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Preface

Dr Hee Sun (Sunny) Choi

U+U journal Editor

‘Space is a material product, in relationship to other material products—including people who engage in historically determined social relationships that provide space with a form, a function, and a social meaning.’
(Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 1996, pp 152)

What does it take to shape our cities, and what are the key drivers in forming their place identity? How does this constitute my social identity?

In ‘The Spirit of Cities: Why the Identity of a City Matters in a Global Age’ (2011, pp xi), Daniel Bell and Avner de-Shalit argue that In the twentieth-century, the nation became the main source of political identity and site of collective self-determination. A patriot takes pride in her own country because it expresses a particular way of life in its history, politics, and institutions. But states find it increasingly difficult to provide this sense of uniqueness because they have to comply with the demands of the market and international agreements.

Since cities work at a national level and so can be considered less burdened by these responsibilities, metropolitan governing bodies and related stakeholders can direct how the place identity of the city can develop, and steer in this direction. In recent years, our cities have undergone rapid transformation as the result of a range of different factors, including an economic slump, terror threats, and cost reduction measures, as well as other structural changes within society. Societal development, a globalized monotonisation of culture, deindustrialization, and the growing importance of service-sectors and commercial development—challenges local identity and a sense of place.

Place identity is deeply related to the social, economic, and political pressures influencing the power and control of decision makers within urban development and urban settings. The multi-dimensional concept includes historical, geographical and cultural experiences over varying time periods. The characteristics of place making within many cities reflect the urban transformation from centres of production to centres of consumption. This has led to an alignment towards architectural and commercial uniformity in many cities. A move towards sameness of place is further underlined by a strong conjunction between development planning and real estate development, which increasingly exists in the hands of international developers rather than as a local initiative. In this sense, localities and identity in a given urban context should be an issue that demands our attention and focus.

To this end, it is important to understand the historical and current forces shaping the built environment and give a community a unique identity, such as social and cultural traditions. There is an emerging architectural form of regionalism that references a contemporary local identity in Hong Kong, rooted in vernacular and traditional styles. This regionalism includes a new architectural built form and cultural modernization that is based on a mixed social history and acknowledges the colonial period of Hong Kong’s heritage.

As Hong Kong seeks to assert its identity, both on the streets and the world stage, it is a pertinent moment to discuss the emerging issues of place identity within urban space, from the perspectives of different stakeholders and the local community. Can we within the urban design community help to lead our city towards a new kind of space, that we can all love and feel a strong sense of belonging to?

Evolving and Transforming Place-identities

Professor Georgia Butina Watson

Faculty of the Built Environment
Oxford Brookes University

Abstract There have been many concerns over the last three decades about the way we build cities and their neighbourhoods. Many critics claim that this is the result of the globalization processes through which built form components are produced. This inevitably leads to the homogenous places, where similar patterns are replicated and the users as well as the critics see such places as anonymous, anywhere places.

In response to this phenomenon many theorists have engaged in a critical discourse about place, identity and place-identity. Practitioners dealing with the form-production processes have also focused their work on designing places that would be seen as unique, distinctive, and responsive to the local cultural contexts whilst also aiming to generate new typology of buildings and open spaces, that would respond to new and evolving human needs.

Particularly challenging have been transformations of rundown housing estates, where the users have a negative relationship with such areas, and claim that there is no sense of place, no sense of place-identity. The paper will first discuss some of the key theoretical ideas which will serve as basis for discussing urban transformation of a former rundown area in South Islington, London.

Keywords: place-identity, morphological transformations, community engagement.

There is a widespread concern today for the changes being made in many cities across the world as a result of the globalized form-production processes that are contributing to the erosion of the place-identity. This is particularly evident in the transformation of historic urban areas where new urban form patterns have little respect for the inherited urban past. With the same architectural building and open space typology being applied in different parts of the world, usually in the form of tall buildings or large urban complexes, some critics call such developments as the 'citadels of power' or what Elizabeth Wilson refers to as the 'sphinx in the city' (1992). This phenomenon is also influenced by the accumulation of capital and investments by large finance corporations and development companies that move their capital globally and invest their resources in schemes that ensure a safe return on their investment. As a result, many critics (Abel, 2000; Graham and Howard, 2008; Castells (2006) and Sassen (2012) as well as the ordinary users of such places see these changes as anonymous, anywhere places. Castells (2006) argues that there is a broken sense of continuity with the past leading to the loss of the distinctive cultural landscapes and the erosion of the way of life. Harvey (2013) also argues that the space-time continuum is compressed and the ideas that took ages to travel in the past are now communicated virtually and instantly, which creates similar visual landscapes that can be shared across the world.

In order to respond to these concerns, it is important to theorise about these issues to form

a common platform for debate and to find potential solutions. In that regards, there is no shortage of the published material and theories that cut across many disciplines from earlier work published by environmental psychologists and sociologists (Castells, 2006); urban geographers (Graham and Howard, 2008); and planning, architecture and urban design experts (Butina Watson and Bentley, 2007; Southworth and Ruggeri, 2011). The loss of place-identity, some argue (Castells, 2006; Butina Watson and Bentley, 2007) can diminish and alter distinctive characteristics of places that were historically rooted in the local context and can therefore potentially reduce the interaction between people and place. Castells states (2006) that the sense of continuity over time is important in constructing a set of images and ideas about places we inhabit. However, as Butina Watson and Bentley (2007) and Sepe (2013) argue place-identities are formed over time, they are also evolving and transforming through the interaction of people and place. Through the interaction between people and place we form meanings and interpretations of places, construct our own identity and therefore place-identity.

There are many definitions of place-identity, but the ideas put forward by Butina Watson and Bentley who state that ...'place-identity is the set of meanings associated with any particular cultural landscape which any particular person or group of people that draws on in the construction of their own personal and social identities' (2007,p..6), is still most commonly

used today. It is therefore very important that we design places that allow interaction between place and people, which is also what Harvey (2013) refers to as the idea of 'public sphere' as an arena of political, and therefore also potentially democratic deliberation and participation, where political ideals may be attained and where associations between people and place can contribute to the interpretation of identity and place-identity. It is important to state the way we use our cities and neighbourhoods and interpret place-identity goes beyond the mere visual interpretations. We experience places through our daily lives and patterns of human use and therefore through all our senses; it is a total environment which is what Scott Lash describes as 'inhabitation' (1999). Through these practices of daily use and experience we also contribute to the enhancement of such places through what David Novitz refers to as the 'participatory aesthetics' (2001).

