

## Book Review

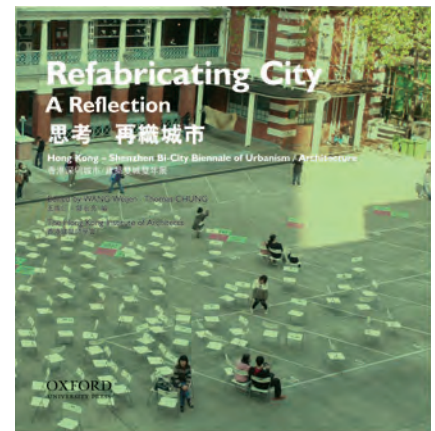
# Refabricating City : A Reflection

Edited by Wang Weijen, Thomas Chung  
Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2010.

思考：再織城市 王維仁·鍾宏亮編 香港：牛津大学出版社·2010

## Re: Publicizing Architecture.

A review of *Refabricating City: A Reflection*. Hong Kong Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism / Architecture  
Eunice Seng



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*“...After all, not only has the inaugural Biennale proven that public involvement on architecture and urbanism can take place on multiple levels, planned or spontaneous, it also reveals that the rich layers of this dense metropolis contains endless possibilities for creative expressions in a very real everyday sense. The potential for the Biennale to serve as the linchpin for public discourse on the spaces and aesthetic of the city is tremendous. The collective efforts of its proponents must be applauded, for this is a momentous step towards a more reflective and creative culture.”*

09 January 2008. Upon entering the Exhibition grounds of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture I was greeted by the familiar curatorial array of architectural and urban representations set somewhat unfamiliarly against a recently-cleaned up Central Police Station compound that has been a contested site amongst various interest groups for a decade. I say familiar, in the sense that the Exhibition has aligned itself with the recent trend of the temporary occupation of a historic site in many art and architectural biennales. Unfamiliar: because it makes public a space that was once reserved for the socially, economically and politically marginalized - those others whom the city would surely prefer to remain anonymous. Such is the uneasy nature of the urban fragment. The implications of the heterotopic underpinnings remain deeply embedded. The current ideologies behind heritage preservation necessitates that historical memory be represented as a positive collective force to the local community and to the regional and global public. The Biennale, through the form of a festival, assumes the role of an agent in the urban processes of Hong Kong.

The Book, published on the eve of the second HK-SZ Biennale, is presented as “at once a record and a reflection on the Biennale” and the editors (also the curators of the Exhibition) have taken on the role of agent provocateurs of “project ‘Re’” – re-fabrication being the main theme. Formally, it re-stages the four aspects of the Biennale, arranging them in the order of 1) the Forum, 2) the Exhibition, 3) Venue and Event, 4) Lecture and Dialogue. It uses the linear format of the Book to complete the circle of openness and inclusion. It is comprehensive in its coverage of the Biennale from its origins to its closing including the editors’ attempts to extrapolate the afterlife of the Exhibition. Post-Biennale reflections are woven into the earlier transcripts of the Forum. Contributors were invited to amend and update their texts in time for its public release in early 2010. Ample space was given to acknowledging the significance of “reclaiming” a space that was once a historical exclusion and to “reframe” it as a temporary public space and an open arena for public discussions on architecture and the city. The processes of making and of envisioning are interwoven into the narratives of the site in that the spatial histories are uncovered through the act of juxtaposing new architectural propositions with the disused compound.

