taipei operations

concept: workshop | exhibition | symposia | book

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A good city is capable of supporting an infinite number of narratives. Taipei is a good city, and there are scores of stories in the following plates and text. It is intended that the work be rearranged, reconfigured, and reinterpreted insofar as the linear format of a book allows. Chapter headings 0.00 to 7.00 (arranged by issues) and the running text group projects around common themes. The map of Taipei (see pg 34) and the narrative of Chung-Chieh Lin, may provide a useful guide (arranged by location). Alternatively, the project summaries in the appendix (pg 266), as keyed in the margins, cite the contributions of the individual authors. These fragments build a portrait of Taipei; the adjacencies, overlaps, contradictions and gaps within these pages allow space for speculation.

The investigations start, from personal observation, and from 'being there'. Data is collected from primary sources by standing in one place, the 24-hour stake-out, the survey, and the walk; all maintain specificity of time and place. These 'snapshots' are depicted in maps, inventories, charts, and lists; they are classified, scaled, and compared, both quantitatively and qualitatively. These operations translate the particular into the general so the data can be made available to others to interpret. Issues arising provoke different responses; what is an opportunity for one, is a threat to another. Propositions are tested against the particularities of the site, an incision as opposed to an overlay. An awareness of everyday objects and activities – 'urban diaries' of post boxes, a mango ice store, two Louis Vuitton handbags, a stray dog and the ritual of rubbish collection – can reveal some of the hidden structures of Taipei. 

Continued on pg10
The Asian city defies most conventional (western) urban analysis – identifiable structures and street patterns, or an easily traceable historical lineage – which often prompts generalist descriptions such as ‘dense’, ‘rapidly developing’, ‘chaotic’ and ‘ad hoc’. Taipei Operations provides an alternative model for examination, speculation, and projection, which is based upon an intimate connection to the material at hand, the city, as opposed to the imposition of a formalist overlay from above or afar. This is not a language of hyperbolic qualifiers: extra-large or mega-Dutch; it is an opportunity to question our methods of engagement and provide an alternative to the master-plan.

The book charts the research of thirty-three architecture students from Tamkang University in Taipei and RMIT University in Melbourne. Observation is the operative process; all responses to the city are considered valid. The mapping of these individual preoccupations is rigorous, often obsessive – a type of forensic study in the search for clues that reveal hidden phenomena. The studies flip between small and large, from a personal reading to a universal understanding. A specificity of time and place is required in order to avoid generalisation and simplification. Issues become identified, and patterns are revealed from within the system.

Whilst it is often considered a problem to work outside one’s cultural milieu, for fear of a lack of understanding, or misinterpretation, we use this as an opportunity for discourse. The work strives to find common pleasures within the city and to accommodate different readings; the seemingly banal is reconsidered. This dialogue becomes a paradigm for the city; the issue is that of negotiation, for different voices to be heard and to allow for multiple narratives and complexity. The architect and urban designer can assist in this act of curation.

I fell in love with Taipei on my first visit. It reminded me a little of Paris with its hierarchy of streets: magnificent tree-lined boulevards protecting the smaller grain of the interior of the blocks. The buildings decrease in height as the streets narrow to a network of lanes. What the plan doesn't tell you is how the city is used – of the quantities of motorbikes loaded with all sorts of goods, or the time when the car got wedged in the lane. 7-11's are ubiquitous - globalisation at work – but where else would you find fairy lights 24-hours a day? Taipei has adopted the chain as its own (town hall); you can pay your parking tickets and bills there as well as buy snacks. It's when you get up close that the city is really revealed: the way they stack goods, the smell of the food. How does one reconcile these two extreme scales? And how can one avoid becoming seduced by the image.

The plan of Taipei produced by the Department of Urban design is an extraordinary document. Building lines and city blocks are delineated; streets and pavements are drawn. However this is where convention stops. Only the hatched buildings exist legally, with approvals from the statutory authorities and in accordance with the master plan. All crossed-hatched structures are illegal in this context, and have been constructed according to the rules of some other system. Laneways are filled in, or become internal courtyards; the footpath disappears completely at times. New typologies are created: arcade kitchens, doughnut buildings, and wrap-around commerce. Any open bit of land is up for grabs. The authority of the map is challenged by the entrepreneurship of the inhabitants. The planners recognise (and draw) this dilemma; they are both rule-makers and citizens who, too, delight in the amenities available any time and everywhere – the spirit of Taipei.