So, what happens when the places we inhabit are seen negatively by their users, when we live in the landscapes of fear, where our democratic right to use and inhabit such places is reduced? Many users and critics see such places as lacking in character and lacking in supporting our positive interpretations of place-identity. This is most obvious and of some concern in some of the urban areas where we can see the broken linkages with the past and where the ability to 'inhabit' such spaces is reduced due to a variety of factors. For example, the inappropriate infrastructure systems such as those evident in the former Boston's Downtown Artery before it

was replaced by a system of streets and open spaces (Butina Watson and Bentley, 2007). We can also see that from some of the modernist housing estates where we experience fear of crime, high levels of pollution, social deprivation and the building typology and morphology that fragments our cities?

The question is how do we engage with these issues through practice of planning, urban design and architecture? As we shall see the methodology put forward by Butina Watson and Bentley in their book *Identity by Design* (2007) is still valid, and useful in shaping existing and in designing new places.

As urban critics and designers we operate at different morphological levels: the landscape components; the overall spatial structure (streets and public open spaces); the overall patterns of use; block and plot structures; and the level of building and open space typology. However, these morphological and typological components also require qualitative dimensions, to reflect on how human experiences and perceptions form part of our place-identity interpretations.

From the operational point of view these qualitative components are summarised as : co-dwelling with nature; the sense of empowerment (derived from the responsive environments criteria such as permeability/connectivity/accessibility; variety; legibility; robustness/resilience; personalization; and richness); sense of rootedness and continuity with the past; and transculturality (accommodating the needs of

Figure 1 (Source By Author)

different communities). In the following section of this paper we shall discuss how urban transformations that are taking place in the part of London, known as South Islington EC1, have

changed and are changing the interpretations of place-identity. The evaluation methodology employed over the last decade by the author of this paper includes a longitudinal study consist-

ing of morphological and typological surveys; semi-structured interviews with key players; focus group discussions with residents, planners, urban designers and landscape architects; and some 350 conducted walks with various groups of users.

The EC1 area of South Islington is one of the central London Boroughs located next to the City of London, the very hart of its global financial investments and international trade. EC1 evolved historically as a historic district composed of a typical morphology that evolved over time accommodating a variety of Georgian and Victorian houses. Due to its proximity to the City it suffered a radical destruction as a result of the Second World War Two bombing of London during the Blitz of 1941. This part of the city became a disaster zone that lost many of its inhabitants as well as buildings destroyed during the attacks. The damaged areas of Islington were rebuilt in the post war reconstruction period during 1950s, 1960s and 1970s based on the modernist morphology and typology that was the favoured approach by the Greater London Council responsible for planning and city building at the time. As a result, the morphology of South Islington changed whereby traditional Georgian and Victorian town houses were combined with modernist housing estates. This also reflected the varied social demographic structure of the area with poorer residents living in high rise tower blocks, whilst the rest of the richer residents living in more traditional neighbourhoods. This led to the double-coded interpretations of place-identity, depending in

which part of Islington people lived, worked and socialised. (Figure 1)

By the early 2000 the area experienced a serious decline economically and socially and suffered from the lack of investment in the maintenance of its area and showed all the signs of other similar areas of deprivation. It felt neglected, run down, bleak, unsafe and lacked quality buildings and green open spaces. As a result, most journeys made by the residents were car bound which further contributed to the run-down image of the area as instead of streets there were roads full of cracks and asphalt. Children's play areas were also tarmacked and there was no one about. Open spaces around tower blocks and other buildings were poorly defined, interrupted by abandoned and vandalised garages and there was no clear distinction of what was public or private space and as a result suffered from anti-social behaviour and vandalism. From a residents' point of view the area was seen as negative, with no sense of place and place-identity. (Figure 2)

In order to turn the area around, a bid was placed by Islington Borough Council under the Central Government scheme known as the New Deal for Communities and in 2004 EC1 became one of the 39 NDC areas which required a community engagement and partnership working between different professionals and local government officers in order for funds to be released. This resulted in the creation of a vision for the area, formulated between various stakeholders and articulated through:

- 1 A Public space strategy
- 2 Urban Design Framework Plans, Action Plans and project design
- 3 Appointment of a multi-professional team
- 4 Collaborative engagement with residents
- 5 Interdepartmental working

Figure 2 (Source By Author)

The Open Space strategy led to the formulation of the so called 'Green Chain' which basically included 7 housing estates, a system of 19 streets, 8 parks, markets and various business and social facilities. The green chain is a connector between different parts and it ties all different areas together. The visioning events were particularly focused on how to enhance and

improve a sense of place-identity in the neighbourhood. The initial funding of some 50 Million (2004-2011) finished in 2011 but the ongoing work is being supplemented by other Local Authority (LB Islington) funding mechanisms and other resources, including contributions being made from other high-profile developments in the area under the planning mechanism known as Section 106.

The area evaluations carried out by the author over the last decade has identified that significant improvements made to the area have also changed the users' perception in terms of a very positive interpretation in place-identity terms. Improved and connected open spaces are full of people which has increased area's vitality and safety. Children are out and about playing in new green areas and there is also a positive sense of community spirit and local pride. These findings also support Lash's concept of place-identity in terms of 'inhabitation' and Watson's and Bentley's definition of place-identity, explained earlier. The revitalised White Cross Street Market is also contributing positively economically and socially through local events and festivals and through public art, which is another dimension of place-identity. The open space strategy also made morphological improvements in terms of connecting different urban tissues so that different parts are seen as part of one single whole.(Figure 3,4,5,6,7)

In conclusion, we can say that place-identities are not static; they are evolving in order to support different societal needs. Places also need to

be cared for, be managed, improved and loved by their communities as they are part of our own changing and evolving identities. Bringing together theory and practice is important if we are to generate solutions that can support places with a positive sense of place-identity.

Figure 3,4,5,6,7 (Source By Author)

Georgia Butina Watson Biography:

She is Professor in Urban Design and Associate Lecturer in Planning and Urban Design at Oxford Brookes University, UK. Her professional expertise lies in the area of urban morphology; urban regeneration; local community involvement including different age groups; the improvement of local urban areas; place-identity; retrofitting cities for sustainability; urban growth management; and healthy cities.
p0054496@brookes.ac.uk

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City and place identity in SIP Suzhou:

Re-learning forgotten lessons from modern western urban design theory

By Raffaele Pernice

Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Urbanism

University of New South Wales - Faculty of Built Environment

Abstract The impressive urban growth of China in the last few decades has been largely based on a sustained and state-sponsored economic development which by financing infrastructure development, fostering industrial and manufacturing production, and promoting an aggressive campaign to modernize the country, has deliberately pursued economic and social policies aimed at concentrating activities and people and reshaping and redesign many urban areas of the cities, with the result that the urban landscapes are changing rapidly, with mixed results, but at the cost of neglecting the safeguarding of the genuine spirit and still valuable features of the local places. Reflecting on the recent urban transformation in Suzhou, the paper intends to stress the importance of re-learning the lessons taught by a few highly influential architects and planners, and how the rediscovery of their theses and principles could be a precious resource to look at in order to initiate a different discourse on the design of vibrant, meaningful and beautiful urban spaces more in tune with the local identity.

