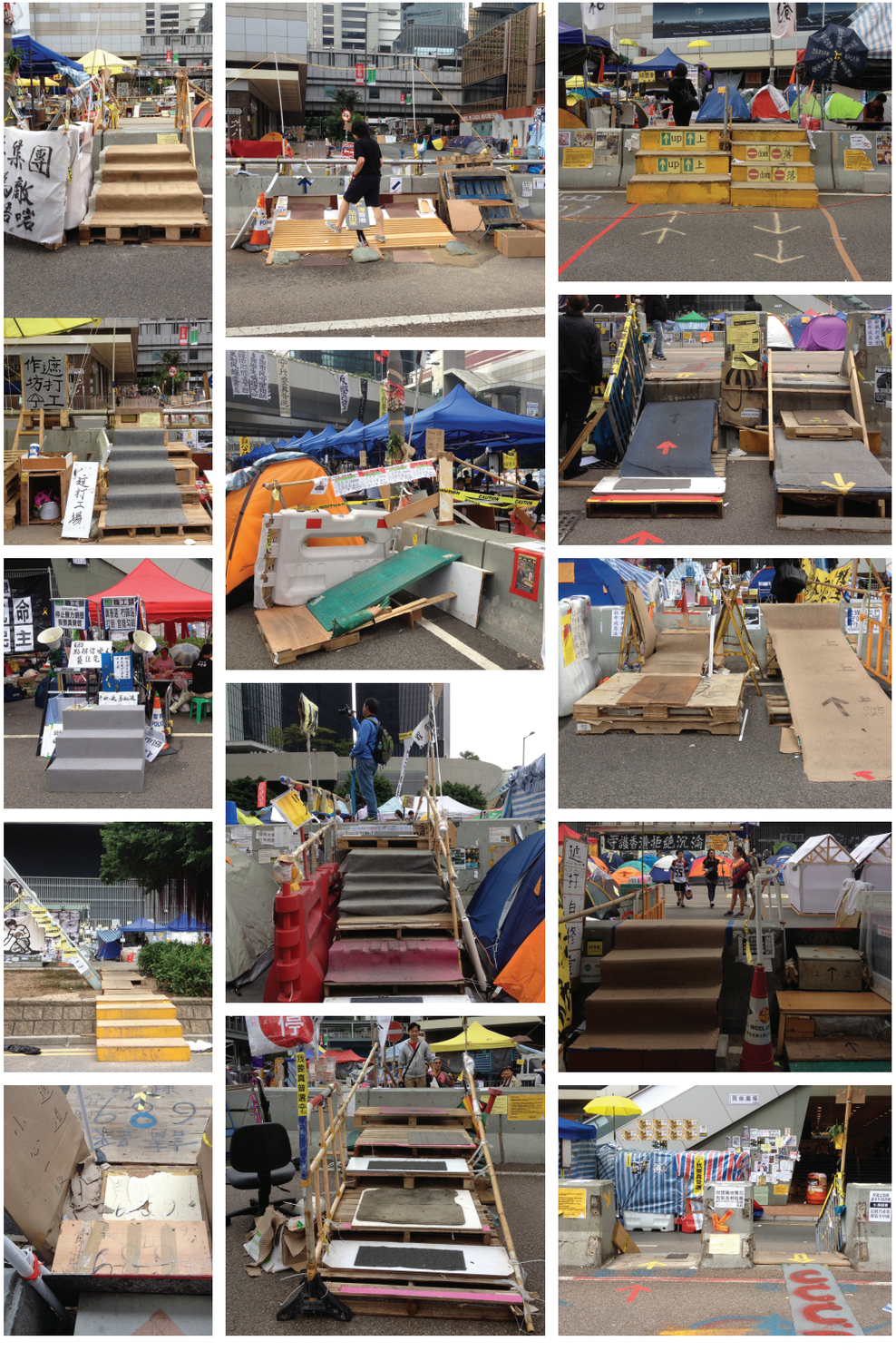
Interspersed among the houses – tent-homes – were a variety of support structures and services. [9] These expanded domestic functions contributed to the self-sustainability of the Occupy commune. Many of the support structures were already in existence during the early days of the occupation, in a more ad hoc manner. Among the many booths for supply, trash collection and first aid, was a tent watching station where people could leave tents that were not in use to be guarded by fellow occupiers. Some of the booths, like the umbrella and raincoat rails, were absorbed into the supply booths; and the library at the plaza of the Lippo Centre was moved into the study booths on Harcourt Road. A dedicated phone recharging station and recycling station, initially located in front of Admiralty Center near the MTR station exit, moved into the booths. As the days went by, their functions were expanded and they became more regulated. One of the best-stocked supply booths was named Admiralty Court. Meanwhile, new booths were constructed and new stations set up to accommodate greater domestic arrangements. Whereas the public toilets along Tim Mei Avenue underneath the Central Government Complex, and those in the buildings along Harcourt Road, were used for daily cleaning routines, small individual booths for private intimate activities such as hair washing, "body cleaning" and changing appeared. Way-finding signs to these booths were littered throughout the site.

Spaces were created within booths to accommodate communal domestic activities such as dining and reading. The largest of these was the multi-booth study corner located underneath the bridge, which incorporated the library. A newspaper wall was set up for occupiers to catch up with daily news from various sources. There were booths for upcycling old t-shirts into sitting mats with instructions for residents to make their own mats; booths for information and registration, and for the repair of electronic devices. One tent was transformed into a "movie theater." Other types of stations included a workshop for the building and repairing of wooden furniture and structures that was set up by the concrete flyover barrier. Recycling stations for different types of garbage were created out of wooden two-by-fours and metal barricades along with other creations such as a cigarette disposal bin that came with visual instructions on how to make one from a plastic bottle. All these constructions and configurations were manifestations of the combined creative energies in making-do.



9 Left Page and Above: Supports and services in the occupied territory. Photographed between October 2 and November 13, 2014.

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STAIRS AND CONNECTIONS

Initially, the occupiers climbed and jumped over road barriers and barricades to get from one side of the road to another. Soon, wooden pallets were stacked together to facilitate the crossing. By late October, a variety of types of stairs had been constructed. [10] Three types of stairs with variations were built to cross over the flyover. To negotiate the level difference between the plaza of the Central Government Complex and the road, a number of stairs and paving boards were set up. Firstly, on the stretch to the east towards Central, where the concrete barricade is lower and topped with a metal railing, low ramps were constructed from wooden planks with one-inch by two-inch planks nailed onto them to create a non-slip surface. Secondly, closer to the study corner by the footbridge where the flyover meets Harcourt Road on grade level, ramps and stairs with two side rails, one side rail or none, were constructed, mostly out of wooden planks and stacked wooden pallets. Some were lined with corrugated cardboard and thin carpet strips and pieces of different shades of gray. Third but not least, at the busiest crossings under the bridge in the section dubbed "Umbrella Square," the stairs were two-way with up-and-down arrows and in-and-out signs.

Visitors and residents abided by these visual codes. What had begun as hastily thrown together, ad hoc constructions became systematized through planning and design. A month into the occupation, the stairs became more evenly spaced apart beyond the densest concentration under the footbridge at the Government offices. Their locations corresponded with the linear distribution of the tent-homes along the flyover and roads within the occupied territory. The designs for the stairs became decorative and more elaborate. Some were combinations of stairs and ramps with railings. The main "factory" for the making of the stairs was the carpentry workshop on the flyover to the west of the footbridge in front of the Admiralty Centre, the very one producing the tables, chairs, shelters and bed frames for the dwellers. [11] Named "Umbrella Square Chater Workshop," it was well-stocked with recycled wood supplies, equipment, tools, accessories, and even surfacing materials such as rubber, carpet tiles and vinyl sheets.[49] Together with the tent-homes and ancillary services, these constructions converted the infrastructure of the flyover and road into a pedestrianized public space that accommodated linear configurations of communal living.

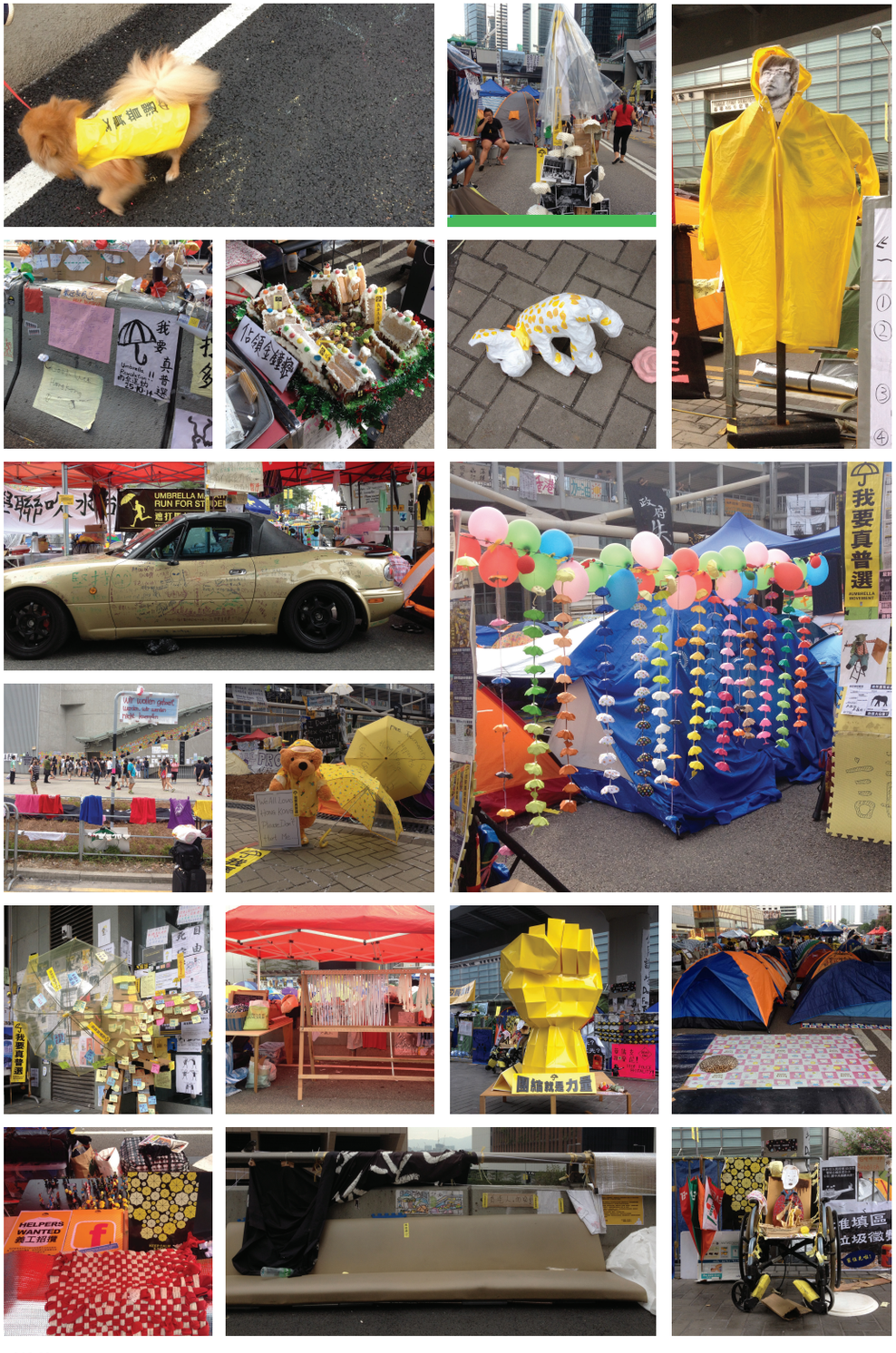
10 Stairs and connections in the occupied territory – 1st type (below), 2nd type (far left two rows), 3rd type (left). Photographed between October 2 and November 13, 2014.