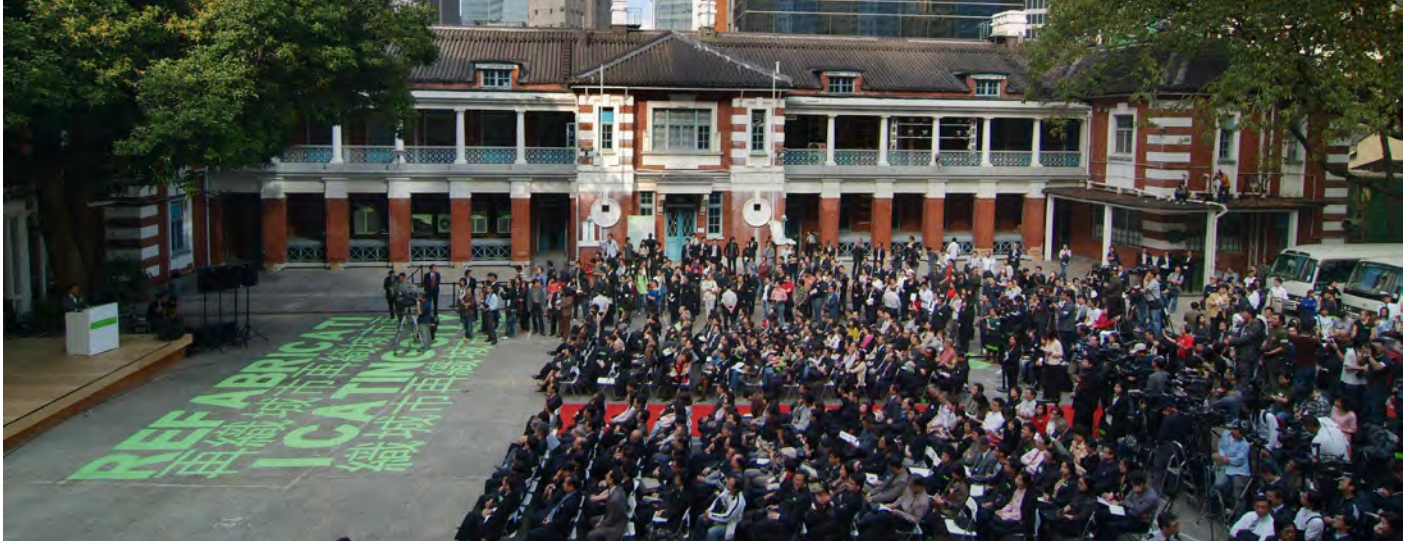
From the onset, the editors announced their intention for the Biennale as part of “the urban process of shaping [Hong Kong’s] public space,” emphasizing “consensus-building and negotiation for a shared urban value” (p xi). The scope for citizen action, public participation and discourse outlined by the curators was promising. The overlapping threads of conversations include the relationships between Hong Kong and Shenzhen and the theme of “fabricating and refabricating” for an architectural biennale and the aesthetic representations of Hong Kong’s urbanism (in chief curator’s Wang Weijen’s interview with Ralph Lerner, the Wang’s dialogue with Zhu Tao and Zhu’s essay “Shenzhen-Hong Kong (Dis)Integration,” as well as Ruan Ching-Yue’s

essay “One Fish Two Eat”); and the form and process of the Biennale (in the interviews with Chang Yung-ho and Rocco Yim, Liu Jiakun’s “Exhibitor’s Impression” and Lee Ou-fan’s “The Flaneur in the City of Life”).

The Book chose to adopt the title with the prefix “Re-”. The editors attend to the reflection on three levels: through a revisit to the Exhibition by contemplating the Event through the reprinting of the various organized dialogues, a record and reordering of the Exhibition by providing the standardized blank page surface for the individual works to be printed on, and an act of reclaiming the Venue through a recollection of the history of the Central Police Station Compound. The Exhibition had performed the acts of the “refabrication” literally as the curators weave architectural events into an otherwise prohibited space and invite the public to witness the Biennale as it reclaimed an urban space for architecture. For a Biennale conceived to be immersed in dialogues and wrapped up in discourse, the post-exhibition publication is already setting itself up to be more than a compendium to the Exhibition. One in turn expects it to be complicit to the re-statement of the dominant ideas, to jumpstart “a strong collective movement” which Ralph Lerner saw to be lacking in Hong Kong, and to be a launch pad for a stronger architectural culture (p10). The potential of the Book to tackle the ambitious task of reaching beyond being simply a record and reflection of the Biennale event is somehow held back by the same professionalism – as appreciatively commented by exhibitor, architect Liu Jiakun in his “Exhibitor’s Impression” (p38) – that governs the representation of the Biennale. Indeed, although the editors asked many questions through the frame of the “re” – “How do we regenerate our city by allowing alternative mechanisms rather than a singular hegemonic mode? How could we be able to build smaller grains in the city while maintaining a metropolitan structure?” etc. – their stance towards “a strong collective movement” remains understated. As co-editor and co-curator Thomas Chung declared, the primary focus of the inaugural Hong Kong Biennale is to reflect on and reappraise the 160 years of the city’s urban fabric in the making, rather than the provocative approach of its counterpart in Shenzhen (p49).