Keywords: Urban Design Theory, Place Identity, Chinese Urbanism

Introduction

Cities in China are very often built as economic engines filled with enormous quantity of cloned copy-cat architectures and chaotic and often unwelcoming mono-functional and hyperdense urban districts which regularly clash and contrast with communities designed around more remarkable urban spaces, venues, and landscapes projects which are incredibly vibrant, entertaining, walkable and share and integrate urban functions and economic activities (Campanella, 2008; Friedmann, 2005). The current wave of new high quality and refined urban design projects throughout several location in China reflect a growing awareness of the importance of a good built environment for the people in general, and witness of a progressive shift from a production-oriented to a more recent service-based economic system (Logan, 2002; Wu, 2007), and therefore towards a fundamental consumers-focus social structure, following a pattern of economic and urban development showing some striking resemblance with what occurred in post-war Japan in the period 1950-70s and S. Korea in the 1970-1990s. Yet in its frantic race towards urbanization and economic growth many cities have simply decided to get rid of the valuable aspects of the traditional urban spaces, seen as an impediment to overcome more than an asset to protect.

Suzhou in Jiangsu Province is a city with over 2500 years of history well represents this trend common to many other Chinese cities. The famous gardens and the waterways are the best

Figure 1. Suzhou Center

(Photo: the author, 2019)

known urban elements of the historical districts of Suzhou, which was described by Marco Polo as the “Venice of Orient”, as the Venetian traveller compared the numberless water canals of this Chinese city to the sea water canals of the Italian city (see figure 1). Currently 2 large urban development schemes have characterized the urban reshaping of the city, namely the development of SSIP - Suzhou Singapore Industrial Park and SND - Suzhou New District, which have led a drastic transformation of the city in terms of fundamental infrastructures, new ur-

Figure 2. Suzhou ancient city: Pinjiang road (Photo: the author, 2018)

ban blocks and modern housing (see figure 2), services and green provisions, and the overall organization of the circulation networks.

Suzhou is classified as one of the second-tier cities in China. This industrial city of 5 million people is set in the Yangzi-River-Delta, along the axis which connects Shanghai metropolitan region to Nanjing. Suzhou has experienced a radical urban development and impetuous economic growth focusing on the promotion of industrial innovation and high-quality service production. A combination of foreign direct investments (FDI) and domestic investments have fuelled and impressive GDP growth which has directly impacted on the overall transformation of the city into an important commercial and highly regarded cultural and technological innovation center in Jiangsu Province (Xu, 2017). One of the main urban development project that have driven the recent success of Suzhou as a global city with an illustrious heritage and an ecological touch was the development of the SIP project as high-tech industrial park, filled

and integrated by a variety of research institutes, liveable green residential areas, tempting new commercial complexes, various national and international academic institutions and medium to large industrial factories and firms of local and multinational companies.

Building SIP as symbol of Global Suzhou

The large urban area of Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park (SSIP, now commonly referred to as simply SIP-Suzhou after the partnership with Singapore ended due to unsettled conflicts during the process of development of the area), set up originally as a joint venture between Suzhou Metropolitan government (under the sponsorship of the Chinese government) and Singapore government, was intended as a prototype and demonstration project of a modern and exemplary industrial district conceived on the most advanced planning strategies and up-to-date urban design concepts as developed in Singapore, with the intent to provide a model of new town from which other Chinese cities could learn from. Indeed this large project was built with the deliberate scope to create a comprehensive urban entity of districts and developments zones within a new town not far from Suzhou, and fill it with first class industrial infrastructures, clusters of planned islands of mostly self-secluded residential complexes essentially as gated communities and high-standard services and technology incubators, while promoting and “branding” the new image of the city at a national and international level (Pernice et al., 2017).

Like many other Chinese contemporary cities also Suzhou seems to display not the integration but the mere coexistence of 2 cities in one, neatly separated by time, scale and forms. The historical city center is the core with its original footprint, monuments, old buildings and architectures embedded in vanishing neighbourhoods of fine grained fabric of narrow streets and still largely human scale urban spots with their traditional rites and century-old memories and more passionate people clashes and physically dwarfs in comparison to the new residential developments, built as extensive urban island of towers, elevated highway and massive street for cars and sterilized architectural objects lost in vast green parks and landscaped areas that could be appreciated only from the sky. It is really 2 cities in one, the small and largely low-rise charming historical nucleus of the millennial core which is surrounded by the new, big and vertical globalized promethetan downtown expansions of the new gigantic limbs built around a backbone of huge circulation infrastructures and super dense residential suburban districts, all showing poor urban and architectural quality and no real distinctive features is a bombastic celebration of the everyday architecture.

In the planning and design of new forms of the residential superblocks which define the urban residential landscape of many fast-growing cities, with an eye on how to foster a more social view of the urban life and promote a more balanced social system in the contemporary city (Kan and al., 2017; Lu, 2006), the neighbour-

hood center, conceived as basic urban element by Clarence Perry in 1929, assumes the function of a fundamental nucleus of efficient and essential services to the community, but also a very important urban place created to foster a sense of social cohesion in the contemporary sprawling Chinese city (Pernice et al., 2014). Yet the organizational model of the design of this fundamental urban element reflects a completely passive attitude towards fostering innovative spaces and the a-critical acceptance of often unfit types and building models and images from alien cultures which can hardly be integrated with the local context and the “genius loci” of the place. Widespread copy-cat architectures practice and the very frequent a-critical acceptance of foreign models and schemes (such as the presence of enormous corporate buildings with flashy architectural styles and forms, high-rise complexes urban developments and a car-oriented planning of the cities), as well as the evident conflict between economic considerations and ecological responsibility (many old canals in Suzhou have been filled in to make room for new roads), are indeed the most serious culprits in the flaws recognizable in the development of several new urban projects in SIP, but also elsewhere in urban China, which simply do not neglect to consider the local history and cultural and social specificity of the place, which are completely and insanely sacrificed to bland commercial architectures for the sake of economic growth, visibility and media branding and exposition.

Rediscovering a few lessons from the legacy of Western urban design theory

In the last century among the great and important contributions to the search in the field of urban design theory there are 3 Americans (Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, William H. Whyte) and 3 Europeans (Aldo Rossi, Jan Gehl, and Christian Norberg-Schulz) who in some of their key publications have provided probably some of the clearest academic lessons, and suggested some remarkable trajectories of research to professionals in terms of the directions on how the conciliate the need for modern life with great consideration for the social and cultural aspect of the life in the city, preserving the peculiarities of the local traditions and the identity of the place by considering multifaced aspects of the urban milieu. Their urban design frameworks have been outreaching, covering several aspects, from the importance of the traditions and history of the place, the need for vibrant urban spaces which conciliate with environments aspects of the area, social and economic factors which need to balance, integrate and harmonize with human needs and people ambitions, both as individual and as larger community.