11 Below: "Umbrella Square Chater Workshop" – the woodwork "factory" on Harcourt Flyover. Photographed on November 13, 2014.



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DESCRIPTIONS OF DOMESTICITIES

The myriad artifacts and art pieces accompanying the tents, booths and other built structures completed the domestication of the flyover and road. [12] Initially, umbrellas, raincoats, t-shirts and towels were hung over the railings on the road. Ad hoc paper folding points sprung up along the flyover, where women and mostly female students sat by the concrete barrier folding paper umbrellas. These formed a visible component of the domestic environment in the subsequent settlement. Given the indefinite duration of occupation, occupiers-residents took to decorating their temporary homes in between mealtimes, study and sleeping. The patient and meticulous ones made elaborate and colorful privacy screens by stringing together multiple folded paper umbrellas. Other decorative paraphernalia such as brightly colored balloons, ribbons, hand woven mats recycled from used t-shirts and post-it notes added to the festive yet domestic atmosphere. The fronts of the tents were laid with nonslip rubber mats and soft foam tiles used as doormats. Dining tables and an assortment of chairs were set up in café settings under large umbrellas propped up with additional metal and wooden struts. Colorful plastic sheets and mats with cushions were placed in between tents for group gatherings. On the flyover, some people brought old sofas and benches and leaned them against the parapet. Along with the regularization of the tent-homes, designated areas for laundry and wooden racks for clothes drying were built at the on-site wood shop.

In contrast to the protest art created in the initial days of the protests, subsequent art pieces were more personal and homely, and less identifiable as works of art. Most were made from found objects: bottled water vases with paper umbrellas and wool pom-pom flowers, teddy bears dressed in yellow outfits and carrying mini yellow umbrellas, wooden stands hung with postcard-size photos of the events, and paper umbrellas, papier-mâché animals, including a replica of the white wire fox terrier Snowy from the comic series Tintin. Some simply brought their pets with them for short stays, especially as the stretch of highway was perfect for walking their dogs. Lego toy figurines simulating the fateful night of confrontation between the protestors and the police were set up at a few tables. Besides the food donated by protestors and anonymous citizens, an elaborate cake described a village scene where teddy bears carrying yellow umbrellas faced off with teddy bears in blue police uniforms at a wall of barricades in the middle of the street lined with houses with white icing-topped roofs. Wrapped on the sides with mistletoe, the Christmas-style cake with the Occupy theme summarized the character of the occupation, that is, a fervent call for universal human rights spurred by the fight to protect one's home.[50] Underneath the public demonstrations, the crisis of affordable housing in the territory pervades.

12 Left Page: Artifacts of domesticity in the occupied territory. Photographed between October 2 and November 13, 2014.

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What we are witnessing in post-2014 Hong Kong is the fragile status of governance that is analogous to the predicament of built form in the territory. Within the rubric of development, the architecture of economics-driven building regulations has been and is produced in the absence of dialogue, process, and engagement with the citizenry whose daily lives are entangled with it. [13] The 79 days of occupation offered a tiny glimpse into another future scenario of people-powered urbanism based on consultative governance and public-private cooperation. This provisional utopia, this *other* space houses many places and harbors *other* aspirational spaces, especially dreams of good homes, which would otherwise not be revealed had the people not occupied the city's central flyover and roads.

If utopia is no place or is multiple places at once yet remains elusive, how does one begin to describe it? Back in the 1960s, this question was indirectly answered by the practitioners of psychogeography who attempted to map the city as an assemblage of individuals, situations and events. The Situationist map offers itself up as evidence of the enactment of resistance against the codes within the city, be it the city or tourist map with its guided itinerary or the traffic grid or the legalities of access. Whereas the Situationist map offers a viable method and precedence, its historical consequences reveal what is evident: first, it is not one map but many maps that present how a place comes to be and what it could become; second, the map itself is not the form of resistance, but its practice. The texts and illustrations in this book tend to a similar spirit. The processes of mapping and drawing the concealed within the ordinary are its basis. Each chapter embodies an attempt to foreground the stakes in the making of post-industrial Hong Kong and to understand the underlying processes and latent meanings in the codes and representations. The triangulation of maps, drawings and written texts endeavors to raise questions on the history of development, dwelling and the environment, and to make a plea for critical reflection.

Resistance is a tired word of late. In Hong Kong, it is translated as "protests," "occupy," "umbrellas," each now laden with undesirable connotations. The now-familiar forms of resistance – an organized body of individuals in opposition to market-driven development and to an imminent ruling power – are manifested in street protests, marches and the occupation of traffic infrastructure. *Resistant City* takes the noun as a given and focuses on the adjective as its premise. It studies the tactics and vestiges of the unyielding and the recalcitrant within the status quo. It describes the crises, the conditions, the agents and identities. What can we learn about the places and about ourselves after retelling buried histories of ordinary places and mapping seemingly prosaic phenomena and behavior? I contend that the mapping and re-mapping of the same places reveals at least

two things. The story of the exclusionary city has not fully unfolded. Its histories, told primarily from the post-colonial frame, are only partially excavated. Exclusion re-emerges in the present, materially and ideologically. The sites of antagonism are typically benign.[51] More often than not, they present themselves as sites of social amelioration: the children's playground, the commemorative park, the housing estate, the museum and cultural district, the leisure waterfront and the shopping mall.



13 Building billboard advertisement for The Visionary, a private residential development developed by the Nan Fung Group. Photographed on October 2, 2014.

The process of mapping raises questions that open our eyes to the failed and flawed logic of modernity that perpetuates. The Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront after closing hours is a residence for the homeless who find the massive indentations under the museums and cultural centers conducive for setting up home, albeit temporarily for a few hours. [**pp307-308**] In his search for a dwelling space in the city that was not designed with him in mind and in which he has no place, the homeless person shares the same tactics as the protestor. [**pp309-310**] Both seek out public spaces to occupy. One gains protection in numbers, the other gains strength in great numbers, through the masses. Viewed from above, the architecture of the city harbors and conceals these spaces. [**pp311-312**] Apropos, the collecting and mapping of the temporary dwelling places of the homeless and the occupiers raises important questions on how the contours of modern Hong Kong are shaped, and reinforces the need to acknowledge the city as an assemblage of contested spaces, histories and aspirations. At its core, this book endeavors to recapitulate the histories and architectures of places and to excavate the historical intersections of architecture and the city. To this end, the maps, drawings, films, women, office towers and composite buildings, attest to heterogeneity as the congenital condition of Hong Kong's modernity. *Resistant City* describes Hong Kong. It describes the city in Asia. Description is the method. In the practice of describing the city as contested space and place, it reappears.

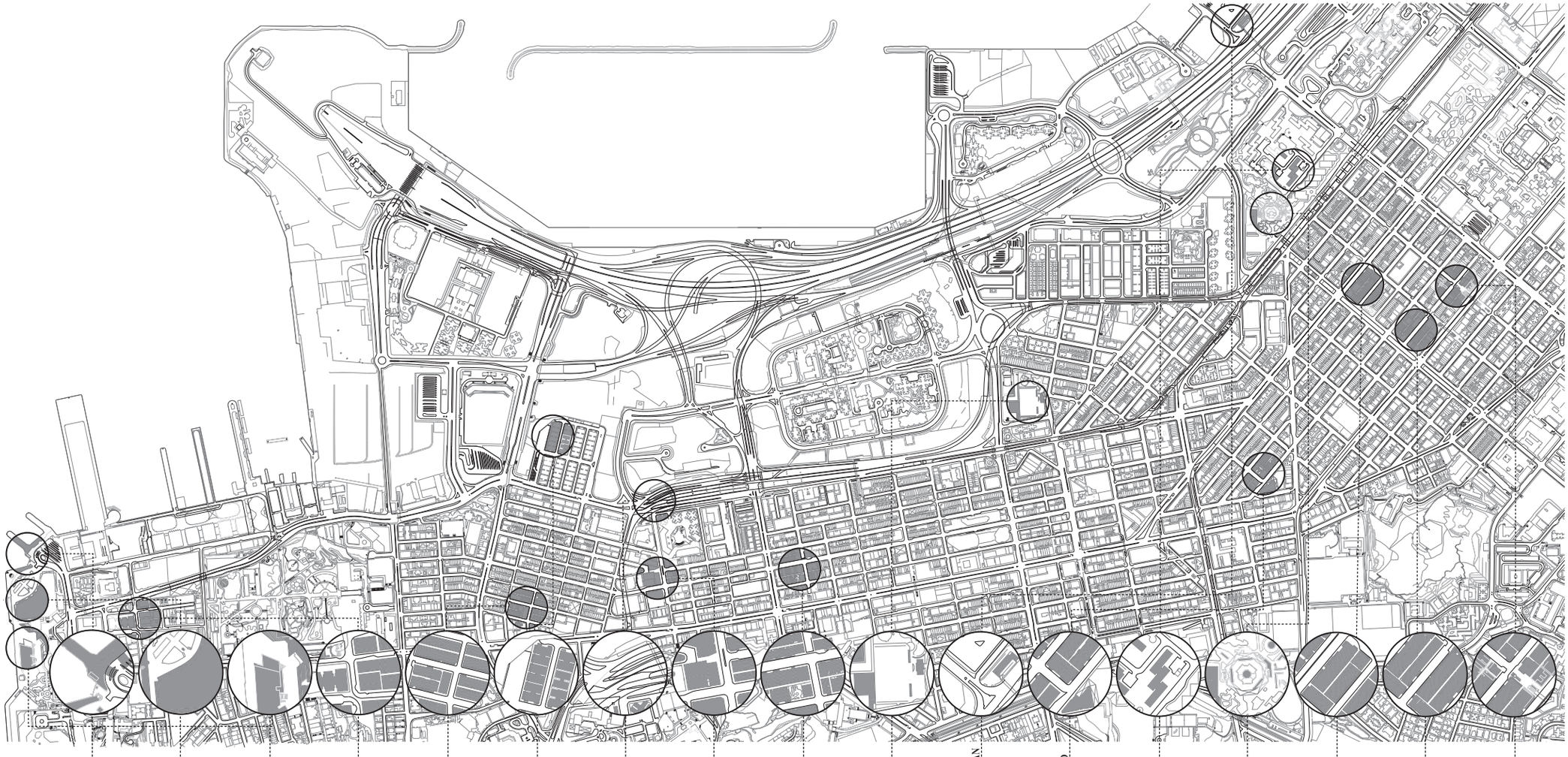
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MAPPING HOMELESS OCCUPATION