Herein lies an opening where the Book which, as the fifth public event in itself provides a space for reflection and could undertake the task of unpacking the trope of the “re-”. Typically prefixed to ordinary verbs of action (chiefly transitive) and to derivatives from these, “re” sometimes denote that the action itself is performed a second time, and sometimes that its result is to reverse a previous action or process, or to restore a previous state of things [OED]. In this case, what had been and are still undergoing re-fabrication, reclamation, and reframing in the Book became the main concern. The Biennale had presented to the public, through the exhibition and dialogues, a city in evolution: the individual and collaborative efforts of all those who participated in the making of the Biennale collectively raised the need for the recuperation of public space for a heterogeneous citizenry. Such curatorial confrontation between reflection (as both an act and a throw-back image) and the public “sphere” (as both a discursive social space of opinions and anonymous identities and a physically bounded space) is downplayed in the Book which as a whole presents itself more as a retrospective of a past event than a retroactive one with the ambition to be projective, so as to highlight the evolutionary urban process that the Biennale is meant to be an agent of.

Reflection, at its base, is a direct gaze. For Michel Foucault, the mirror – that thing through which the reflection is rendered visible – presents itself as a utopia in that the space within it is unreal, yet it is heterotopic at the same time in that it is a physical presence in itself and the space



Biennale opening ceremony, 08 Jan 2008. Refabricating City was awarded the Jury's Special Prize at the HKIA Annual Awards 2008

within it is recognizable and "localizable." From this view, the Book functions as a mosaic mirror, seemingly burdened by the procedures of a book as a record of events. Upon an initial cursory reading of the Book, it seems as if professionalism and multiplicities has placated ideological content and instrumentality, and academicism has appeased agency. The overall thrust of the well-intended, carefully curated Biennale with its celebration of bottom-up approaches predicated on the indeterminacy of everyday life with Michel de Certeau as the ideological figure, is represented in book format. The projects are re-curated in the order to restate the emphasis on reflecting Hong Kong projects against others. The record begins with "Mapping Twin Cities: Shenzhen & Hong Kong" (p69), followed by works on Hong Kong and/or by Hong Kong practitioners and researchers in "Mapping Fabric" (pp70-111) and concludes with parallel Exhibitions that took place in the in-between spaces such as the open-air courtyards and cramped prison cells. Notwithstanding that implicit in all the "non-corporate" installations is the possibility of architecture to affect change at a micro-level such as through user-activated spaces and environments, the projective endeavors in the Biennale are only concentrated within the exhibition category "Envisioning Fabric" (pp188-201) which consists of architectural and urban speculations on different cities by various architects. The Project (or collective vision), is presented in the framework of procedural objectivity.

Nevertheless, the undertaken mode of reflection could be productive, even provocative, in setting the stage for further critical reflection. In his curatorial statement, Wang Weijen refers to the heterotopic urban settings of Hong Kong through the lens of art and film as a counterpoint to an urban morphology based on efficiency and technocracy (p5). This prognosis of the fracture in cultural production is crucial. In a city where architecture is first and foremost a professional service and art seems to enjoy a greater freedom at least in terms of its formal expressions (notwithstanding the oft-heard comment that there is no artistic culture in Hong Kong), surely the foregrounding of urban processes would create a space for architecture – even if it is fleeting – to be critically delimited and evaluated? The Book as reflection is timely as it attempts to capture the actual processes before it is completely overshadowed by the Biennale as spectacle. Chung, in his retelling the "Exhibition Strategy and Thematic Intentions," revealed that one of the foremost functions of the sub-themes was to set local works against Mainland and International work within a spectrum of scales, locations and intensities. His own post-Exhibition reflection – aptly titled "Towards a Critical Refabrication" emphasizes on the need for self-critique and reappraisal of the current urbanism in Hong Kong amongst all those involved in the city's architectural and urban production (p49).

The five lectures and six dialogues at the end of the Book reveal the editors attempt to unpack the tropes of everyday life and the rhetoric of bottom-up approaches to effectively reflect upon the fragments of the modern metropolis. Taking the prefix "re-" to mean literally "to do over" critically (as with Foucault's take on the mirror as the critical space for the tracing out of the distinct intersection between the dichotomy of "ideologies" and "procedures"), the Book can be seen more as a beginning of a public-level discourse rather than just a wrap-up of a public event. As the architecture and urban festival was unfolding, the Mark I housing blocks at Shek Kip Mei were undergoing rapid demolition. All except for one exhibition block designated for artistic and creative events were taken down. Memories of the Star Ferry and Queen's Pier had been erased. The Central Market was awaiting its

verdict for its transformation into a public mall. The Tate-phenomenon, or closer to home, the top-down implementation of creative districts in mainland China are all demonstrations of a process that is taking place in the late industrial, late-capitalist millennial city where contemporary criteria on preservation is underscored by economic impetus.