The United States has been leading the innovation in urban planning and architectural theory since the second half of the 20th century. In her important work published in 1961 with the title “Death and Life of Great American Cities”, the activist and urban sociologist Jane Jacobs studied the reasons behind New York urban vitality of city downtown through the scientific observation of complex dynamics of the particular

urban context of Greenwich Village, and utilized different empirical methods: participant observation; informal interview; documentary evidence to support the argument, building his theory from this particular case, explaining and highlighting the direct connection between the mixed use of the urban space and human scale of the built environment, and its livability and social success of the community. Jacobs was the first to launch a clear attack to the inhuman scale and abstract forms and impractical spaces of the modernist planning and architectures, as rage reaction essentially to two factors: the progressive loss of the familiar and distinctive sense of community previously distinctive and present in the old neighbourhoods as main tool for social cohesion in the city; and the loss of the traditional image of the city as something coherent and comprehensive, so that the modern (or Modernist) city appeared now to be more complex and chaotic than ever.

Almost at the same time Urban planner Kevin Lynch wrote and published “The Image of the City” (1960), another hugely influential book in which he analyzed how people remember and describe the cities. During his studies on the relations between urban spaces and human reaction he found out that most people established a “generalized mental picture of the external physical world”. Through an analysis of the response of the people to their urban environment, Lynch realized that the mental picture of the people was very similar, and their images emerged in a biunivocal process: people made distinctions among the various physical parts of the city, which then organized in a per-

sonally meaningful way. He therefore detected and summarized the 5 key elements of the built environment which can be used as reference elements in observing, decoding (reading), and eventually designing and visioning new urban and architectural elements of the city: Paths: “channels along which the observer customarily moves”; Edges: “the boundaries between two areas”; Districts: “represent medium-to-large sections of the city”; Nodes: “points of intense activity”; and Landmarks: “physical reference points”.

Sociologist William Holy White conducted studies on the use of urban spaces in the 1970s and 1980s New York, and he is the author of “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces” (1980), which focuses on the physical analysis of public spaces in New York and social activities within as used by common users. Built on solid empirical methodology, and on an extensive variety of surveying tools, the book provides many design guidelines for architects and urban designers in shaping urban spaces on the reason some urban spaces are highly successful while other, which still how what the conventional architectural and urban theory deems as good modern design fall short of people and activities. Among the most interesting findings and common sense design suggestions, there are: “What attract people most to urban spaces are other people...people tend to sit most where are places to sit...[p.28]”; “If you want to seed a place with activity, put out food [p.50]”; “What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people [p.19]”; “The most-used places also tend to have an higher than average propor-

tion of woman [p.17]”; “If a place has a markedly lower than average proportion of woman, something is wrong. Where there is a higher than average proportion of woman, the plaza is probably a good one and has been chosen as such [p.18]”; “Zoning is certainly not the ideal way to achieve the better design of spaces... for economics alone, it make sense {though} [p.15]”; “The best-used plazas are sociable places with a higher proportion of couples you find in less-sued spaces, more people in groups, more people meeting people...[p.18]”.

The European stance on issues related to the space quality and cultural value of the urban life in the city has different roots and a more intellectual approach, which differently from the American urban culture has an incredibly fundamental importance because of it long and various traditions, and inbred with the many cultural experiences, practical experiments and theoretical principles produced in different time and space for over 300 centuries.

In his writings, especially the book “The Architecture of the City” (1966), Italian Architect Aldo Rossi called for a rediscovery of the urban and architectural traditions of the historical European urban culture and criticized the lack of understanding of the city in current architectural and urban design practice. Against the policy of slum clearance and sterile urban renewal projects (ideology of **tabula rasa**) so popular during the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s, which caused a drastic alteration of pre-existent urban environment causing in addition a profound loss of the social and cultural fabric

in the communities affected, Rossi argued that a city must be studied and valued as something constructed over time; of particular interest are urban artefacts that withstand the passage of time, either the individual building or the urban footprints, voids made by the ancient streets and public spaces; he also held that the city remembers its past (which he called **“our collective memory”**), and that we use that memory through the monuments and other relevant buildings in the history of the city, which should be reused and adapted, and not destroyed; that is, monuments and the memories related to them give structure, identity and significance to the city both in terms of physical form and social and cultural dimension.

Just a few years later Danish architect and urban designer Jan Gehl first published *“Life Between Buildings”* in 1971 (1st English edition is in 1987), a study built on the works of other scholars, such as Jane Jacobs, William Whyte, Oscar Newman, Christopher Alexander and focused his attention for use of spaces as opposed to “function” of space. By distinguishing three main types of human activities in the public space (these are: Necessary Activities, linked to job activities, study, moving in general; Optional activities, as they are consequences of a choice, when time and environment are favorable; they are expressed as a pause; and Social Activities, which are the consequence of previous activities and depend upon the co-presence of many people in the space (actually with little relevance) he derived as key concept that The Spatial characteristics strongly influence op-

tional activities and have less influence on the necessary ones, and therefore the Space is not determinant of an activity, but it suggests or allow for one or more activities.

Finally, Norwegian architect and theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz published *“Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture”* in 1979. **Genius Loci** refers to ancient Roman cultural and religious tradition, which believed that every physical space was inhabited and protected by local spirits, and that architectures and urban and natural landscapes were inherently host of a specific sense of space directly linked to the history, art, traditions and culture of the people who populated them. The human experience is something related with the cultural value of the objects in and out the space, and this relate with his historic background, aesthetic language, the overall tradition and historical reflection, and poetic intentions.

By learning the meaning and substance of the things beyond the pure physical appearance, Norberg-Schulz stressed the importance of this comprehensive concept which refer to the often hidden characteristic of the place which need to be detected, sublimated understood and then integrated in any new action or will of construction, as it will become an integral part of the new space but reflects the history, the territory and natural landscape, and the people who lived before.

Final Remarks

This short article is an invitation to reconsider the cultural basis and the intellectual directions on which the planning and design of the built environment has been recently based in transforming urban Suzhou and many new Chinese cities. The process of fast urbanization in China during the last decades has disclosed several problems and contradictions which are typical of a country and a society that has been striving in the last decades to modernize its economy, urban environment and cultural features rapidly: increasing need for urban mobility and a evident car-oriented urban development which inevitably clashes with the needs of the preservation of the fragile pattern of the traditional city; the importance of further industrial development versus the need to protect endangered eco-systems and precarious natural environments; the importance of protecting social harmony more and more endangered by the extremisms led by a rampant capitalistic model of economic growth, are just some examples of the challenges faced by Suzhou and by extension by all other Chinese cities.