Urban diary: ‘The World Famous Mango Ice Store’. A 24-hour ‘stake-out’ by the authors reveals not only the entrepreneurial spirit in the (illegal) appropriation of the public space of the street, but also a social code in the system of negotiation with adjacent businesses. The structure opens at 11am and begins to gradually unfold onto the adjacent lot and footpaths: tables and chairs, service stations, the overflow from the kitchen. The popularity of this fruit and ice treat grows throughout the day; the crowds build, and illegally parked cars and service vehicles expand deep into the neighbourhood. By 6pm an employee from the ice store arrives to establish an unobstructed frontage to the Japanese restaurant next door when the queues get long. This grass-roots response appears to provide a viable alternative to the systems of legislation and planning.
The ‘urban diary’ is a summary of our methods. We start small. An object, event or a district is selected and located specifically in time and place. From there we ‘zoom out’ to locate the investigation within a larger space and longer time frame to determine the site or context of the work, and how ‘big’ the idea is – the issues arising. My views about the architectural project is that it exists somewhere between the scales of 1:1 and 1:100,000 and should be considered within the time frames of a moment and a minimum of 100 years. All observations start from the personal reading, and rely upon our ‘being there’. We make catalogues, stay in one spot (over time), trace routes, see things in motion, compare them to where we have come from, and position them within the map of the world. The data is broken down, edited, analysed, – compiled as a list, arranged by colour, categorised, and seen over time in order to reveal the particularities of Taipei.

The process of depiction or making the map is undertaken consciously; it is not a neutral activity. All maps lie, to paraphrase Robert Smithson, and reflect the bias of the mapmaker: one set of data is privileged over another; the means of representation selected offer some possibilities for interpretation and exclude others. The construction of the map is the construction of the city – the design of the site of speculation – and the initial intervention. Propositions thus flow seamlessly from the analysis of what is already there.

The position of the author is reflected in the bias of the map, and it is only through a considered social and political agenda that meaningful contributions can be made within the built environment. This is demonstrated in the work of Deniz Sun who was uncomfortable with the lack of clear distinctions between the public and private realms. What could she photograph? How does one determine the (public) space of the street where on one hand a shop’s merchandise blocks the footpath while next door domestic rituals take place (in full view)? How could she reasonably operate in an environment without a full understanding of the culture? A series of drawn delineations of her perceptions reveal the nuances of occupation she discovers – alternative plans and sections to the indifferent documents issued by most cities, which register property ownership and buildings.

The authors of an alternative proposal for rubbish collection in the Yong Kung District are less romantic than me, realising that this ‘ritual’ poses a nuisance to those with large families, during a monsoon, and for the elderly or handicapped. They pose questions that avoid an over-simplification of the problem(s) and thus an expedient response. (They are not seduced by the image.) Their strategy to create neighbourhood recycling centres instead of dumping waste on the city’s periphery not only maintains the community spirit, but also ensures a continuing economic mix with the introduction of additional local employment. Abandoned historic Japanese houses are co-opted and recycled in the process; urban typologies such as the shop house and the light-industrial unit maintain their relevance in the face of impending high-rise development. This is far from a preservationist position, yet it enables the urban fabric to remain intact. By dealing with the complexity of the site phenomena at both the local and city scales, and over a period of time, they create a truly sustainable project with its requisite breadth of concerns.

Through representation and critique, the observations of the existing conditions are evaluated; the particular becomes general as the (larger) issues are raised, allowing others to engage in dialogue. All opinions are acknowledged and respected. In some instances phenomena can be considered both positively and negatively. I, personally, remain charmed by the garbage truck that heralds its arrival in my neighbourhood on Monday evenings with a digitised version of Mozart’s A Little Night Music. The neighbourhood congregates to load their rubbish in the ‘village’ square.