Viewed against a larger global context where major cities are witnessing a reversal in the occupation of historic sites, the erasure or disneyfication (perhaps an even worse fate) of such places in Hong Kong is not an exception. The Central Police Station site itself is over-powering. The Biennale did not explicitly challenge the expected fate of the Central Police Station. The architecture of the site and the history of its spaces over-powered the temporary architectures set against it. Instead, the Exhibition and the Book re-presented the site to the public from the perspectives of the individual artist (Stanley Wong's autobiographical representations, pp88-89), the government (the Urban Renewal Authority's visual account of the city's urban redevelopment in "Re-Space," pp90-91); and the curatorial accounts which include Thomas Chung's historical recollection of the compound in "Re-membering" (pp92-93) that he expanded upon in his essay "Venue History and Refabrication" (pp222-231), Stephen Chan's "Venue Design" (pp232-33) and Martin Fung's "From Biennale to Festival" (pp240-43). Rather than proposing alternatives – concrete or speculative – for the future development of the site, the organizers chose to open this question up to the public.

Apropos, despite the efforts to generate public interests and participation, the exhibition as a whole, an individual project and the book could have reflectively or projectively considered the question raised by Rocco Yim as to why "the vitality of the street markets has little to do with the quality of the architecture" in Hong Kong (pp272-273). His own matter-of-fact response was that the public (citizens) were unable to articulate the issues on "the art of architecture" – a problem he identified as the result of the government's disinterest in architecture's role in improving a city's urban image as well as the fear of risk-taking by an administration based on a "half-baked democracy." Yim asserted that the role of the Biennale is to take on the task of articulating and publicizing the problem of the art of architecture in the city. Just as the projective possibilities in the bottom-up initiatives of the Exhibition were perhaps too successfully "refabricated" back into the imbricated urban layers of the city, the Book, in staying close to its pronouncement as a record and reflection, could also take further the task of projection, of a collective vision and of propositioning counter-alternatives to the (public) reader. Notwithstanding, the statistics at the end of the Book is ample motivation for the next public event on architecture to take up the challenges brought forth by the Biennale as it is reflected and reframed within its well-laid out pages. After all, not only has the inaugural Biennale proven that public involvement on architecture and urbanism can take place on multiple levels, planned or spontaneous, it also reveals that the rich layers of this dense metropolis contains endless possibilities for creative expressions in a very real everyday sense. The potential for the Biennale to serve as the linchpin for public discourse on the spaces and aesthetic of the city is tremendous. The collective efforts of its proponents must be applauded, for this is a momentous step towards a more reflective and creative culture.

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出版：文化葫蘆·2010年

始建於一九五二年，公民村建在摩星嶺的陡峭山脚上，又稱「摩星嶺平房區」，上世紀七十年代全盛時期曾住上超過二千人，在〇二年被夷為平地。物換星移，公民村今天已變廢墟，留下的是一個個臺階和地面的紙皮石，一直道樓梯，和屬於曾經居住在這裏的人的一段回憶。

這本書寫的不但是建築，而是有關作者兒時住在公民村的故事。有人有物有情，有山有海有動物；當然也有談及規劃建築室內擺設公共空間，充分反映上世紀六七十年代香港人的生活和鄰舍間守望相助的精神。

「兒時住在公民村，如今村落消失了，再加上家裏貯存了不少公民村的舊照片，便藉着出書為自己家人和當年的鄰居作個紀錄，也為紀念離世的父親。」書中蘊藏不少珍貴的歷史照片，今天沒法重拍。原來，九龍皇帝曾灶財的墨寶也曾在公民村附近出現過。

公民村要拆，居民要離開，一個社區要徹底消失，卻沒有半句不滿。外人沒有參與，反正都不知道公民村在那裏。

村莊以臺階式依山而建，一層高的平房橫向形排列。縱向以梯級貫通，橫向以走道連接。走道在屋前，屋後是明渠。屋內沒有浴室和廁所，洗澡要在廚房進行；要解決，便要到區內的公廁。

屋前的走道便是半私人空間，各家各戶因應需要自由擺設。走道也是村民互相溝通的地方，乘涼織毛衣摘菜打麻將說三道四就在這裏。

#### 無憂村莊情景不再

上世紀六十年代物質匱乏，不等於不快樂。那個小孩不愛玩？「那條大石階就是孩子的遊樂場，大夥兒玩集體遊戲。猜皇帝、猜樓梯、跳飛機、兵捉賊、捉迷藏都在這裏。玩具都是自製的，花草樹木蛇蟲鼠蟻都可以玩餐飽。例如炮仗花當真炮竹，玩含羞草，用竹枝自製『壁咁』筒，還有彈弓、射碼子、吹箭、紙足球、自製柚子燈籠……」