2200-0600 HRS

Every day, after ten o'clock in the evening, homeless individuals seek refuge among the urban spaces in Yau Tsim Mong District on the western part of the Kowloon Peninsula. They will disappear by six the next morning when the residents and businesses in the core urban area of Kowloon awaken. This fieldwork research was conducted three times – in 2013, 2016 and 2019.



STAR FERRY PIER Watefront

CULTURAL CENTER Colonnade

MUSEUM OF ART Covered Walkway

BEIJING RD. 24 hrs McDonald's

PARKES ST. Public Toilets

MANWAHSUN CHUEN Subdivided Apartment

GASCOIGNE RD. Under Flyover

60 PUBLIC SQUARE ST. Temporary Shelter in Community Center

SHANGHAI ST. News Stand After Business

ANCHOR ST. Football Court

MARINE WHOLESALE MARKET Back of Lorry

COMMERCIAL TOWER Escape Staircase

HOME OF LOVE Indoor Refugee Center

AP LIU ST. Staircase In Tenement House

TAI NAM ST. Rooftop Housing

AP LIU ST. Staircase in Tenement House

GUILIN ST. Metro Exit

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1 **TEMPORARY SHELTER**
STAR FERRY CAR PARK

2 **SHOWER ROOMS**
HUTCHISON HOUSE FOOTBRIDGE

3 **CAMPING SITE**
PLA HQ (HARCOURT RD.)

4 **BARRIER CONFRONTATION**
LUNG WO ROAD TUNNEL

5 **FORUM AND LEARNING CENTER**
CENTRAL GOV. FOOTBRIDGE

6 **LENNON WALL**
CENTRAL GOV. COMPLEX WALKWAY

7 **FIRST AID AND SUPPLY CENTER**
ADMIRALITY CENTER

8 **PRESS CAMP**
CITIC TOWER FOOTBRIDGE

MONG KOK CAMP
28TH SEPTEMBER

1ST OF JULY MARCHES

STUDENT CLASS BOYCOTT
22th Septembr 2014

HONG KONG FEDERATION OF STUDENTS AND SCHOLARISM PROTEST
26th Septembr 2014

27TH SEPTEMBER MARCH

CENTRAL AND ADMIRALTY CAMP
28TH SEPTEMBR

PROTEST PROCESS

CAUSEWAY BAY CAMP
28TH SEPTEMBR

MAPPING OCCUPY : ISLANDS

Protests Affected Sites
July 1st, 2014 - Occupy Central

- private space
- 2nd stage sit-in
- 3rd stage domestication
- 1st stage demonstrations (500m walking distance radius)

+309.00

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OFFICE TOWER
GOV
2002 / 2004 / 2004
Hong Kong Architectural Services Department
47
MAY HOUSE CAR PARK
100 000 m²

1 警政大樓 POLICE HEADQUARTERS

2 OFFICE TOWERS
4F PODIUM: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
STRATIFIED OWNERSHIP
1978 / 1980 / 1980
Wong & Ouyang (HK) Limited
T1 - 28/ T2 - 32
--
89 000 m²
45 hkd

2 海富中心 ADMIRALTY CENTER

2 OFFICE TOWERS
2F PODIUM: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
1984 / 1988 / 1987
Paul Rudolph, Wong & Ouyang
T1 - 44 / T2 - 48
FINANCIAL SQUARE
110 000 m²
50 hkd

3 力寶中心 LIPPO CENTER

OFFICE TOWER
2F PODIUM: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
STRATIFIED OWNERSHIP
--/ 1983 / 1982
Wong & Ouyang (HK) Limited
48
48 000 m²
60hkd

4 遠東金融中心 FAR EAST FINANCE CENTER

OFFICE TOWER
3F PODIUM: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
STRATIFIED OWNERSHIP
-- / 1982 / 1982
Andrew Lee King Fun & Associates
28
--
22 000 m²

5 東昌大廈 FAIRMONT HOUSE

OFFICE TOWER
WITH BANKING FACILITIES
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
BANK OF CHINA
1985 / 1989 / 1990
I.M Pei and Partners
72
MURRAY HOUSE
100 000 m²
100hkd

6 中銀大廈 BANK OF CHINA TOWER

OFFICE TOWER
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
Cheung Kong Holdings
1996 / 1999 / 1999
César Pelli
63
HILTON HOTEL
117 000 m²
155 hkd

7 長江集團中心 CHEUNG KONG CENTRE

OFFICE TOWER
WITH BANKING FACILITIES
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
1983 / 1985 / 1985
Foster and Partners
44
HSBC BUILDING FROM 1935
91 000 m²

8 香港滙豐總行大廈 HSBC TOWER

OFFICE TOWER
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
1963
Aedas
29
PRINCE'S BUILDING
1ST GENERATION
120 hkd

9 太子大廈 PRINCE'S BUILDING

HOTEL
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
1963
Leigh & Orange
26
QUEEN'S BLDG

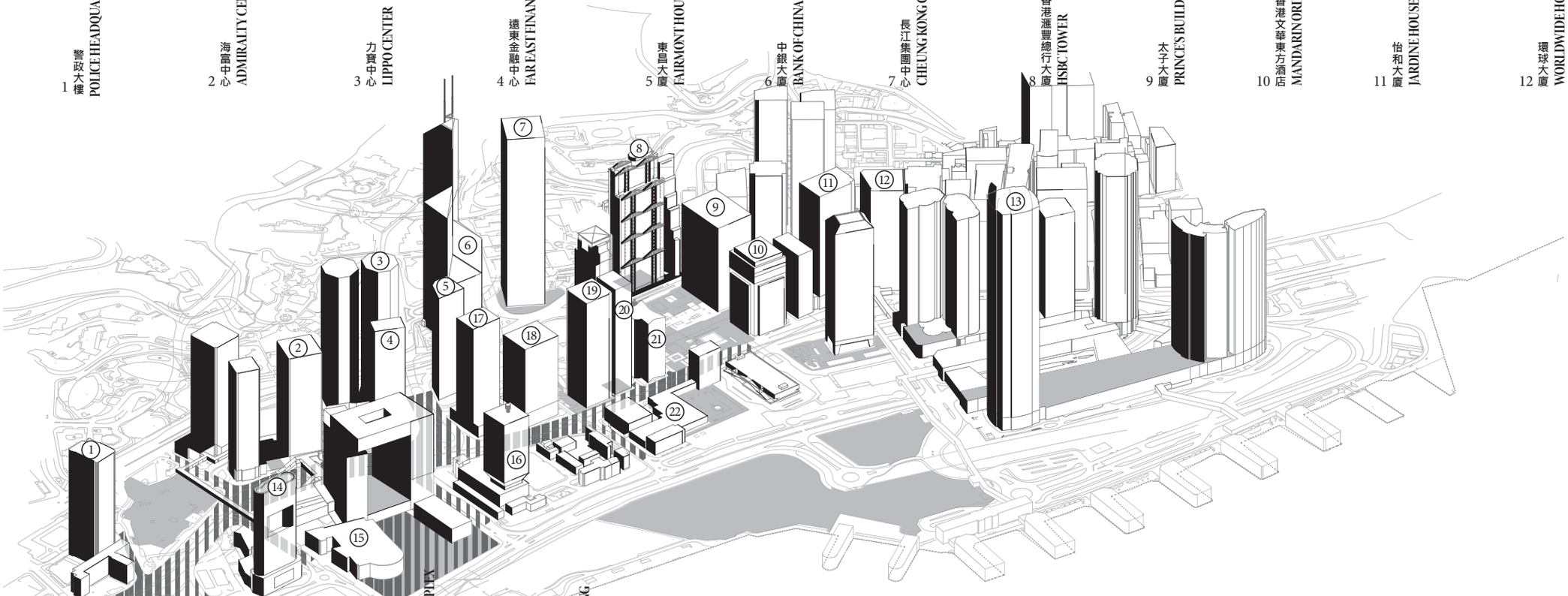
10 香港文華東方酒店 MANDARIN ORIENTAL

OFFICE TOWER
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
1971 / 1974 / 1973
P & T Group
52
DOCK
75 000 m²
150 hkd

11 怡和大廈 JARDINE HOUSE

OFFICE TOWER
3F PODIUM: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
STRATIFIED OWNERSHIP
1976 / 1980 / 1981
Wong and Tung Interior Designers
4+27
POST OFFICE
65 000m²
65 hkd

12 環球大廈 WORLDWIDE HOUSE



MAPPING OCCUPY : BUILDINGS

space occupied by occupy central movement
public spaces & privately owned public spaces
massing

13 國際金融中心 IFC TOWER

OFFICE TOWERS
5F PODIUM : COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
STRATIFIED OWNERSHIP
1997/ 2003 / 2003
César Pelli & Association Architects
T1: 88 T2: 39
RECLAIMED LAND
185 000 m²
170 hkd

14 中信大廈 CITIC TOWER

OFFICE TOWER
5F PODIUM : COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
1992-6 / 1997 / 1997
P & T Group
33
DOCK / TAMAR REDEVELOPMENT
55 500 m²
65 hkd