It becomes apparent that starting with the particular does not preclude the scale of the proposal. A fascination with traffic flows and motorcycle culture (the scale of a pedestrian with the speed of a car) starts with time-lapse photography from a bedroom window and concludes with the redevelopment of the movement systems within an entire district. The coexistence between these scales – ‘being there’ and the master-plan – becomes the issue as does the varying and often contradictory needs of the population. Zoning and pedestrianisation are deemed to be oversimplified solutions in
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from high with our bird's-eye views? Our traditional spheres of operation as architects, at 1:200 scale in plan and Curation best describes our activities in Taipei. Who needs a designer in the face of such inventive entrepreneurs? And contribute. underscore the fact that there are many readings of a good city and that anyone can and should be encouraged to accident, and by desire. Overlaps, adjacencies, comparisons, contradictions and tensions amongst the plates responses that range in scale and types of strategic intervention. The explorations by the individual authors (as outlined above and graphically throughout the book) become part of a larger body of work on the city – and a composite map of Taipei. The specificity of these fragments becomes abstracted into patterns when the work is seen as a whole. The 1:1 scale is read simultaneously with the map at 1:10,000; the phenomenological coexists with the physical. Taipei is perceived as a series of specifically located moments with strong identities and character. These observations build up, as does the work, to reveal a complexity of issues, attitudes and accident, and by desire. Overlaps, adjacencies, comparisons, contradictions and tensions amongst the plates undermine the fact that there are many readings of a good city and that anyone can and should be encouraged to contribute. Curation best describes our activities in Taipei. Who needs a designer in the face of such inventive entrepreneurs? And what is the role of the planner when neighbours can negotiate? And who are we (whether foreign or local) to swim in from high with our bird's-eye views? Our traditional spheres of operation as architects, at 1:200 scale in plan and section, for instance, are useful to the growing complexity that practitioners in the built environment are faced with today, such as the scale of a highway or the time frame of a sustainable agenda. When working at a larger scale we are often distanced from our subject matter and create the sorts of disenfranchisement that are addressed by ‘urban agitators’ such as the Situationists in Paris and the Stalker group in Italy. Questions of authorship, and the responsibility that this entails, remains clear in our practice, but we need to remember the common pleasures we share as citizens. It is our responsibility to enable and empower our constituents in the curation of their cities.

An installation of the work in Taipei and Melbourne disseminates the outcomes of the workshop, and summarises its spirit. A series of identically-sized folio plates are placed on an ‘examination table’ in the centre of the gallery. They can be read as a series of individual projects, by negotiating the piles. The loose plates by their nature have no hierarchy; they become rearranged, reconfigured, added to, or deleted. Velcro installations on the gallery wall invite the visitors, as well as the authors, to ‘curate’ the city by affixing the plates by issue, by location, by program, by project, by media, by accident, and by desire. Overlaps, adjacencies, comparisons, contradictions and tensions amongst the plates underscore the fact that there are many readings of a good city and that anyone can and should be encouraged to contribute.

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1 The author is a regular participant in ‘Urban Flashes’ conferences and exhibitions where a like-minded group of practitioners debate how one might practice in the Asian City. Her introduction to Taipei was at the 1998 workshop; the 2001 symposium in Linz was aptly titled ‘How Big is the World? How Tall is the City?’ See Tri-Ran Choi, ed., Urban Flashes: Human Environment Group 2002, and Nicholas Boyarsky and Peter Lang, ed., Urban Flashes Asia: London, John Wiley and Sons Ltd. 2003.

2 Although this alludes to the titles of the following well-known books, the critique is of the international ‘expert’ and the practice of sketching the ‘solution’ for the city, on the back of an envelope prior to arrival. Refer to Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, S.M.L.XL: New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995, and MVRDV, Metacity Datatown: Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999.

3 The ‘Mobility: Taipei Operations’ workshop took place at Tamkang University from July–Sept. 2001 and was followed by two symposia and exhibitions at I.T. Park, Taipei and First Site Gallery, Melbourne. Refer to Credit List in the appendix.

4 One could mistake 7–11 for a Taiwanese corporation. Professor Chi-Wen Liu believes that Taiwanese culture and society is sufficiently robust to withstand the pressures of globalization, and in fact to be creative and modify international imports to its own specification. From “Taipeilization”, a lecture given during the ‘Taipeilization’ workshop, 17 August, 2001.

5 From “Stalker”, a photographic work in progress by Sanford Heimer. It is in homage to Joseph Beuys’ statement ‘everybody is an artist’ which he misquotes often (everybody is an architect) in his belief to enable others to participate in the built environment.