## 書名：山林之樂

作者：林中偉

## 閱讀《山林之樂》反思生活價值

吳永順

作者娓娓道來，臉上充滿喜悅之情，彷彿又回到無憂無慮的童年時代。各種小玩意的做法都一一記在書中。林中偉覺得，他兒時的生活比現今的孩子還要幸福。

「公民村是最安全的地方，山上沒有車，沒有外人進出。日間家家戶戶打開大門，全村人都彼此認識互相照應。你頑皮生事，鄰居會通告家長。」

因為村莊依山而建，背山面海，屋與屋之間沒遮擋，閒時爬上天台躺在斜斜屋頂上，遙望大海看浮雲看日落看星星便過了半天。

童年的快樂泉源不在物質，而在與大自然的關係，在鄰里間的關係。

#### 山水為鄰 海景非富人專利

「公民村的特色，就是與山水為鄰。遊山玩水享受清風明月不費分毫。更有價值的是人與人的關係，親情、友情、鄰里情。」林中偉筆下的公民村，像個避世的桃花源。

反觀今天的城市發展，人人困在石屎森林裏。背山面海的是豪宅，海景變成有錢人的專利。城市人要找尋快樂，便要拼命賺錢。孩子要讀好書，成績好要補習，要成才就要參加無數課外活動。學這樣學那樣，時間表填得滿滿的，卻不快樂。

長此下去，我們的環境愈來愈擠逼，生活質素愈來愈差，人情味愈來愈淡。

「香港回歸，沙士疫潮之後，新一代質疑過去社會發展模式，反思生活價值。中環價值消費主義是最終價值嗎？對財富無止境的追尋，不等於找到快樂。」

《山林之樂》要說的是一種價值觀。是回歸大自然和自給自足的生活模式。

#### 不能以金錢交換的生活態度

作者在構思這本書時，菜園村反高鐵事件仍未發生。如果你仍不明白「保衛菜園村」的

八十後青年在想些什麼，《山林之樂》為你提供了不少線索。

《山林之樂》結語一段帶出了這樣的反思；「隨着灣仔利東街、天星皇后碼頭的拆卸，香港人對我們的歷史文化生活產生了徹底的反思；開始重新認識失落了的精神，檢視不良的現狀，計劃美好的將來。公民村是一個時代的產品，由盛轉衰直到消失，只有五十年歷史。這裏要懷緬的是那種與大自然親密的無拘無束的生活，是人與人之間守望相助的關係。這些正是世人共同追求，歷久常新的東西。」

筆者忽發奇想；如果時光倒流，如果公民村未拆，又如果《歲月神偷》取景在公民村而非永利街，公民村的命運又會否不一樣？



吳永順

註冊建築師

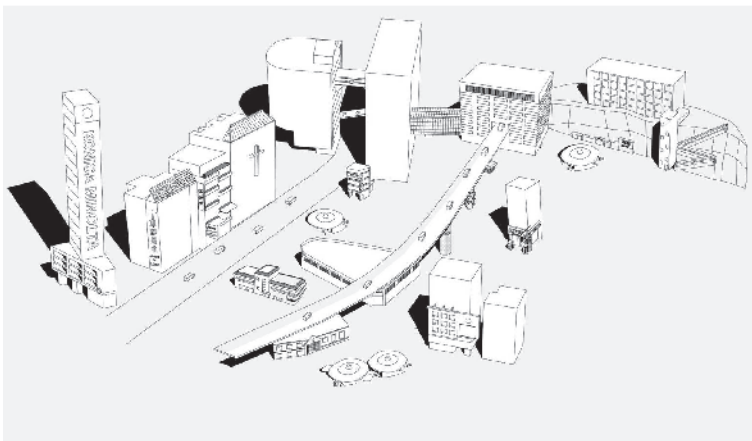
香港城市設計學會副會長。

資料來源：

由林中偉先生及吳永順先生授權刊登，並轉載於2010年8月14日及21日的星島日報

# Empowered to Go Beyond the Limit

Chan Nga Yin, Amy



## 香港の蛋

— 建築與人的對話

作者：陳雅妍

「不同時代的建築物也反映了當代的城市形態及價值觀。面對瞬息幻變的香港，我們快失去一種閱讀城市的能力。香港的城市发展，經歷多番重建，已經令香港變成迷宮一樣難以解讀。我們可以由這本書瞭解香港城市空間……」