15 政府總部 CENTRAL GOVERNMENT COMPLEX

BUILDING COMPLEX:
CGC OFFICE BLOCK, LEGCO BLOCK
GOV
2008 / 2010 / 2011
Rocco Design Architects
26
DOCK/ TAMAR REDEVELOPMENT
131 500 m²

16 中國人民解放軍駐香港部隊大廈 CHINESE PLA FORCES BUILDING

PLA HEADQUARTERS
GOV
1976 / 1979 / 1979
PWD
28
LOW RISE BLOCKS, NAVAL OPERATIONS BASE
45 500 m²

17 美國銀行中心 BANK OF AMERICA TOWER

OFFICE TOWER
3F PODIUM : COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
STRATIFIED OWNERSHIP
1973 / 1975/ 1975
Ho & Partners Architects Limited
38
MURRAY HOUSE
46 500 m²
60hkd

18 和記大廈 HUTCHISON HOUSE

OFFICE TOWER
2F PODIUM: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
1972 / 1975 / 1974
Wong & Ouyang (HK) Limited
22
66MLN $ SITE
35 000 m²
75 hkd

19 友邦金融中心 AIA CENTER

OFFICE TOWER
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
2002 / 2005 / 2006
Skidmore, Owings and Merrill
38
FURAMA HOTEL
40 000 m²
140 hkd

20 中國建設銀行大廈 CCB TOWER

OFFICE TOWER
WITH BANKING SERVICES
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
2010 / 2012 / 2012
Aedas
27
RITZ CARLTON
21 500 m²
145 hkd

21 香港會所大廈 HONG KONG CLUB

OFFICE TOWER
SINGLE OWNERSHIP
2002 / 2005 / 2006
Skidmore, Owings and Merrill
38
FURAMA HOTEL
40 000 m²
85 hkd

22 香港大會堂 CITY HALL

BUILDING COMPLEX : EXHIBITON HALLS, CONCERT HALLS, OFFICES, CAFES, PARKING, SHRINE
GOV
1959 / 1962 / 1962
Ron Phillips and Alan Fitch
12
Reclaimed Seafront

TYPE OF BUILDING:
OWNERSHIP:
CONSTRUCTION STARTED / COMPLETION DATE / DATE OF OCCUPATION:
ARCHITECT:
NO. OF FLOORS:
PREVIOUSLY ON A SITE:
GFA:
RENT PRICE PER SQF:

+311.00

+312.00



















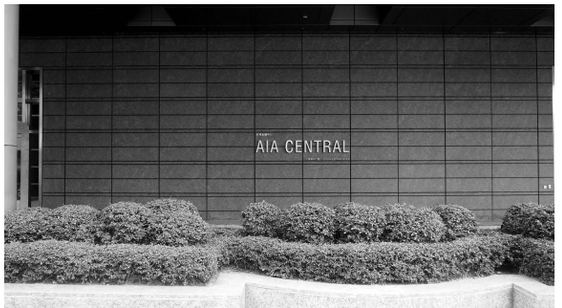












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AFTERWORD
Utopia to Realization

William S.W. Lim

With the dramatic collapse of the Soviet challenge, urbanization development strategy everywhere largely depends on the US post-World War Two model, with drastic restructuring and destruction by ruthless displacement in the capitalist repossession of city centers. This strategy has been applied irrespective of political ideologies and different states of economic development. Its impact is particularly destructive in those non-Western cities undergoing rapid urbanization and structural changes.

The unprecedented accelerated development of digital technologies has severely undermined the manufacturing base of large cities in the advanced capitalist countries. Furthermore, globalization has greatly benefited capitalism through the offshore relocation of production. The unrestricted application of neoliberal capitalism over the last few decades has resulted in an ever-widening income gap within countries, regardless of their stages of economic development. There is presently wide recognition of the decline of the dominance of neoliberal Western capitalism and the rise of non-Western private and state capitalism. There is general concurrence with Saskia Sassen's analysis that the new economy must be place-based and made firm by rootedness in each city's own cultural history and with Leon van Schaik's observation of the destabilization of borders between centers and provinces.[1] The world has indeed become more polycentric.[2]

Accordingly, the 21st century has seen an urgent search for an appropriate new capitalist urban development model. It is in this context that the recent work by Allen Scott on "cognitive-cultural economy" needs to be critically debated. Scott stresses that cognitive-cultural production, as a major new phase of capitalist development beyond industrialization and Fordism, thrives on the economies of agglomeration, specialization and creativity.[3] However, Scott faces several major criticisms. First, he devotes little attention to global sustainability and related pollution and environmental issues, as well as to the obsession for economic growth even in the rich countries. Second, the collective impact of activists and civil society groups has generated great pressure for change towards spatial justice, income equality and a more caring, inclusive social policy.

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Scott fails to bring the concerns of the poor to the center stage, particularly where the population of slums and squatters form a substantial portion of the urban population.[4] Third concerns the impact of large numbers of the educated younger generation who have opted for less stressful lifestyles and their own self-actualization. Some have contested their right to the city and support environmental sustainability, while others have committed to challenging art and creative activities. Fourth, critics have expressed some serious reservations. As Sharon Meagher has asked, *"The question, of course, is 'liveability' for whom?"*[5]

In the prologue, Eunice Seng analyses the scope and constraints of Utopia and strongly argues for the need to consider the possibilities in Hong Kong, *"even if only provisionally and experimentally."*[6] The book consists of original archival and field studies, analyses and an intriguing collection of essays, which are described as "*utopian in spirit and heterotopian in practice."*[7] Many of the essay authors are clearly inspired by David Harvey's book entitled *Rebel Cities* and its radical concept of the "Right of the City."[8] However, the writings of Edward Soja on spatial justice provide a broader relevance and challenge to the biased allocation of urban space that privileges the rich and powerful.[9]

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Cover illustration: Underground plan of Victoria Harbor, ©2016

PROLOGUE

p1-2 Photo by Au Chun Hung, 2019.
p3 Above: Pavement with missing bricks on Lung Wo Road, Admiralty, Central District, 13 June, 2019. Center: Brick barricade on Lung Wo Road, Admiralty, Central District,12 June, 2019. Adapted from *South China Morning Post*, "Gallery of Anti-Extradition Law Protest," 16 June, 2019. Accessed 28 June, 2019. https://multimedia.scmp.com/infographics/news/hong-kong/article/3014305/extradition-bill-protest-embed/index.html. Below: Brick rubble on Lung Wo Road, Admiralty, Central District, 13 June, 2019.

1 MAPS: TERRITORIES OF CONTESTATION

With research and drawing support by Au Chun Hung, Natalie Khoo, Wu Yi En and Xu Junjie.
p23 Inside cover page of "In Far Eastern Waters". Hong Kong Land Investment Agency Co., Ltd. *In Far Eastern Waters.* Hong Kong: Company, 1933.

2 NOIRS: THE CITY, THE WOMAN, AND OTHER SPACES

p59 Fairfield Methodist Church, previously the Metropole Theatre, Singapore, 2018.
[8] Adapted from *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1955): 37.

3 TOWERS: TECHNOLOGIES, JARDINE HOUSE AND METROPOLITAN VISIONS

p79 Jardine House with the Central Post Office and footbridge to Central Ferry Pier in the front, Central District. Photo by author, 2016.
[1] Drawings © P&T Group.
[2] From "Low-rise zone of Connaught Centre being completed," *Asian Architect & Builder* (July 1972): 33. Courtesy of The University of Hong Kong Libraries 香港大學圖書館.
[3] From *Asian Building & Construction* (June 1972): 28-29. Courtesy of The University of Hong Kong Libraries 香港大學圖書館
[4] From *Asian Building & Construction* (March 1973): HK VIII. Courtesy of The University of Hong Kong Libraries 香港大學圖書館
[5] Redrawn from Nigel Cameron, "Central District Reshaped," *The Hongkong Land Co. Ltd.*, 1979.
[8] Redrawn from "Mile long pedestrian bridges for Central District," *Asian Building & Construction* (June 1973): 10-11.

4 COMPOSITES: THE CITY IN A BUILDING

p95 Looking down at an air well at Kiu Kwan mansion, North Point, Eastern District. Photo by author, 2016.
[1] From E.Y. Wu, C.N. Chow and Associates, *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1964): 108.

5 NARRATIVES: COMPOSITE BUILDINGS STORIES

With research and drawing support by Sam Cheng, Cherry Cheung, Juliana Kei, Kenrick Kwok and Wu Yi En

EXCURSUS: MAPPING TOILET ARCHITECTURE

With research and drawing support by Juliana Ke and Xu Junjie

EPILOGUE: RESISTANT DOMESTICITIES

With research and drawing support by Sam Cheng and Piotr Winiewicz
p285 Three houses under pedestrian bridge at Central Government Complex, Admiralty, Central District, 2014.
p313-314 Photo by Au Chun Hung, 2019.

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NOTES

PROLOGUE

1 "NGOs are contemporary Trojan horses," *Sol Defter*, August 4, 2010. http://www.soldefter.com/2010/08/04/interview-with-arundhatiroy-ngos-are-contemporary-trojan-horses%E2% 80% 9D-kaya-genc/.

2 Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), 203.

3 Elaine Yu, "The Anarchists of Occupy Central," *The New Yorker*, December 10, 2014. https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/original-anarchists-occupy-central.

4 "Occupy Hong Kong activists camp out at HSBC headquarters," *The Straits Times*, September 12, 2012.

5 It must be noted that the Hong Kong Institute of Architects has dedicated space in its journal for discussions on the provision of commons in Hong Kong. See especially, Thomas Chung, Thomas Tsang and Weijen Wang eds., "Occupy Commons," HKIA Journal, Issue 73 (2017): entire issue.

6 Raymond Williams, *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 2007; c1989), 62.

7 Christina Zhao, "Four Years after Umbrella Movement, Joshua Wong's Fight for Democracy Continues," *Newsweek*, Sep. 28, 2018, https://www.newsweek.com/four-years-after-umbrella-revolution-joshua-wongs-fight-democracy-continues-1137313.

8 Just months before the onset of Occupy, Michael Siu's study of how newly arrived persons (NAPs) from the Chinese mainland and local residents practice their everyday life in public spaces in Shamshuipo, Kowloon, and Tin Sui Wai in the New Territories, was indicative of an emerging public discourse on place-making in Hong Kong. Kin Wai Michael Siu, "Regulation and Reception of Public Space in Hong Kong," in *Transcultural Cities: Border-Crossing and Placemaking*, ed. Jeffrey Hou (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), 285-98.

9 The first ready-mix concrete batching plant was set up in Hong Kong in the early 1960s, during which the facilities were still relatively primitive.