Like Suzhou, many other Chinese cities are progressively approaching a post-growth, post-industrial condition which is confirmed by the reality of demographic decline, slow growth, shrinking cities, resources depletion, environmental concerns, growing localism and ageing society, all factors which invites to set up a new and comprehensive urban and architectural agenda for the rest of the 21st century. Obvious targets should be then on putting more efforts

to conciliate heritage protection, ad hoc regeneration projects, and a clear emphasis on more sustainable forms of urban development.

In this first quarter of the 21st Century's new brave world then the rediscovery of the lessons of highly regarded theorist giants in urban and architectural theories, whose principles seem somewhat forgotten or at very least ill-applied in the real world, might be of exceptional help and foster and inspire, not only in china but also elsewhere, new generations of young designers and planners to undertake liberating and useful broader reflections on what should be the new direction of contemporary urbanism. By illustrating the errors of the past but also reasoning on the good of the local traditions and indicating the most appropriate direction in seeking to generate new visions for the future of the cities and their urban life through a critical review of the often meaningless transformations of the urban real caused by many recent large-scale public projects, their work could act as catalyst in the search and production of new ideas which inspire innovative forms of urban development and cities architectures.

Raffaele Pernice Biography:

He is a Licensed Architect and Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Urbanism at the Faculty of Built Environment at UNSW Sydney. He received a PhD in Architecture from Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan and a Laurea degree in Architecture (BArch + MArch) from the University IUAV of Venice, Italy. Dr. Pernice has extensive research and teaching experience in Japan, South Korea, the Middle East and China, and his interests and activities, which lay in the nexus between architecture and urbanism, range from practice to theory, criticism and history of architecture, urban design and city planning. r.pernice@unsw.edu.au

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Learning from Art

By Vincci Mak & Andres Delpon

Senior Lecturer / HKU Division of Landscape Architecture

Adjunct Assistant Professor / HKU Division of Landscape Architecture

Abstract This article explores how a foundation level landscape design studio borrows ideas from the creative art discipline to engage students to understand the design process.

Keywords: Design Education Fundamentals, First Landscape Studio, Art

Figure 1 Final Model by Mandy Chong

Introduction

The “Introduction to Landscape Design Studio” offered at HKU Division of Landscape Architecture Bachelor of Arts in Landscape Studies Program, is the first design studio students take in their four-year landscape education.

As young designers, one of the best ways to learn is to understand the wide scope and breadth of design disciplines, before they engage specifically in landscape. Therefore, this foundation level landscape design studio starts with exercises that present them with fundamental design skills. The philosophy of the content chosen and the studio learning flow are based on the universal design approaches that apply to all design disciplines.

One pedagogical methodology implemented in this studio is the introduction of creative art as study objects, for students to ease into the understanding and appreciation of creative operation and design process.

As Professor Chip Sullivan at the University of California, Berkeley, College of Environmental Design, mentioned, “I have a lens, which always believed that landscape architecture is an art form and should be accepted as such. I teach all of my classes through an artistic lens, with each student encouraged to develop his or her own sources of intuition, inspiration, and imagination. Each project brief establishes a framework that allows exploration and pushes students to develop their individual creative process.”¹

Art as a Study Object

At the beginning of this studio, students are randomly assigned a piece of artwork selected by the instructors for their study. The artworks selected range from both Western and Asian artists as well as a significant portion of female artists. Such curatorial effort aims to not only bring in values of cultural diversity and gender equality, but it also opens up a wide range of creative styles and design subjects to be explored by students. Using art as a study object (or topic), we hope to stimulate students’ curiosity about creative work in general.

Figure 2. Abstract Drawing by Agnes To

In order to engage students to understand the three-dimensionality of space, most of the artwork selected for the study are sculptures or have a spatial attribute.

With the assigned artwork, students are first to study and research about the artist's philosophy and creative approach, the period this artwork is created, the significant characteristics of artistic work from that era, and how that influences the understanding of form and space in future generations of design professions.

The understanding of form, scale, proportion, and composition, is further explored when students engage to make measured drawings for

Figure 3 Sections (left)

Figure 4 Perspective Diagrams (above)

by Agnes To

the artwork. They have to composite information from different research sources, to derive plan and section/elevation drawings of the artwork in orthographic projection. All these are to be done by hand, to nurture the skills to translate real scale (of the object) and the representational scale (of the paper layout).

Figure 5 Concept Diagram by Joyce Fong

Conceptual Development

One main element intended to be introduced through the study of an artwork is how a creative concept is conceived. When students study the art piece, they are also to study the artist's work processes. From initial thoughts to trial-and-error experiments, through constant revisions and iterations to seek the ultimate version, there is a workflow shared among all creative professions that landscape students should learn to master.

In the next exercise, students are asked to create an abstract drawing to express the concept they

understand from the artwork, and this exercise is conducted in iterations. Students produce sketches or drafts of their ideas; then they go through studio desk crits to discuss how such concepts can be expressed; from there, they relate conceptual understanding to form and composition expressions. Methodologically, it takes students' initial research and analysis to the next level, as the abstract drawing involves the synthesis of ideas and interpretations beyond a direct representation of the artist's work.

Figure 6 Study Diagram by Sabrina Young

An Open-Air Museum Design

While the abstract drawing is meant to express the students' interpretation of the artwork, it also lays a conceptual foundation for the next exercise. Students are to design an open-air museum to house the artwork they study, using the concept developed in the abstract drawing. This exercise brings the conceptual understanding of form and composition on an abstract drawing, to the actual design of space. Students' analytical and synthetic processes done before, are now translating into a three-dimensional real-

ity; the abstract concepts distilled from the artwork, to be infused back into their designs. This is a process for students to see how landscape design relates to art, yet also is different from art. The artistic forms and compositions can convey thoughts and ideas, and spatial design disciplines (like landscape architecture) take forms and compositions to transform them into space – a dimension that has bodily experience.

Figure 6 Abstract Drawing by Sabrina Young

Conclusion

Seen in the larger context of the landscape architecture education, this foundation level landscape design studio aims to introduce students to the elements and principles of design, and to get them to be acquainted with the various *modi operandi* of artistic field, as a way to mark the beginning of their design education.

There is so much that students can learn from Art, and it is hoped that the creative energy and inspirations from art, can create new qualities and interpretations to landscape architecture in the future.

Vincci Mak Biography:

Wing Sze (Vincci) Mak is a Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Hong Kong (HKU). She is also the Program Director of the Bachelor of Arts in Landscape Studies (BA(LS)) Program.

Vincci is trained in architecture (BArch USC) and landscape architecture (MLA Harvard). She has practiced in both Hong Kong and London, with projects ranging from urban landscapes to large-scaled regional planning.
wsvmak@arch.cetl.hku.hk

Andres Delpon Biography:

Andres Delpon is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in Landscape Architecture, at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Hong Kong (HKU).