**內容簡介：**  
三十三個有關香港本土建築特色的個案，勾勒出香港人如何運用空間的靈活變通能力。英國的建築師 Cedric Price 會以不同形態的雞蛋來形容城市的發展，作者則用港式茶葉蛋、蜜糖、出奇蛋來形容香港獨特的城市空間與功能性。

**作者介紹：**  
陳雅妍，香港大學建築系碩士畢業生。酷愛文字，所以愛上寫作，喜愛將建築跟文字結合。畢業論文《香港料理》，促成了本書的誕生。

I launched my debut book “Eggs of Hong Kong: A Dialogue between People and Architecture” during the Book Fair 2009. It is one of the eight winning entries of the Young Writers’ Debut Competition organized by the SHKP Book Club in collaboration with Joint Publishing.

My book took the British Architect Cedric Price’s analogy of urban morphologies with different types of eggs: hardboiled fried and scrambled. It is not only a book about architecture, but also an investigation into the history, local culture and transformation of Hong Kong. I hope that readers can bring my book to travel around Hong Kong and thus experience and explore the city in a brand new way.

The competition was divided into different stages and lasted for nearly a year. Firstly, I needed to submit a draft proposal and attend interviews with all judges and editors. Entering the semi-final, I was assigned to an advisor, Mr. Vincent Wong, the Director of Strategic Planning, Hong Kong Commercial Broadcasting Co. Ltd to formulate ideas into a book. Mr. Wong’s experience and

understanding of book publishing was helpful to me and I learned beyond just the architectural research.

Most people regard writing as a lonely career since you are all by yourself when you write. You may not have teammates and the response from readers can hardly be anticipated. However, recognition from others is encouraging, especially for a new author like me. One of these was from Atelier Bow-Wow, Tokyo-based modern architecture firm founded in 1992 by Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kajima.

I am really inspired by their book “Made in Tokyo”, which investigated and recorded the “not pretty” architecture in Tokyo. Reading through the book, I was amazed to see that Tokyo had a systematic record of the local architecture while no one had attempted to do so in Hong Kong. When the first draft of my book was published, my teacher, Professor N. Matsuda, helped me to send the book to Japan and got it signed by Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, the author of “Made in Tokyo”. Let me share the quote with you:

*“Observation is love; Persistence is Power”*

You have to indulge yourself in your work and stay persistent to achieve your goal. Everyone fails or gets confused along the path of searching, but one’s determination is important.

I was working on my thesis for my Master degree at the same time I had to meet the deadline of the book submission. People simply think that to handle these two tasks at the same time is mission impossible. But as my advisor, Mr. Wong said, “One common trait of Hong Kong people is multi-tasking, you will perform to limits that you cannot ever imagine. As we are young and we have dream, we should treasure whatever we are doing now that can empower us to achieve something that we have never imagined before.”

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出版：商務印書館（香港），2010年

## 書名：政經建築觀 香港都市發展實例反思

作者：羅慶鴻

對話與反思  
建築觀的政經意趣  
翁海穎

建築師羅慶鴻從建築思維啟程，娓娓解構香港城市設計、房地產開發、建築保育背後的政經社會文化因素。

「建築物是人創造出來的，也和人一樣有著軀體（外表）與靈魂（內涵）的雙重性。」

羅慶鴻循兩條線索鋪展《政經建築觀——香港都市發展實例反思》的寫作。通過作者與建築前輩師長在不同階段的六組對話，刻劃出一名建築師在成長過程的心路探索。另一方面，他抽取近年香港都市典型案例，分析香港政府、房地產開發商和居民對都市發展的不同取態。前者乃個人對建築內涵的感悟，後者是群體對建築物在功能層次的運用與感性領域的體會，以此探究香港都市發展的內在設計邏輯和外部理念紛歧。

本書風格迥異於坊間的香港建築和都市發展書籍，它沒有停留在建築風格介紹或著眼於傳統社區特色討論，而是將視角提升至建築哲學、社會文化和政府管治疆域。作者引入政府管治、公共資源、歷史意識、社會價值等概念，對當前香港都市規劃、房地產發展、市區重建模式做出反思。