10 See for example, Kisho Kurokawa, *Metabolism in Architecture* (London: Studio Vista, 1977).

11 Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, "The grid and the pathway. An introduction to the work of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis", *Architecture in Greece* (Athens: 1981), 15.Kenneth Frampton, "Critical Regionalism: modern architecture and cultural identity." In *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 314-27 (London; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007). First published in Hal Foster ed. *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 17-34.

12 In his writings and interviews, Frampton continues to refer to Clement Greenberg's 1939 essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" to reiterate his stance against art and architecture that is reduced to "pure entertainment." See, Thomas McQuillan, "On the Grounds of Modern Architecture: An Interview with Kenneth Frampton," *Architectural Histories*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2016): 2. Stan Allen, Kenneth Frampton and Hal Foster, "A Conversation with Kenneth Frampton," *Oct*. vol. 106 (Autumn 2003): 47.

13 Xenakis's City was first published in Françoise Choay. *L'Urbanisme, utopies et réalités* (Paris: Seuil, 1965).

14 Robert Silverberg. *The World Inside* (New York: Doubleday, 1971).

15 Louis Marin. *Utopics: Spatial Play*, trans. Robert Vollrath (NJ: Humanities Press; London: Macmillan, 1984), 198.

16 Fredric Jameson. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verson, 2005), 412-413.

17 See, Zhou Rong, "Leaving Utopian China," *AD - New Urban China*, Vol. 78, Issue 5 (Sep-Oct, 2008): 36-39. John Rosenberg, "Urban Utopia: China's Swift March from Communal Housing to Market Mansions," Harvard Magazine, Sep.-Oct.2010, accessed August 1, 2013, http://harvardmagazine.com/2010/09/urban-utopias. Gwen Webber, "Credible Utopias: New York architect aims high at enlightened development in China," The Architect's Newspaper, Aug. 8, 2011, accessed Aug. 1, 2013. http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=5554#.VNXG0vmUfdA. Alex Davies, "Communist Utopia: China is building a huge eco-city where no one will need to drive," *Financial Post*, November 5, 2012, accessed Aug. 1, 2013. http://business.financialpost.com/2012/11/03/china-is-building-a-huge-eco-city-where-no-one-will-need-to-drive/.

18 David Wang, "Utopia, Dystopia, Heterotopias: From Lu Xun to Liu Cixin," (presented at a lecture at Peking University, May 17, 2011), trans. Emma Xu, World Chinese Language Science Fiction Workshop, Jan. 2, 2012, accessed Aug. 1, 2013, http://www.chinesescifi.org/475.html.

19 As Wang pointed out, historical materials suggest possibilities of exchange between different eras and political ideals with the utopian potential seemingly existing in narration or political writings. Not surprisingly, Cha's novels were banned in the mainland till 1984, and till 1989 in Taiwan.

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20 These are: Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang, Lok Ma Chau/Futian Kou'an, Lo Wu/Luohu, Sha Ta Kok/Shatoujiao, Man Kam To/Wenjindu and Shenzhen Wan which is at the end of a long bridge across Shenzhen Bay. "Landuse Planning for the Closed Area: Development Potential & Constraints, ¨Planning Department, accessed August 1, 2013, http://www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/misc/FCA/pdf_pps/FCA_brief.pdf.

21 "Land Use Planning for the Closed Area: Development Potential & Constraints," Planning Department, accessed August 1, 2013, http://www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/misc/FCA/pdf_pps/FCA_brief.pdf.

22 Barrie Shelton, Justyna Karakiewicz and Thomas Kvan. *The making of Hong Kong: from vertical to volumetric* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 5.

23 Leftist riots started with labor disputes that began in March 1967 in shipping, taxi, textile, and cement companies and the Hong Kong Artificial Flower Works. The outbreak of violence started in an artificial flower factory in San Po Kong on May 6 and led to large-scale demonstrations and rioting in the streets, which saw 51 deaths.

24 The two composite buildings in North Point shall be discussed more in depth in Chapters 4 and 5.

25 Cha co-founded *Ming Pao Daily News* in 1959. The paper had adopted an anti-Communist position by the late 1960s, in the wake of widespread famine due to Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward economic and agricultural program.

26 Louis Cha and Stephen Wang, *On Hong Kong's Future: A Collection of Ming Pao's Editorials* (Hong Kong: Ming Pao Daily News, 1984), 76.

27 Ibid., 300.

28 Ibid., 67.

29 Within the classrooms of the academy, Swiss-French Le Corbusier has been the effigy of blame, ever since his dogmatic urban plans have been introduced to territories and governments beyond Europe. This is simplistic and simply too convenient. Whereas he had envisioned greater state control – Singapore would be a better example – the urbanism of Hong Kong, especially on the Island, is far from centrally planned and a singular vision. Even the new towns are hybrids of public and private interests. More pertinently, this mismatch reveals the problematic and isolated platforms on which the academy, the profession and the city are working.

30 In his discussion of the problem of visually representing the crowd when the crowd itself is already a representation, Andrew V. Uroskie examines photography's role in perpetuating the rhetoric of representation: "For the tens of thousands, the desire to be 'seen, heard, and counted' was much more than an articulation of disagreement with state policy; it was a primary instance of subjectification – a rare moment of collective disidentification from the world-as-presented through the often totalizing lens of the mass media." The crowd, he concluded, is "figure and metaphor" that will "continue to circulate as a persistent, if elusive, site of representational breakdown, and aesthetic, social and political contestation." Andrew V. Uroskie, "Far Above the Madding Crowd: The Spatial Rhetoric of Mass Representation," in Crowds, ed. Schnapp, Jeffrey T., and Matthew. Tiews (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), 307-334.

31 Milan Kundera, *Slowness*, trans. Linda Asher (London; Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996), 34.

32 In his in-depth discussion of the dynamics of crowds, Elias Canetti described four attributes of crowds: 1. The crowd always wants to grow. 2. Within the crowd there is equality. 3. The crowd loves density. 4. The crowd needs a direction. How a crowd is to be classified however, will depend on which of these predominates it. Underlying Canetti's 1960 analysis is the paradoxical psychology of crowds in their obedience of power and potential capability to seize even that power of the state. From Canetti, the flyover at Admiralty in Hong Kong was occupied then by "the slow crowd." Characterized by the remoteness of its goal and composed of "people who move with great persistence towards an immovable goal, and who keep together in all circumstances." Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 29-30, 39-41.

33 Leo Ou-fan Lee. *City Between Worlds: My Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 3.

34 Eight of these essays are contributions by architectural graduates from the University of Hong Kong.

35 See, Stephanie H. Donald. "The Idea of Hong Kong: Structures of attention in the City of Life." In Lindner, Christoph. *Urban Space and Cityscapes: Perspectives from Modern and Contemporary Culture*, *Questioning Cities Series*, ed. Christoph Lindner (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 63-73.

1 MAPS: Territories of Contestation

1 Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York; London: The Guilford Press, 1992), 78-79.

2 NOIRS: The City, the Women and Other Spaces

1 The genre's influence by Hollywood is highlighted by Hong Kong film scholars like Lisa Oldham Stokes and

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Poshek Fu. See for example, anthologies on Hong Kong cinema history and cultural identity: Stokes, Lisa Odham., Jean. Lukitsh, Michael. Hoover, and Stokes, Tyler, *Historical Dictionary of Hong Kong Cinema*, Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts; No. 2 (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2007). Poshek Fu and David Desser, *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

2 Born in Guangzhou in 1935, Nam was a Cantonese opera actor before she began acting in movies, and later in television dramas, in the 1970s. She was in the cast of the 1994 television version of *I Have a Date with Spring*.

3 Law Kar, "Black and Red: Post-War Hong Kong Noir and its Interrelation with Progressive Cinema, 1947-57," in *Hong Kong Noir*, eds. Esther C.M. Yau and Tony Williams (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2017), 45–48.

4 Poshek Fu, "The 1960s: Modernity, Youth Culture and Hong Kong Cantonese Cinema," in *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, eds. Poshek Fu and David Desser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 75–76.

5 Esther M.K. Cheung, "The City that Haunts: The Uncanny in Fruit Chan's *Made in Hong Kong*." in *Between Home and World: A Reader in Hong Kong Cinema*, eds. Esther M. K. Cheung and Chu Yiu-Wai (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2004), 364.

6 Gina Marchetti, "Running on Karma: Hong Kong Noir and the Political Unconscious." in *Hong Kong Noir*, eds. Esther C.M. Yau and Tony Williams (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2017), 107–111.

7 Lingzhen Wang, "Chinese Women's Cinema." in *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*, ed. Zhang Yingjin (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 318–45.

8 Ching Yau, *Filming Margins: Tang Shu Shuen – A Forgotten Hong Kong Woman Director* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 29–66.

9 David Desser and Poshek Fu, *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 104. According to the authors, most of these directors like Tang, were educated in Euro-American academies and thus influenced by their culture and film making techniques.

10 Paul Fonoroff, "Flashback: China Behind – Cecile Tang's Orwellian tale outlasts its suppressors," *Post Magazine*, April 15, 2017. https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/arts-music/article/2087426/flashback-china-behind-cecile-tangs-orwellian

11 Ibid., 326–327.

12 Lisa Oldham Stokes, "Wong Tin-lam's The Wild, Wild Rose as Melodrama Musical Noir Hybrid." in *Hong Kong Noir*, eds. Esther C.M. Yau and Tony Williams (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2017), 24.

13 Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces", *Diacritics* 16, No. 1 (1986): 24.

14 Charles Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 10.

15 Ibid., 2–3.

16 Steven Jacobs, *The Wrong House: The Architecture of Alfred Hitchcock* (Amsterdam: NAi010, 2013), 299.

17 Chiang directed over 160 films between 1946 and 1971, including many of the noir films and melodramas discussed here.

18 Poshek Fu attributes the structuring theme and marketing strategy of the Cantonese cinema in the 1960s to widespread anxiety about the youth problem and efforts to contain it in the aftermath of 1949. Poshek Fu, "The 1960s: Modernity, Youth Culture and Hong Kong Cantonese Cinema." 72–76.

19 "Hong Kong Today," *Liangyou*, No. 51 (1962): 20–21.

20 For an understanding of pre-1949 Shanghai-based *Liangyou*, see Leo Ou Fan for a fuller analysis of the role of *Liangyou* in the representation and production of Shanghai's modern urbanity in the 1920s and 1930s. Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

21 "Traffic Bridges Appear all over Hong Kong," *Liangyou*, No. 138 (1963): 3.