He holds a Master's degree in Architecture from Universidad de Navarra (ETSAUN), and he is an RIBA chartered member.

He has worked in Madrid and Hong Kong for both private clients and public bodies.
andresdelpon@gmail.com

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Hong Kong's living roots - nature's gift to the community

By Mark Blackwell
Chartered Landscape Architect, Morphis
BA (Hons), Dip LA, CMLI, FRSA

Kai Tak City Public Realm

Authenticity is an integral component to Hong Kong's urban and natural landscape - while its perception is subjective, it is key to orchestrating spatial experiences and directly influences the soul.

Hong Kong's cultural authenticity has a historical fusion rooted in China and influenced by British colonialism, celebrating its unique local and international heritage and spirit, influencing the soul for a new generation for whom life, work and pleasure intertwine.

As globalization blurs the lines of identity, the unique character of Hong Kong not only needs to be protected, but to continually evolve.

The impact will be crucial for the future of Hong Kong towards creating to a remarkable and distinctive city beyond imagination. The inner beauty of invisible design, turning the ordinary into the extraordinary, the past into the present, and the present into possibilities to create inclusive public life which grows continuously - it's effects are both symbolic and emotional.

So how do you engage in DNA of the city, how to create memorable destinations for communities and visitors to return time and time again, and ultimately, what makes a great vibrant public space? The Danish urbanist, Jan Gehl neatly summarises his approach as, 'First life, then spaces, then buildings.' In other words, as designers, our responsibility

is for people and how we live and celebrate life, before developing the spaces and places, and ultimately designing the buildings.

When we put people first, we design to reflect the extraordinary melting pot of Hong Kong's culture towards a new lifestyle as a living system, with healthy living through connections with nature to explore and discover beyond boundaries, where rich and happy memories will be created. The ultimate aim, to contribute to enhanced wellbeing, creating a sense of engagement and enhanced pride in our city.

Kai Tak City Public Realm

Considered in this way, Hong Kong can become an ensemble of animated places, as a series of destinations, framed by buildings to allow the city to breathe, develop, grow and adapt, crucial to simultaneously transform and unite Hong Kong from its urban waterfront to the rural hinterland to create a thriving, well served sustainable cityscape.

Hong Kong's 'living roots' can be regarded as symbolic of the urban jungle growing coherently over time and space, celebrating its diverse heritage and spirit. The urban landscape weaves sin-

uous connections through the city and beyond to the extraordinary sub-tropical jungles, many of which are within a 15 minute walk from town centres, but not celebrated by most; journeys and destinations, places of fun and discovery where rich and happy memories are made.

By making conscious decisions to design the landscape with urban eco-systems as bio-filters, we can ultimately make a difference to atmospheric CO₂ trends. We need to explore more integrated approaches to challenge some of the conventional approaches to create solutions to reduce energy demands and increase renewable energy supply / re-use, to continue to inspire innovative ideas for new ways of thinking about the urban heat island, smart building orientation, re-use of water, efficient energy consumption and building facade / roof treatments.

Intelligent massing at the earliest stages of urban planning is key, including the harnessing of local opportunities and building orientation as part of an integrated microclimatic response. For buildings, we are seeing integrated green roofs and water storage created for aquaculture through tilapia tanks to create high yield food production within buildings. The technology had been around for decades – it's the collaborative mindsets between disciplines that need to come together.

Benefitting from solar energy for passive heating in winter, prevailing winds as a cooling mechanism, and creating shelter and shade from unwanted solar gain and glare and shelter from

Sungang Shenzhen

cold winter winds and local air pollution in the public realm. Whilst planting creates shelter from sun during hot months, this needs to be balanced with admitting daylight and low angle solar energy for passive heating in winter.

Our responsibility as designers of the urban environment, demands integrated responses to transform lifestyle experiences to enhance Hong Kong's unique DNA, visually and emotionally. We need to collaborate on the curation of experiences, without boundaries between disciplines to ensure what we holistically contribute to the urban experience; a series of transitional spaces and destinations framed by buildings where all lines of movement flow together, connected by nature. When we put people and eco-systems first, we

design towards a new lifestyle as a living system. Let's develop a collaborative approach towards integrated design solutions, connected with nature. Then our cityscapes can be re-imagined for future generations to embrace and celebrate.

Mark Blackwell

Mark is the creative director at Morphis, the award-winning landscape architecture practice based in Hong Kong and London, creating visionary designs exploring the intersection of city, society and nature. Their design ethos celebrates context, experience and memory to create healthy places for people to live and celebrate life across Asia, the Middle East and Europe. www.morphisdesign.com

Placemaking at Night

Keith Bradshaw
Principal, Speirs + Major
FRSA IALD

What makes a space a place? Spaces become places when they encourage people to dwell for longer than they may have planned and are comfortable and familiar yet every changing. Unbeknown to most user, the quality of light and shade in a place plays a large part in one's experience of the atmosphere within a space; it impacts on one's memories and experience of a place. Legibility, safety, character are just a few roles that light plays within a public space and if, carefully designed, common sources can provide the functional and aesthetic lighting.

Working with it every day as we do, it is easy to forget that light, in and of itself, is intangible. As designers, we are used to thinking and speaking of light and materials as a single entity. We need to remind ourselves that light and material are two very different yet interdependent entities. Without light, materials and their inherent characteristics are unseen, and without materials, light is invisible. In all of our projects, the dialogue between light, colour and material texture is constantly on our mind. We make multiple tests, checking and experimenting to find the most appropriate way in which to reveal a texture or best enhance a colour. We think in terms of visual impact and also consider the practicality of a concealing the lighting detail.

Once we believe we have the correct approach to all the surfaces and textures in a single space we take a step back to make sure the balance of the overall composition is what we were aiming for. This may mean some tun-

ing: downplaying the effect of certain surfaces or overplaying others to ensure the space is harmonious and clearly legible, rather than confused and distracting. Often in the process, we question whether materials and textures can be changed or relocated to help the overall composition.

Vertical illumination is as important and, in some cases, more important than light on horizontal surfaces. As upright mammals, we experience of spaces in elevation rather than plan view so it is logical that we are guided by light on vertical surfaces. Luminous elevations create a stronger sense of light in the space, more than the horizontal illumination. Human-scale light creates moments of privacy within larger spaces. People gather around light; a subconscious social reaction to light encourages people to cluster together.

Light in public places plays a key role in opening up spaces. Light encourages people into public places after dark promoting a sense of both inclusion and legibility. Light energises and promotes civic pride in these places. Well considered light within public space is a place ops interaction, a place of economic sustainability and vibrancy. Visitors and resident can exist with the same space in places that are comfortable, safe and memorable.