作者通過歷史事件分析政府管治文化對城市發展的影響。深刻指出特區政府在傳統「被動式行政文化」薰陶下，在制訂公共建設政策和組織社區參與時，往往將重心放在「怎麼做」的操作層面，較少涉足「做什麼」領域，基本沒有上升到「為什麼」的思維疆界。以經濟效益極大化為前提的市區重建模式，使新建築物變成缺乏地區文化、社會意義的經濟產品。向來主導香港公共政策的資本主義之功利精神，在舊區重建項目與以眾人為本的社區精神相逢衝擊，牽扯出一連串社會矛盾。作者受到亞歷山大的《社區發展與公民參與：俄勒崗實驗的啟示》啟發，尤其強調社區參與市區重建的必要性。

羅慶鴻在香港歷史建築評估、文物及保育和舊區活化領域的豐富經驗，使他對近年熱門話題如西九龍發展、觀塘重建、天星事件提出別樹一格的想法。他闡釋了根據理性原則規劃的西九項目與文娛藝術理念的矛盾衝突，觀塘重建在發展和保育之間的難解之選。較特別的是，作者針對天星事件引動香港新一代對集體回憶的守護運動，就集體回憶對歷史建築物去留和保育的重要性，提出該概念的模稜兩可性質，令議題容易流於簡單化、浪漫化、絕對化，以致牽引出過猶不及的社會回應。

稍有不足是，本書較少從資源角度分析香港作為經濟城市的內在發展矛盾。港企在高增值驅動下，貴價發展土地。港府在低稅率制約下，開源不足，且要滿足高昂的福利訴求，難免土地財政。政經結合正是功利式建築觀。「過度高增值」往往令空間有限的經濟城市步入「過度地產化」，紐約、倫敦和東京同樣如此。房地產困局折射出服務型城市的普遍性、結構性問題。香港先行先試，也先嘗苦果。解套之道恐怕超越保育二字。

真正讓人掩卷回味並非香港都市發展的實例分析，乃是作者從哲學的高度來思考建築和規劃的內涵。「建築設計和規劃若缺乏哲學觀點是不能夠關門的」。六組對話中的「會說話的建築」與「看不見的建築」道出建築師在構築硬梆梆建築物的同時，利用建築上的歷史語言，將該時該刻的政經體制和藝術思潮，帶進建築設計和城市發展，賦靈魂予建築物。他們利用永恆的建築語言，將建築譜成一首凝固的音樂，穿越時空與後來人深情對談。作者沒有一面倒地批判港府發展戰略的失位，或毫無保留地推崇香港時下得令的集體回憶思潮。他秉持平常心，採取對話交流形式，反思香港城市困局，探索未來方向。這也許不是一本讓人閱後熱血沸騰的書籍，因為作者冀望傳達出哲者式的熟思溫言。

### 翁海穎

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# Lost in Translation – An adventure to the Southern Highland of Peru

Margaret Lau

The first bunch of sun-beam pieced through the cloud and mist from the east side of the sacred mountain, warming my body from zero temperature, colouring up the hidden castle at the mountain top. I could finally reveal the magnificent scene which I had been dreaming of - an amazing castle laying silently on the top of the mountain that is more than 3000m above the city we are living in. The golden city finally woke up, empowered by the sun, with shadows of the remains of walls highlighting the most stunning lost city in Inca time – the Macchupicchu, Cusco, Peru

I desired to visit the legendary lost city of Macchupicchu since I was young when I knew her from a Japanese cartoon series – “The Son of Golden City”. I promised to myself that I would be ready to reach the sacred place after I learned Spanish, the national language of Peru. I just could not believe the chance came so sudden that I even didn't have time to learn the very basic of the language! In mid July 2006, my journey of discovery started. After 30 hours of flight with two transit stops via European countries, I reached Lima, the capital of Peru, which locates exactly the opposite side of the globe from Hong Kong.

## Hola! Como esta?

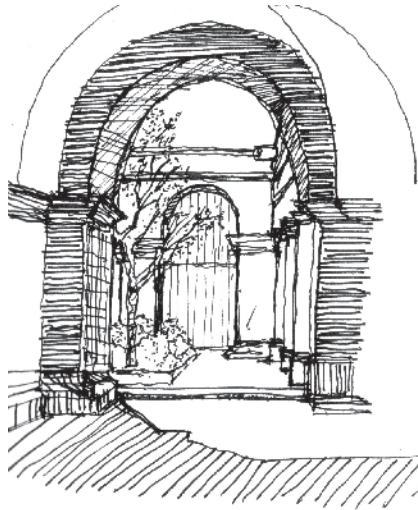
I started my journey with a week of International Conference at the Catholic University of Lima. With limited ability on Spanish, my first trouble came when making order at the school canteen. Although it seems to be an easy task, I could not accomplish it even with my little traveller's phrase book in hand.