22 "The Changing Face of a City," *South China Morning Post [SCMP]*, May 29, 1964, 35. "Tall Cities of the Future depend on Otis Elevators," *SCMP*, May 29, 1964, 65.

23 *Liangyou*, No. 126 (1964): 3. "The Jackblock Method of Construction," *SCMP*, May 29, 1964, 25.

24 "Situation stays tense after Kowloon's Night of Terror," *SCMP*, April 8, 1966, 9. "Riots here and there," *SCMP*, April 11, 1966, 11.

25 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Great Minds Series (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998).

26 "A groundswell of popular discontent," *Sing Tao Daily*, May 31, 1967. "Day of rioting at Central," *SCMP*, May 22, 1967, 1. "Raids on three communist strongholds," *SCMP*, August 5, 1967, 6.

27 "Beginning from Chun Ye Street [Yau Cheun Yeung Gaai Syut Hei]," *RTHK Hong Kong Stories [RTHK Heung Gong Gu Si]*, Episode 18, December 26, 2011.
28 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 72–73.
29 Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia*. SUNY Series in the Anthropology of Work (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 1–2.
30 No one else but the sisters, the housekeeper and the audience knows that Black Rose is actually two persons.
31 *Liangyou* No. 51 (1962): 11–12.
32 Janet Salaff, *Working Daughters of Hong Kong* (Columbia University Press, 1981), 279.
33 Ibid., 280–281.
34 Cindy Hing-yuk Wong and Gary W. McDonough, "Consuming Cinema: Reflections on Movies and Marketplaces in Contemporary Hong Kong." in *Consuming Hong Kong*, eds. Mathews Gordon and Lui Tai-lok (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2001), 81–116.
35 Hong Kong was the first British colony to obtain television in 1957 with limited cable distribution that gave way to telediffusion in 1967.
36 Morrison Docherty, David Morrison and Michael Tracey, *The Last Picture Show?: Britain's Changing Film Audience* (London: BFI Publishing, 1986), 25.
37 "Preliminary Results of the 1981 Population Census." *Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics* (Jan. 1982): 97.
38 *Hong Kong Statistics 1947-1967*. Hong Kong: Census and Statistic Department, 1969, 15.
39 Ibid., 23–29.
40 *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics,* Hong Kong: Census and Statistics Department, 1978, 23.
41 Philia Siu, "Hong Kong will need 600,000 domestic helpers in next 30 years amid demand for elderly care, labour chief says," *SCMP*, November 5, 2017. https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2118462/hong-kong-will-need-600000-domestic-helpers-next-30-years. See also, Daisy C.L. Mandap. "Number of Filipino domestic workers in HK at all-time high," *Rappler*, April 17, 2015. https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/balikbayan/90186-filipino-domestic-workers-hk.
42 See for example, *The Dark Heroine Muk Lan-Fa* (1966) directed by Law Chi and *Spy with My Face* (1966) directed by Chor Yuen.
43 "The Architecture of Hong Kong… An Appraisal," *SCMP*, May 29, 1964, 38.
44 "Governor opens Television Station," *SCMP*, November 20, 1967, 6.
45 "Raids on Three Communist Strongholds," *SCMP*, August 5, 1967, 6.
46 Artist impression of Sunbeam Theater and Metropole Building, *SCMP*, January 6, 1951, 6.

3 TOWERS: Technologies, Jardine House and Visions of the Modern Metropolis

1 Ackbar Abbas, "Hong Kong: Other Histories, Other Politics," In *Between Home and World: A Reader in Hong Kong Cinema*, ed. Zhang, Zhu, Zhang, Meijun, and Zhu, Yaowei (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2004), 289-90.
2 Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (MN; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 66.
3 Fredric Jameson, "The Brick and the Balloon: Architecture, Idealism and Land Speculation," *New Left Review*, 1/228 (March-April 1998): 43-44. Also in, Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: selected writings on the postmodern, 1983-1998* (London; New York: Verso, 1998), 162-190.
4 The twin towers opened in April 1973, just five months before the Connaught Centre.
5 "52-story office block rising on Hong Kong's 'golden' site," *Asian Building & Construction* (Jul. 1972), 20. See also, Fung, *A Century of Hong Kong Real Estate Development* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (HK) Co. Ltd., 2001), 118.
6 "Tallest building named Connaught Centre," *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, November 19, 1971, 31.
7 This is evident in all the descriptions of the building. It has been described as the "tallest building," "office building" or "office block" but not as "slab" or "tower."
8 T.C. Liauw, "Modern structural systems for tall buildings," *Asian Building & Construction* (December 1972): 21-24.
9 "52-story office block rising on Hong Kong's 'golden' site," *Asian Building & Construction* , 22.
10 James Kinoshita, *From Slocan to Hong Kong: An Architect's Journey* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishing, 2005), 145-146.
11 "52-story office block rising on Hong Kong's 'golden' site," *Asian Building & Construction*, 20-31.
12 "The key to better buildings: Research," *SCMP*, Febuary 28, 1972, 30. Republished from the *Financial Times*.

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13 The monthly publication ran from the late 1930s till 1980 and contained building and construction news in Hong Kong and the region, featuring research, design and technical innovations in the building industrial. See in particular, "52-story office block rising on Hong Kong's 'golden' site," *Asian Building and Construction* (July 1972), 20-31.

14 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. New ed. New York: Monacelli Press, 1994, 81-160.

15 Otis Hong Kong was established since 1888. The company claimed that the high-speed elevators running at 1,400 feet per minute were the results of computerized data analysis of the traffic capacity, speed and other relevant details. "Otis advertisement," *Far East Builder* (Jan.; Mar.; Jun.; Jul.; Sep.; Nov. 1972).

16 "Otis advertisement, *Far East Builder* (March 1970), advertisement insert. Ed. A.G. Barnett.

17 York advertisement, "*Asian Building & Construction* (July 1972), advertisement insert. Ed. Peter Leung.

18 Ads featuring the Jardine House, then Connaught Centre between 1973 and 1974 include: Pioneer Concrete ("Concrete by Pioneer: Connaught Centre"), Nippon Sheet Glass ("S.E. Asia's largest suspended glass screen for the Connaught Centre") which supplied the 26 feet high suspended glass panels for the ground and mezzanine floors, Fujisash Hong Kong ("Luxury and strength by Fuji Sash"), Mansion Company ("These buildings detect and protect themselves against fire with the most sophisticated automatic sprinkler system in the world"), Yamatake-Honeywell Automation Company ("System 2J"), Biso Gondola ("Imagine the tallest building in Hong Kong with bamboo scaffoldings… then with a Biso Gondola"), etc.

19 "Low-rise zone of Connaught Centre being complete," *Asian Building & Construction* (July 1972), 34. "Asset to building construction," *SCMP,* April 24, 1972, 29. "Biso (HK) Ltd." ad, *Asian Building & Construction* (January 1974): advertisement insert.

20 "Connaught Centre," *Asian Building & Construction*, Jul. 1972, 27.

21 "Gammon… building the Hong Kong of tomorrow" ad, *Asian Building & Construction* (Febuary1972): advertisement insert. See also *Asian Building & Construction* (March 1973): HKVIII; (May 1973): HKII.

22 Kenneth So, "Peak Day for Skyscraper," *Sunday Post Herald*, April 29, 1973, 1. Also reported in: "Topping out of 52-storey Connaught Centre," *Asian Building & Construction* (May 1973): 5.

23 "Hong Kong Land: A thousand portholes and good fung shui," *Insight* (November 1976): 6-10.

24 Nigel Cameron, *The Hongkong Land Company Ltd: A brief history* (Hong Kong: Hongkong Land, 1979), 65.

25 Vernon Roberts: "My business philosophy is to buy land anywhere in bad times… and then work up the property and sell it and buy more land right here in the Central District of Hong Kong." Hongkong Land: A thousand portholes and good fung shui," *Insight* (November 1976): 7.

26 D.K. Lewis, "Adding a few extra floors to new GPO," *SCMP*, August 2, 1974, 10. See also, "Guarantee to $53m property buyer," *SCMP*, May 6, 1970, 33. "The Government yesterday gave an undertaking to the [prospective] purchaser of the Central Reclamation lot – to be sold on June 1 – that during the next fifteen years, any building erected between his property and the sea would not exceed the height of 120 feet above principal datum." Lewis was the Principal Information Officer of the Public Works Department.

27 "Windows that don't open," *SCMP*, May 23, 1973, 6.

28 The Board then raised $140 million by means of a 'rights' issue and doubled the Company's authorized capital from $300 million to $600 million by the creation of 60 million new shares. Simultaneously, the commercial land owned by the Company was revalued upward from $140 to $325 million. It was thought by expert opinion at the time that $450 million would have been a more realistic figure. Nigel Cameron, *The Hongkong Land Company Ltd: A brief history* (Hong Kong: Hongkong Land, 1979), 53-54.

29 Ibid., 69.

30 Ivan Fallon, "How Jardine won the war of the hongs," *The Straits Times*, November 20 1980, 16.

31 "Hong Kong to have World Trade Center," *Asian Building & Construction* (July 1972): 7.

32 The main exception was the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank headquarters by Norman Foster (1985) where the main office spaces were elevated from the ground level with a ground level public plaza that also serves as a shortcut between Queens Road and Des Voeux Road.

33 The first harbor crossing was made in 1980 as the Kwun Tong Line was extended to Chater Station under Chater Road. Chater Station opened on Feb 10, 1980. It was renamed Central Station in 1985 when the section of the Island Line between Admiralty and Chai Wan opened on May 31, 1985.

34 The Hong Kong film industry was undergoing a revival in the 1970s. Jardine House was a recurring prop for *The Private Eyes*, a Cantonese comedy film released in late 1976 that broke the box office record.

35 Both films emerged out of an era in the 1970s when the disaster epic was at a peak in Hollywood. "King Kong slain again," *SCMP*, June 24, 1976, 10. *King Kong* opened on December 17, 1976. Directed by John Guillermin,

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produced by Dino De Laurentiis Corporation and distributed by Paramount Pictures (US$24million), it starred Jeff Bridges and Jessica Lange.