We work on a wide range of projects in varying locations and scales. This variety allows us to test and share ideas across projects that may at first glance seem disconnected but share a common focus of people's experience of space in light:

Salisbury Gardens + AOS

A dark sanctuary on the waterfront of Kowloon, a place of quiet serenity, allowing visitors a moment to admire the views of Hong Kong island skyline. Delicate lighting details add sense of refinement and urban luxury.

Gasholders London

The repurposing of the historic Gasholder structures into residential buildings fuses old and new revealed by light + shade – celebrating the beauty of the industrial frames whilst creating warm, refined interior for residents.

QEOP

Light creates an enchanting, immersive experience for the park. The unique moon-like spheres suspended over the pathway create a dappled effect on pedestrians below, reminiscent of light filtering through a forest canopy creating an extraordinary space which is at once intriguing and calming.

Miami Design District

A district designed to bring together architecture, design, art, fashion and dining experiences in a cross-cultivating community environment. Light is used to identify the brand of the MDD district with gold and blue. Individual, illuminated gems provide moments of joy, intrigue and inspiration.

Keith Bradshaw:

Keith Bradshaw studied fine art before training in architecture at the Bartlett School of Architecture. Keith became a Principal of Speirs + Major in 2009. He has led many of the practice's award winning international and UK projects, including the Copenhagen Opera House, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Mosque, Shenzhen Airport and flagship stores for Giorgio Armani in Tokyo, New York, Milan and Beijing. Noteworthy current projects include urban realm projects in Miami, Helsinki and Hong Kong and civic buildings in Rome, Oslo and Beijing.

<http://www.speirsandmajor.com>

New Signs for Urban Renewal

By Sunnie SY Lau

Director of Smart City Research and Industry Collaboration,
MIT Hong Kong Innovation Node, MIT Innovation Initiative
Council member of HKIUD
(RA)HKIA, RIBA, MHKIUD, AIA Assoc.

Eslite Bookstore Spectrum Gallery, Suzhou (Source:Author)

Eslite -Suzhou-Atrium pop-up stores (Source:Author)

Through the cases of Malaysia, Nanjing, Suzhou , and Hong Kong, the author argues that their occurrence could not be coincidental but instead they bear same witness for a paradigm shift in how architecture and urban design strives to serve society and people better by way of flexible, sharing, proactive, and engaging programs and space usage. The idea of space sharing, free-space and community space have overtaken the preoccupation with a distinction of what is private versus what is public (space). However, as shown in these cases, blurred definitions, hybridized activities and user experience in the era of the new generation does not

UABHK-2017-Arts Centre Installation render (Source:Author)

Multi-use hall, Rex Theatre, Kuala Lumpur (Source: Author)
seemed to bother neither the building owner nor the designer.

In essence, and in a revealing way, each of the cited examples exemplify an alternative route for architects and urban designers in response to a dynamic, changing world shaped by often, self-centered propaganda, resulted in nothing but uncertainty, challenge, distrust, and even frustration, all of which led to the victimizing of societies at large, and individual at heart. More and more one sees the call.

The first attempt comes from Kuala Lumpur, site of the REX-KL Project - a 1,300 seats cinema

originally built to serve those migrant workers and their folks at the heart of China Town, was burnt down by a fire in the Nineties Twenties. Over the next decades, the REX-KL was rebuilt and reapportioned for different uses and activities. Yet none of the programs could restore REX-KL's glory. Until recently, the owner finally realized that the missing link has been its social mission – to serve and unite the otherwise fragile, migrant community. Thus they come a long way to revamp and convert the abandoned cinema into a newly designed urban facility for social gatherings and related, designated activities. The re-planning involves the reconfiguration of the cinematic setting into a newly

Multi-use hall,Rex Theatre,Kuala Lumpur (Source:Author)

organized, flexible, spatial entities in order to facilitate seminar, exhibition, workshop, class, assembly for community at large, including that of a co-working, shared space for start-ups businesses. As it turns out, the new REX-KL has in no time captured the hearts of the old as well as the young members of community, and restore its fame and aim. The project has proven a win-win arrangement for both owner and users.

In the second example, the author is being touched by the revolution, if not a self-transformative conversion of the bookstore industry

Multi-use hall,Rex Theatre,Kuala Lumpur (Source:Author)

Librairie Avant Garde, Nanjing (Source:Author)

Librairie Avant Garde, Nanjing (Source:Author)

amid threats of extinction due to the popularity of knowledge on-line in lieu of books as physical entity. This example has been construed by two real life events, one being the Xinfeng Bookstore Nanjing and the other being the Es-lite Bookstore Suzhou. Despite a remarkable distinction because of scale, size, resource, operational mode and experience, they tell of a similar rebirth of bookstore which exhibit a

familiar feature or belief. Both have taken on a new interpretation of the concept of bookstore to cope with the demand of new society, i.e., in parallel with a business motive, these bookstores taken on a diversified, multifunctional role as far as social function and spatial ethos are concerned. The original identity of bookstore which is rather passive, has been completely replaced and reinterpreted by their owners and designers to be a major social gathering place geared for all ages. The new bookstore is no longer the same bookstore of yesterday but have evolved into a multi-functional programmed social venue, targeting mass public. As far as the program is concerned, these new bookstores have become a catalyst and promoter of art, culture, knowledge, by the hosting of multiple and flexible spaces for archives, book sale, library, exhibition, forum, art saloon, tea house, mini performance space, etc., aimed to enhance the cultural and intellectual pursuits of all ages, in an interactive manner.

Librairie Avant Garde, Nanjing (Source:Author)

Although the third event tells of a transient event happened in 2017 in Hong Kong, it nevertheless marks the unfolding of the city's open arm towards participatory art for the people, in this case as a response to a regional campaign – the Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism \ Architecture (HK). The Biennale is hosted by the cities (municipality) of Shenzhen and Hong Kong SAR. For the author, the 2017 event was a turning point for Hong Kong as it approved a bold mission to engage the people and the city at large, in order for everyone to engage with arts. The organizer and the curatorial team have been successful to gain supports from both the public and private stakeholders for the 2-6 months event. In this case, various government agencies as well as private agencies (for example, professional societies and institutes, private real estate developers, and building owners) have unconditionally bought into the curatorial team's proposal to engage the public on a daily basis by the conversion of a number of private spaces

and public spaces as venues for the exhibits of arts. In the case of the Hong Kong Arts Center at Wan Chai, the author was particularly excited to work with the Art Center and the government agencies, Hong Kong Country Parks and Ocean Park, both of whom have consented the deployment of the street area immediately connected with the Arts Center. The reapportioned use was to transform the otherwise pedestrian street into a socially engaging place by the deployment of a modularized/ reconfigurable cubic of smart furniture. This furniture has been designed to interact with passer-by (the area in mind was site to a number of high to low end hotels, an existing arts center, and the nearby convention and exhibition center). Undoubtedly, the Project has turned out to be a public event space for both adult and children.