**Hola! Como esta?** – A simple greeting did help to start my conversation with a local student at the canteen. Peru people were helpful to traveller. I finally got my first meal and learnt a new Spanish phrase which helped so much to quench my thirst in my journey afterward – **Chicamonada, Uno, por favor!** (A glass of sweet-corn juice, please!)

## Coca Te, por favor!

So, for the rest of the week, I drank *chicamonada* every meal, wishing to get



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used to the taste and life of Peruvian as soon as possible. It was until I reached Cusco that I knew the “Coca Te” was the true local taste for a pragmatic reason. Cusco, then the capital of Inca Empire before the Spanish conquer, was also the gateway to the sacred site of Macchupicchu, which located above the sea level by 3,350 meter. To heal people from adverse physical reaction at that high altitude, Coca tea is the real drink for the local!

After Cusco and Machupicchu, the rest of my journey was travelling mainly on area at 2500m above sea level. That included the world's highest navigatable lake at Puno - the Lake Titicaca. There are a few habitable islands in the lake. Comparing to the famous floating island of Uros, another habitable island, Amantani, is more quiet and authentic. I spent one night there with one of the local family, trying to understand more about their life there.

## No hablo Español. Lo siento!

I reached the Amantani and lived with a local family for 2 days. It was the time I totally got lost since the local people spoke only Quiche (a local dialect) and a little bit Spanish.

**No hablo Español. Lo siento!** (I'm sorry, I can't speak Spanish) – A sentence I found from my little traveller's phrase book helped me to explain my situation to the local family. Although I could not communicate with the family by words, body language and facial expression did help me a lot to share and experience their life. Compared to the metropolitan Lima and the glamorous Cusco, life in the island was much simpler and poor.

At night time, the temperature of the island dropped to freezing point. The house of the local

people was very basic and simple. Constructed with dried mud bricks and reinforced by dried grass, the thermal insulation of the wall was performing surprisingly well. Otherwise, I would be so difficult to survive from the freezing night.

Before I left, I gave the family a pack of ball pens which I bought from HK as gift. They were so delighted and showed a true and beautiful smile which was long lost from the faces of people from materialistic world like Hong Kong. Although their living condition is harsh, life seems to be contented. I didn't know how tourism could help to improve their living conditions. I just hope that tourism didn't pollute their mind.

## Adios! Peru.

After my journey at the southern highland, my route turned north and headed back to Lima again to complete my journey as a full circle. Along my way, I could see diversified natural landscape, and also very different life between the poor and the rich. Fortunately, everything seemed to be at an equilibrium point and the country at the moment was in a peaceful atmosphere. But there was one scene that I found very shocking. In the city Arequipa, there was a volcano backing the skyline of city. It was a snow-capped mountain the whole year round. During the time of our visit, the snow cap should be at it largest coverage since it was winter time in the Southern hemisphere. However, when I compared this with an old photo in the Museum of Arequipa, showing the same mountain 50 years ago, it was astonishing to found that the snow cap nowadays was less than half of the original size! It warned us that we are sharing the same globe, the same environment. No matter developed or developing countries, we are facing the same threat from Global warming problem. I don't think anybody will like to see the beautiful natural environment ruined like the lost city of Macchupicchu, it's time to react.

I left Peru, after visiting the country briefly. I loved the Peruvian people and was amazed by the intelligence of Inca culture. I promised that I would be back, with better preparation and language ability next time!



2-8-06 HY. Lau

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# OBITUARY:

## HUGH CEDRIC ASTBURY (1922 – 2010)



Mr. Hugh Cedric Astbury, Past President of the then Hong Kong Society of Architects in 1965, passed away on 18 August 2010.



Mr. Astbury was a graduate of the Architectural Association in London and a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. His professional life took him to Singapore and finally to Hong Kong, in 1959, where he practiced with the Public Works Department of the Hong Kong Government until his retirement in 1983. His successful career in the field of architecture was well known to many architects of all generations.

He was a very active Member of the Society and his contribution to the profession was remarkable. His contribution to the Methodist church in particular was well recognised.

We are saddened that he left us but the example that he set for his fellow members as a dedicated professional shall be long lasting.



The Institute extends its deepest condolences to Mr. Astbury's family.