6 The scarily clad betel nut girls in their neon-lit glass kiosks have become an unofficial emblem of Taipei, appearing on numerous book covers including the afore-mentioned Urban Flashes Asia. Betel nut girls indeed grace page 159 and the cover of Taipei Operations (much to the chagrin of my colleagues) but the latter is used by the authors as a colour chart to register the delineation of the periphery of Taipei, rather than for the seductiveness of the images.

7 Though there is an affinity to the model of ‘datascapes’ of practices such as MVRDV (op. cit.) as urban design strategies, the data here, however, is collected from a first-hand experience of the specific site rather than statistical sources. It is interesting to note that the workshop participants’ first moves were to search the internet. (I wondered why we had bothered to leave Australia!)


9 The walk is a means of empowering the individual in the city by a critique of the map – specifically the ‘derived’ or ‘bound’ of Situationist International and Stalker, respectively – as outlined in Francesco Cacchiani, Walkscapes: Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gill, 1998.
urban diary 1 | one post box over time (50 times) | 16 post boxes in different places >>
the repetition of discrete elements form a system | how big is the sample?  >>

van:
route 1
route 2
route 3
route 4
route 5
route 6

postal routes in tai an district

reading the streets of taipei
a series of images with subtle variations | a breakdown (or build-up) of component parts >>

reading the streets of taipei
rhetorical devices | multiplication: to establish scale: size and duration >>
subtraction: or to reveal by editing (the photograph contains too much information)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Opening hours</th>
<th>Program type</th>
<th>Consumer type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast shops</td>
<td>06:00 AM - 10:00 AM</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(a), (b), (c), (d)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee shops</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 10:30 PM</td>
<td>(A), (D)</td>
<td>(a), (d)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>11:00 AM - 11:30 PM</td>
<td>(A), (D)</td>
<td>(b), (c), (a)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food Shops</td>
<td>11:00 AM - 10:30 PM</td>
<td>(A), (D)</td>
<td>(b), (c)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cafes</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarkets</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional markets</td>
<td>07:00 AM - 07:30 PM</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery Shops</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 08:00 PM</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(a), (b)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/LI</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(b), (c)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit shops</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 11:00 PM</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail shops</td>
<td>10:30 AM - 10:30 PM</td>
<td>(b), (c)</td>
<td>(a), (b), (c)</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair salons</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 03:00 PM</td>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>(a), (b), (c)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry cleaning services</td>
<td>09:00 AM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(a), (b)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty salons</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 03:00 PM</td>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>(a), (b), (c)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local clinics</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 04:00 PM</td>
<td>(E)</td>
<td>(a), (b), (c)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacies</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(a), (b), (c)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 06:00 PM</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>09:00 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(a), (b), (c)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock Market trading centres</td>
<td>08:00 AM - 01:30 PM</td>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassware stores</td>
<td>08:00 AM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>(E)</td>
<td>(b), (c), (a)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning centres</td>
<td>04:00 PM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare centres</td>
<td>07:30 AM - 09:30 PM</td>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video rental shops</td>
<td>10:30 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>(b), (c), (a)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstores</td>
<td>10:30 AM - 10:00 PM</td>
<td>(E), (D)</td>
<td>(b), (c)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A site can be observed by standing in one place. Congestion points in Tien Mu community:

| Time  | 7:30 am | 8:00 am | 8:30 am | 9:00 am | 9:30 am | 10:00 am | 10:30 am | 11:00 am | 11:30 am | 12:00 pm | 12:30 pm | 1:00 pm | 1:30 pm | 2:00 pm | 2:30 pm | 3:00 pm | 3:30 pm | 4:00 pm | 4:30 pm | 5:00 pm | 5:30 pm | 6:00 pm |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|       | ![Image](image1.png) | ![Image](image2.png) | ![Image](image3.png) | ![Image](image4.png) | ![Image](image5.png) | ![Image](image6.png) | ![Image](image7.png) | ![Image](image8.png) | ![Image](image9.png) | ![Image](image10.png) | ![Image](image11.png) | ![Image](image12.png) | ![Image](image13.png) | ![Image](image14.png) | ![Image](image15.png) | ![Image](image16.png) | ![Image](image17.png) | ![Image](image18.png) | ![Image](image19.png) | ![Image](image20.png) | ![Image](image21.png) |
or by locating key moments in different media at a range of scales