Reflection:

A quick glimpse of these projects reflects on the fundamental purpose for the profession of design, whether it is architecture, urban design and or others. In what way and for whom should the professional make cities better and liveable, in order to create a distinctive character at a local and national level, and how should this be carried out? Alas, the so called new trend summarizes for us a change of heart on the side of the service provider, whoever and whatever they represent, in other words, a sense of caring, and most of all a willingness to engage, share, not forgetting the general good that city and society needs more than any other things.

Sunnie S.Y. Lau Biography:

Ms. Sunnie S.Y. Lau, born and raised in Hong Kong, graduated with a B.A in Architecture from University of California, Berkeley; and later on obtained her M. Arch , and Certificate in Urban Design from M.I.T. Her international experiences begun with renowned architectural practices prior to postgraduate study at the M.I.T.; she worked with Morphosis Architects L.A., MVRDV , Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA Asia) – HK and Farrells. Her focuses on urban design, urban mobility and smart infrastructure, creative and innovative sustainable design strategies. She believes firmly in bridging professional and academia by active teaching engagements. In 2017, She was invited to be the Co-Curator & Exhibitor of the Hong Kong Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale Of Urbanism\Architecture (Hong Kong). Her current research-oriented practice - SOSArchitecture Urban Design Studio Ltd. covers a wide range of works; which includes but not limited to smart urban furniture (Infrastructures), interior design, urban place-making, masterplanning. Sunnie is excited to join the MIT HK Innovation Node as the Director of Smart City Research and Industry Collaboration in mid of 2019.
<http://sunnielau.com>

Key Design elements for sustainable place identity

Lee Lai Ying, Stella
Project Coordinator, Cohere Design

What you learn in University about Architecture feels like reading a brief introduction to what design truly is. A beginning step on the path of learning how to design. Work is a completely different story. Any number of challenges and questions are created every single day. In my new role as a Project Coordinator for the Cohere Design Company I am learning this. A project coordinator is a problems solver, my mission together with my co-workers is to handle client's difficulties and meet their expectations. I am learning that if your attitude is positive you can conquer those challenges and grow from dealing with them.

My first project at Cohere Design is the sales office for Jin Cheng-Entel Irvine. Launched in 2019, the aim of the landscape design is to fully surround the office with a the natural environment, integrated with local historical and

cultural elements. The gardenesque decoration combined with urban art to create a unique fusion which let the users to engage with the feelings of artistic, modern and naturalism simultaneously when entering the space (refer to landscape plan on preivouse page). With budget a key concern for the client the space was separated into 4 zones: Light, Life, Wind and Green.

Life - Arrival Plaza:

The entrance plaza includes a feature wall framed by a symmetrical arrangement of planting. This entry sequence is a key 'zone' within the landscape planning. We considered the addition of a water feature but this proved too costly, and so the focus became the greenery and a minimal entrance canopy at an impressive scale, carefully detailed to give a sense of order.

Light - Central Art Garden:

Enclosed with the office and built structures on three sides, the Central Art Garden is the main landscape feature of the project. In it we continued with a minimalist approach, focusing on the material quality of the the minimalist design but focus on details such as materials reflective pool, artwork selection, themed trees and light

ing. I found the most challenging part of this was working with the limitations of the local construction technologies. Part of addressing this challenge involved seeking the input and advice of others with experience in overcoming this.

Wind – Void Deck & Feature Courtyard:

To the south of the Central Art Garden, the Void Deck & Feature Courtyard are reached via a garden pathway. Furniture, colorful plantings, a wooden deck formed into stepped seating and a lawn are a simple but important part of the overall composition.

Green – Sunshine Lawn:

Considering the varied mix of users, we designed the Sunshine Lawn as a multi-functional space. The design combines a wooden platform with furniture, a water feature, sculptures and a feature wall to generate a warm and comfortable atmosphere. The details of the sunshine lawn reference the eco-friendly design concept of the Sponge City.

In the completion of a project I have learned that the most valuable challenge for me is to find a balance between budget, quality and time. Design is always hard but what it brings to me completes me.

Lee Lai Ying, Stella Biography:

Stella Lee is a Landscape Designer with specialisms in architecture, interior and public space. She commenced her education at Birmingham City University, completing her BA(Hons) in Landscape Architecture. Following practical experience in Shanghai and Hong Kong, Stella is currently working with Cohere Design as a project coordinator at in Hong Kong, dealing with landscape, architecture, and interior design. s.lee@coheredesign.com

New Urban Design Book introduction

Ruined Skylines: Aesthetics, Politics and London's Towering Cityscape (Routledge, 2019)

Author: Günter Gassner

: This book examines the skyline as a space for radical urban politics. Focusing on the relationship between aesthetics and politics in London's tall-building boom, it develops a critique of the continued construction of speculative towers and the claim that these buildings ruin the historic cityscape. Gassner argues that the new London skyline needs to be ruined and instead explores ruination as a political appropriation of the commodified and financialised cityscape.

The Mathematics of Urban Morphology (Birkhauser, 2019)

Author: Luca D'Acci

: This edited volume provides a resource for urban morphology, the study of urban forms and structures, offering a mathematical perspective. Experts on a variety of mathematical modeling techniques provide new insights into specific aspects of the field, such as street networks, sustainability, and urban growth. The chapters collected here make a case for the importance of tools and methods to understand, model, and simulate the formation and evolution of cities. The chapters cover a wide variety of topics in urban morphology, and are organized by their mathematical principles. The first part covers fractals and focuses on how self-similar structures sort themselves out through competition

Public Infrastructure, Private Finance

Author: Demetrio Muñoz Gielen, Erwin van der Krabben

: The shift in recent years towards public infrastructure being financed by private stakeholders has increased the demand for transparent guidance to ensure accountability for the responsibilities held by developers. Within planning practice and urban development, the shift towards private financing of public infrastructure has translated into new tools being implemented to provide joint responsibility for upholding requirements. Developer obligations are contributions made by property developers and landowners towards public infrastructure in exchange for decisions on land-use regulations which increase the economic value of their land. This book presents insight into the design and practical results of these obligations in different countries and their effects on municipal financial health, demonstrating the increasing importance of efficient bargaining processes and the institutional design of developer obligations in modern urban planning.

Urbanie and Urbanus

Next Issue Topics

Invitation to Submit Your Paper and Join Our Journal

We welcome submissions for our third issue, which will be published in January, 2020 with the topic of ‘Sustainable Cities’

Submitted papers must be original and not under consideration by any other journal.

Academic papers (preferably not exceeding 4000 words, with an abstract in less than 200), practice papers, conference reports, book reviews and notices of forthcoming events will be considered.

You could send your manuscripts directly via e-mail to: sunny@choi-comer.com
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Dr Hee Sun (Sunny) Choi
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