36 The crucial elements were kept, namely the giant ape and the blonde bombshell romance, the savagery-to-civilization and humanity's triumph over the monstrous beast motifs. Kenneth Chan, "The Shaw-Tarantino Connection: Rolling Thunder Pictures and the Exploitation Aesthetics of Cool," *UCLA's Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* (Fall 2009). http://www.tft.ucla.edu/mediascape/Fall09_ShawBrothers.html

37 Produced by the Shaw Brothers Studio at an estimated cost of HK$6 million (meagre compared to the HK$120 million Hollywood version), the film was directed by Ho Meng Hua and starred Hong Kong actor Danny Lee and Swiss actress Evelyne Kraft. It was written by Chinese science fiction and martial arts fantasy writer Ni Kuang. It was released in the United States as *Goliathon* in 1980 and re-released by Quentin Tarantino's Rolling Thunder Pictures in 1999.

38 The buildings are designed by Leigh & Orange, and Wong and Tung respectively.

39 Ackbar Abbas, "Building on Disappearance: Hong Kong Architecture and the City," *Public Culture* 6 (1994): 445; 448.

40 Kinoshita, *From Slocan to Hong Kong: An Architect's Journey*, 146. Other sources reported that the developer was required by the Government to provide pedestrian accessibility because the site is located on a plot of reclaimed land, which was not interwoven with the rest of the developed areas further inland. See, "Mile long pedestrian bridges for Central District," *Asian Building & Construction* (June 173): 10-14.

41 The twenty-three story Union House (370,000 square feet) was completed in 1962. It was renamed Swire House in 1977. In 1998, it was demolished and redeveloped as the thirty-story Chater House (498,000 square feet) designed by KPF.

42 Florence Chong, "Walkways for Central," *SCMP*, May 28, 1972, 4.

43 "Central bridge strides ahead," *SCMP*, August 10, 1978, 1.

44 Dennis Phillips, "Pedestrians get a welcome lift," *SCMP*, May 18, 1977, 1. Despite the complaints of some owners of buildings that would be affected by the project, the elevated walkway system was further extended. It eventually joined up with the Mid-Level escalators that opened in 1993, by engineers at Palmer & Turner who also supervised the project.

45 It eventually joined up with the Mid-level escalators that opened in 1993, by engineers at Palmer & Turner who also supervised the project.

46 This was synchronous to the economic, social and urban reforms pushed by then governor Murray MacLehose, all of which had lasting impact on the urbanism of the territory and on Hong Kong society. Architectural and urban infrastructural development included the implementation of the ten-year housing program in 1972, the building of the first satellite towns and the mass transit railway, the establishment of country parks, the expansion of community facilities, schools and hospitals. MacLehose was Hong Kong's longest serving Governor, with four successive terms from 1971 to 1982.

47 Hong Kong Land undertook a tree-planting program along Connaught Road in front of the Connaught Centre to commemorate its 90th year anniversary. "Central is blooming," *SCMP*, May 14, 1979, 12.

48 "Mile-long pedestrian bridges for Central District," *Asian Building & Construction* (June 1973): 10-14.

49 The main exception was the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank headquarters by Norman Foster (1985) where the main office spaces were elevated from the ground level with a ground level public plaza that also serves as a shortcut between Queens Road and Des Voeux Road.

50 A labor code was implemented in the Philippines in response to the 1974 economic crisis, which saw the export of foreign domestic workers. This helped reduce the unemployment rate and increased the country's treasury through the workers' remittances. By 1978, the labor agency industry was privatized and has since become an important industry in the national economy. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, increasing labor export from the Philippines coincided with the economic rise of Hong Kong. When China introduced its large-scale economic reforms in the 1970s, Hong Kong was the largest investor. As more manufacturing activities moved to mainland China, the territory began to expand its service and finance industry, and the female labor force was mobilized to deal with the labor shortage and increase in labor costs. Double-income families sought help from contract-term domestic helpers, a trend that intensified in the 1980s and 1990s and continue to this day. For an urban sociological discussion on the domestic helpers and their place in everyday Hong Kong space, see, Nicole Constable, *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina Workers* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2007).

51 Chris Yeung, "A Building that serves both God and Mammon," *SCMP*, June 27, 1983, 15.

52 Dean Sherwin, "The Street Against the Sky," *Architect and Builder* (July 1981): 16-27.

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53 Jardine House was amongst the first buildings in Hong Kong to be cladded by aluminum, replacing its original grey glass mosaic tiles. "Hong Kong wakes up to aluminum," *Asian Architect and Contractor* (December 1984): 46-51, 55. C.f. "52-story office block rising on Hong Kong's 'golden' site," *Asian Building & Construction* (July 1972): 31. "Central footbridge gets $20m facelift," *SCMP*, Dec. 12, 1984, 16.

54 Kinoshita, *From Slocan to Hong Kong: An Architect's Journey*, 146. "Facelift for centre," *SCMP,* July 3, 1976, 6; "Land finds a cure for tile plague," *SCMP*. June 19, 1982, 19.

55 "'Richer' tenants to move into Connaught Centre," *SCMP*, June 30, 1981, 41.

56 Bob Crew, "Architecture – the good, the bad and the ugly," *Asian Building & Construction* (November 1973): 7. On the problems in the construction of the Connaught Centre, see, "Connaught Centre: the tallest of them all," *Asian Architect and Contractor* (November 1976): 103-106.

57 The first harbor crossing was made in 1980 as the Kwun Tong Line was extended to Chater Station under Chater Road. Chater Station opened on Febuary 10, 1980. It was renamed Central Station in 1985 when the section of the Island Line between Admiralty and Chai Wan opened on May 31, 1985.

58 The Hong Kong public was informed of the filming locations and schedule. See, "Spiderman conquers Connaught Centre," *SCMP*, October 15, 1978, 11. Harbor City (the largest and most comprehensive in the territory) was undergoing its third and final phase of expansion.

59 The domination of the cityscape glass curtain wall from the 1970s was reported and discussed in Maureen Katemopolous, "Hong Kong turning into 'Mirror of the Orient'," *SCMP*, August 31, 1982, 63.

60 Of the 380,000 foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong who congregate in public places such as parks, footbridge passages and places under flyovers across the city, many gathered on the elevated walkways in the Central District on Sundays and the public holidays. This continues to be a matter of public debate, "LCQ3: Foreign domestic helpers congregating in public places during holidays," *The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Press Release*, 23 May 2018. https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201805/23/P2018052300422.htm

61 Abbas. "Hong Kong: Other Histories, Other Politics," 286.

4 COMPOSITES: The City in a Building

1 Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 56-60.

2 The first Town Planning Board was set up in 1922, but the Town Planning Ordinance was enacted only in 1939, right before the outbreak of the war. Previously, building and planning schemes were based on the 1841 colony lease conditions, and later the Building Ordinance of 1889 that regulated density control, height limit, yard, lane and open space. The Buildings Ordinance Office (BOO) was first set up under the former Public Works Department (PWD), which began publishing an annual report from 1897. The PWD was succeeded by the Building Development Department in 1982, which comprised the two constituent parts - the Building Ordinance Office and the Architectural Office.

3 Founded as the Sanitary Board in 1883, the Urban Council (UrbCo) was responsible for municipal services on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon. The municipal services were provided by the council's Urban Services Department. The Board was renamed the Urban Council when new legislation was passed in 1936 expanding its mandate. *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by the Commissioner J.C.C. Walden for Resettlement for the Financial Year 1954-55* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1955), 7.

4 *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by the Commissioner for Resettlement for the Financial Year 1954-55*, 3-6.

5 *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by the Commissioner J.C.C. Walden for Resettlement for the Financial Year 1972-73* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1973), 1-2.

6 Within Hong Kong's building regulations, "composite" refers to multiple functional uses – always inclusive of the domestic – within a single building complex.

7 Fai-Ming Wong, "Industrialization and Family Structure in Hong Kong," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 37, 4 (November 1975), 988.

8 Charles Smith, "HK's growth generates expectations," *South China Morning Post* (July 5, 1971), 32.

9 Wong, "Industrialization," 989.

10 Ibid., 993.

11 D.J. Dwyer and Lai Chuen-Yan, *The Small Industrial Unit in Hong Kong: Patterns and Policies* (Yorkshire: University of Hull Publication, 1967).

12 D.J. Dwyer and Lai Chuen-Yan, *The Small Industrial Unit in Hong Kong: Patterns and Policies*, 27-29. Originally from *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by the Commissioner for Resettlement*, 1963-64, 24-27.

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13 Dwyer and Lai, *The Small Industrial Unit in Hong Kong* 1967.
14 Victor Sit, *Made in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Summerson Eastern Publishers Ltd.), 81-88.
15 Victor Sit, "Hong Kong's 'Transfer' Industrialization and Industrial Geography," *Asian Survey*, 38, 9 (Sep. 1998), 903-904.
16 Hon-Chu Leung, "Immigration and citizenship," in *Remaking Citizenship in Hong Kong: Community, nation and the global city*, edited by Agnes S. Ku and Ngai Pun (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 101.
17 Patrick Abercrombie, *Hong Kong: Preliminary Planning Report* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1949). See R. Bristow, *Land-use Planning in Hong Kong: History, Policies and Procedures* (Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1987), 2-5 and 108. This notion of capacity and understanding of density took into account Patrick Abercrombie's 1948 plan for Hong Kong that recommended an even development of new Towns and the city center. The Report recognized, however, that Abercrombie's scheme was no longer valid because it was based on a significantly lower projection of population growth.
18 "Government Resettlement Work," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* 12, 5 (1956), 71-72.
19 "Lady Grantham Villas," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* 11, 4 (1955), 57-58.
20 "Editorial: And Now, Middle Class Co-operative Housing?" *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* 11, 5 (1955), 5. Cf. "What To Build," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* 15, 6 (1961), 42.
21 Bangyan Feng, *Xianggang di chan ye bai nian* 香港地產業百年 [*One Hundred Years of Real Estate in Hong Kong*]. Shanghai: Oriental Publishing Center, 2007, 66.
22 Ibid., 85-87.
23 "Empire Court," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* 12, 3 (1956), 19-20.
24 Feng, *Xianggang Dichan*, 73.
25 In Britain, the Clean Air Act was introduced to reduce air pollution in 1956 after years of debates. This was followed by the amendment of the Rights of Light Act in 1959 for the purpose of preventing the access and use of light from being taken without interruption.
26 Density zoning was adopted in 1966. "Density Zoning Adopted," *Far East Architect & Builder* (May 1966), 27-28. Zones 1, 2 and 3 referred to urban, suburban and rural respectively. The building demolition regulation was enacted in 1964.
27 Cumine designed North Point Estate (1958) and was master planner for So Uk Estate (1961) in Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon.
28 The Engineering Society of Hong Kong was established that year.
29 "Resettlements," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builders* 5, 11 (1955), 62-64.
30 Luke S.K. Wong (ed.), *Housing in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Heinemann Educational Books, 1978), 95-100. See also, "Tower Court," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builders* 6, 10 (1953), 9. In 1955, the use of reinforced concrete was regulated and architects needed to co-sign the drawings with a registered structural engineer. The PWD established a laboratory in North Point to conduct tests on the control of building materials across Hong Kong. In 1957, local factories began to manufacture high-strength steel re-bar. Escalators were introduced to shopping malls and podium retail began to emerge.
31 For example, Mirador Mansion's two escalators and eight elevators were supplied by Otis and used Vibro Piling for the foundations. "Mirador Mansion," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* 13, 6 (1957-1958), 19-20.
32 Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," *The Architectural Review* (December 1955), 357. He published a book of the same title in 1966: Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic*? (London: The Architectural Press, 1966).
33 Ibid., 361.
34 Kate Whitehead, "Witnesses to anarchy: the 1967 riots in Hong Kong, by some of those caught up in the violence," *Post Magazine* (25 April 2017).
35 Ibid.
36 "Over 100 Workers held three-hour demonstration," *SCMP* (11 May 1967), 6.
37 "Tenants leaving 'leftist buildings'," *SCMP* (19 July 1967), 9.
38 Fujian is a province on the southeast coast of Mainland China.
39 "Police landed from British helicopter, raided Leftists' base in North Point" ["警察乘英艦直升機從天而降 大舉圍搜北角左派巢穴"] *Kung Sheung Daily News* (August 5, 1967), 5.
40 "Well-equipped secret hospital found," *SCMP* (5 August 1967), 6. "Raids on Three Communist Strongholds: Largest Operations since May," *SCMP* (5 August 1967), 6.
41 Gary Ka-Wai Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed: The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 86.

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42 "Raids on Three Communist Strongholds," 6.
43 "Curfew in Kowloon, Specific Order for Rigid Enforcement, Enquiry told," *SCMP* (9 June 1966): 8.
44 Ibid., 9.
45 Xu Xi, "Chung King Mansion – from Chinese Walls," *History's Fiction: Stories from the City of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Chameleon Press, 2005), 160-183.
46 "Mirador in the news – tenants complained about its "slum conditions," *SCMP* (24 December 1965), 6. See also "Hong Kong's fire hazards," *SCMP* (15 September 1966), 2.
47 Jimmy Leung, "Mirador Mansion: Full of problems," *SCMP* (8 August 1988), 3.
48 Gabrielle Chan, "Blaze highlights lack of safety," *SCMP* (8 August 1988), 3.
49 Since the colonial administration, South Africa and Hong Kong have had trading relations, with the latter serving as a transit route for air traffic and trade with the rest of the region and China.
50 Szeto Wai, "Modern Day role of the Architect," *The Hong Kong & Far East Builder* 14, 5 (1959), 52.
51 Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 54.
52 Gordon Matthews, *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011). Rather than focusing on the ethnic representations of the inhabitants, Matthews discussed these groups as specific social categories within the Mansions.
53 In 2011, the building celebrated its 50th anniversary and the news headline read "From eyesore to icon".
54 The original plan consisted of mainly studio apartments of 500-600 square feet while the corner ones are larger, up to 1,300 square feet.
55 "From eyesore to icon," *Sunday Morning Post* (7 August, 2011), 4.
56 Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Cities Between Worlds: My Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 163.

EXCURSUS: Mapping Toilet Architectures

1 Since the publicly accessible toilets are managed by different governmental and private bodies, there is no official release of the total number of public toilets in Hong Kong. However, companies such as Nuthon IT Solutions and TechmaxApp have designed apps like Toilet Rush and Hong Kong Public Toilets respectively to map and locate them as a service. Jenni Marsh, "iPhone Application Toilet Rush outs the city's public lavatories on the map," *SCMP*, November 7, 2013, https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/technology/article/1349862/iphone-application-toilet-rush-puts-citys-public-lavatories-map. Christy Choi, "Thousands of toilets in Hong Kong, so no excuse for public peeing," May 4, 2014, https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1503789/lots-toilets-hong-kong-so-no-excuse-public-peeing
2 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Cleansing Services, Last modified on April 30, 2019, https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pleasant_environment/cleansing/clean1.html
3 Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene, "Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 11 December 2018 - Improving public toilet services and facilities at major tourist spots," "Improving public toilet services and facilities at major tourist spots LC Paper No. CB(2)383/18-19(06)," https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/fseh/papers/fseh20181211cb2-383-6-e.pdf

EPILOGUE: Resistant domestiCities

1 Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow, Updated Edition* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000).
2 Operating in a paradigm where competition organizes human activity, Hong Kong has been, especially since the 1980s, thrust into the dystopian present in which its people are taking to the streets. Stephen Metcalf's article on how the neoliberal world order has become an assault on humanity resonates loudly with the large-scale civic events that have been occurring in Asia's financial center in the 2010s. An ideal society based on a kind of universal market has been shaped by those leaders whom he wrote, "had abandoned the left's traditional commitments, especially to workers, in favor of a global financial elite and the self-serving policies… and in doing so, had enabled a sickening rise in inequality." Stephen Metcalf, "Neoliberalism: the idea that swallowed the world," *The Guardian*, August 18, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/aug/18/neoliberalism-the-idea-that-changed-the-world
3 Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s," *Social Text,* no.9/10 (1984): 178-209.
4 According to the Hong Kong Government's Census and Statistics Department, there were 159,901 Indonesians in Hong Kong by 2016. Indonesian domestic helpers began migrating to Hong Kong in significant numbers

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between 1990 and 1992. See, Hong Kong By-Census. *Main tables,* (Hong Kong Government, 2017), June 3, 2019. Also, Asian Migrant Centre, *Nowhere to turn to: A case study on Indonesian Migrant Workers in Hong Kong*, (Hong Kong, Asian Migrant Centre, 1994), 11.

5 Graeme Hugo, "Labour Export from Indonesia," *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Labour Migration in Asia (November 1995): 275-298. See also Nisha Agrawal, "Indonesia: Labor Market Policies and International Competitiveness," *The World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper Series* 1515 (Nov. 1999): 1-16.

6 Hong Kong By-Census, *Main tables* (Hong Kong Government, 2017): June 3, 2019. https://www.bycensus2016.gov.hk/en/bc-mt.html

7 Government Information Services. *Events in Hong Kong, 1967: An Official Report* (Hong Kong: Govt. Printer): 1968, 13. See also, *Internal Political Situation in Hong Kong: Disturbances and Communist Agitation, August 1967 - January 1968 (Folder 3)*, 1967.

8 Gary Ka-wai Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed: The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 123.

9 Hong Kong Government Secretariat. Security Branch, Refugees Division, *Fact Sheet on Refugees from Vietnam in Hong Kong* (Refugees Division, Security Branch, Jan. 3, 1980), 5.

10 Hong Kong Government Secretariat, Fact Sheet on Refugees from Vietnam in Hong Kong, 150.

11 Vietnamese Boat People. *Hong Kong Camps*, June 4, 2019. http://vietnameseboatpeople.hk/archive/camps/. These camps were overcrowded, and some had insufficient basic resources such as water and air. The VBP lived in barracks that were enclosed by high fences. Only bunk beds were provided inside these barracks, and there were no partitions for privacy. Janelle M Diller. *In search of asylum: Vietnamese Boat People in Hong Kong,* (Hong Kong, Indochina Research Centre, 1988), 33.

12 Raquel Carvalho, "How Europe can learn from the hard lessons of Hong Kong's Vietnamese refugee crisis," *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, September 14, 2015 https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1857873/how-europe-can-learn-hard-lessons-hong-kongs-vietnamese-refugee

13 Elaine Yu, "Occupy Central: The Migrant Workers in Democracy's Blind Spot," *Dissent*, July 2, 2014. https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/occupy-central-the-migrant-workers-in-democracys-blind-spot

14 In 2015, amid anti-mainland sentiment, the word "Hong Kongese" was added to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Its meaning is described as "a native or inhabitant of Hong Kong" (noun); and "relating to Hong Kong or its inhabitants" (adjective). *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2019). https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/393763?redirectedFrom=hong+kongese#eid
See also, Jeffie Lam, "'Hongkonger' makes it to world stage with place in the Oxford English Dictionary," *SCMP*, March 19, 2014. https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1451929/finally-hongkonger-arrives-world-stage.

15 The public plaza was an overt civic gesture by the bank. It was celebrated as such in anticipation of its opening and reiterated in the bank's 1986 monograph. Lindy Course, "1985 target for new-look bank: Central landmark goes in July," *SCMP*, February 13, 1981, 1. See also Ian Lambot, Gillian Chambers and Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation. *One Queen's Road Central: The Headquarters of HongkongBank since 1864* (Hong Kong: HongkongBank, 1986), 138-139, 146.

16 "Norman Foster's Hong Kong HSBC headquarters tore up the rule book – a history of cities in 50 buildings, day 45," *The Guardian*, May 28, 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/may/28/hong-kong-hsbc-hq-bank-history-cities-50-buildings

17 Keith Bradsher, "Occupy Hong Kong Protestors Forcibly Removed," *New York Times Global Business*, September 10, 2012. https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/12/business/global/occupy-hong-kong-protesters-evicted.html. Lai Ying-kit, "Occupy Central protesters evicted from HSBC building," *SCMP*, September 11, 2012. https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1033963/occupy-central-protesters-being-evicted-hsbc-building

18 Stephanie Tong and Stanley James, "HSBC Seals Off Plaza After Bailiffs Evict Hong Kong Protesters," *Bloomberg Business*, September 11, 2012.
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-09-11/hsbc-says-court-to-evict-hong-kong-occupy-protesters-today-1-

19 Simpson Cheung, Olga Wong and Thomas Chan, "Helpers fear they may lose their haven," *SCMP*, September 13, 2012. https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1035207/helpers-fear-they-may-lose-hsbc-haven

20 Cai Yongshun. *The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong: Sustaining Decentralized Protest*. Routledge Contemporary China Series; 157 (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 37-39.

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21 Samuel Chan, "The walls are up at HSBC in Central as Occupy looms," *SCMP*, September 17, 2014. https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1594121/walls-are-hsbc-central-occupy-central-looms

22 Lai Ying-kit, "Historic lion heads take pride of place at HSBC headquarters following plaza makeover," *SCMP*, Jan. 31, 2015. https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1696491/historic-lion-heads-take-pride-place-hsbc-headquarters-following

23 Mong Kok was occupied from September 28 to November 27, and Tsim Sha Tsui from October 1 to 3.

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