1. Main bus stop
2. Pharmacy
3. Coffee & restaurant
4. Japanese school
5. Traditional market
6. Carrefour shopping
7. Local police station
8. McDonald’s
9. 24 hour market
10. American school
11. Temple
12. Mountain view
13. Convenience store
14. Restaurant & bar
15. Stock trading centre
16. Breakfast restaurant
17. Baseball stadium
18. Free circle bus stop
19. Supermarket
20. Learning center
21. Park
22. Fruit shop
23. Department store
24. Local high school

- Map of the area with numbered points corresponding to the listed places.
both quantitatively or qualitatively: arrange by colour ->

Taipei suburban streetscape at night
A place can be understood by comparing it to something you already know (Melbourne / Taipei).
how big is the site? how and at what scale does one operate?

- rented signage space
- mcdonald's signage
- mcdonald's storefront
- public space associated with mcdonald's

planned evolution / local response techniques:
- adept use of local commercial building typology
- provision of spaces for local consumers (playroom etc)
- menu / price changes
- transformation of public space into semi-public branded space, using local guidelines

unplanned but locally sanctioned evolution:
- use of restaurant and semi-public branded space by the homeless
- use of semi-public branded space as scooter parking
- use of playroom as child-minding / waiting centre

lung shan temple physical analysis
somewhere between full scale (1:1) and the map of the world (1:1,000,000).

cultural analysis

measuring local / global interaction: mcdonald's as an urban / cultural indicator

taiwanese pork noodles
taiwanese dumplings
souvlaki style chinese or indian burger based food product
broadmeadows fish + chip shop aussie burger
taiwanese mcdonald's hamburger
taiwanese mcdonald's fries
hong kong mcdonald's hamburger
japanese mcdonald's hamburger
australian mcdonald's hamburger
us mcdonald's hamburger
us burger king's hamburger
australian hungry jack's hamburger
japanese rice based mos burger
cultural distance

cultural axis
Drawing inspiration from the hills and river patterns surrounding the city to consign the orientation and aspect of the major street grid system and important spaces, Taipei City is the last city in contemporary Asia that was planned and built on traditional Chinese Feng Shui principles. After the city’s original conception, during the period of the Japanese Occupation up until the end of World War II, the Japanese introduced baroque urban planning concepts which interfaced and shaped the fundamentals of the Taipei City of today. Following the end of World War II, the city saw tremendous and prosperous growth. At present, Taipei is a metropolitan centre with 27,000 hectares of land, and a population of 2.6 million.

Situated in a basin, there is an abundance of mountain and water resources, as well as cultural traditions in Taipei. These include the Tam Tsui / Kee Lung major river systems and the surrounding mountain range of the Yang Ming Mountain National Park – with its highest peak at 1,220 metres in height. Taipei City consists of 4,020 hectares of residential area, 894 hectares of commercial area and 7,475 hectares of public facility area. Other than the major old and new city cores at the western and eastern areas of Taipei respectively, there are many sub-centres and community / neighbourhood centres in the city, such as the Yong Kung Community Park and its surrounding area (see page 40). The formation of these sub-centres and neighbourhood centres is the result of years of effort in the advancement of the Community Planner scheme, during which fourteen Community Planning Workshops and six Community Universities were set up. Together these efforts brought about the overall improvement of the community / neighbourhood living environment.

Furthermore, in recent years the Taipei City Government has taken an active role in advocating the preservation and conservation of the city’s historic and cultural heritage. Up until now, we have enlisted approximately 100 historic buildings for preservation and 1,000 building sites and streets for conservation – of which the Hwa Shan Special District and Hsi Men Market (see page 150) are two of the more important examples. Furthermore, in order to enhance the urban character of Taipei, we are continually promoting good urban design, public arts, nightscape improvement and many other projects, all in the overall aim of making Taipei a global, yet unique city in Asia.

The Hwa Shan Special District was originally a rail yard, 55 hectares in area. It is situated at the eastern part of the historic Taipei City centre. After the disuse of the cargo dispatch area, eleven hectares of the rail yard were planned to become city parkland; the other parts were consigned to be the information technology area. At the same time, a considerable portion of the historic warehouses in the Hwa Shan Special District had been transformed into a profound and unique precinct for cultural activities and artistic performances. The Hwa Shan Special District currently houses and is operated by a variety of arts groups, hosting activities ranging from exhibits, music, outdoor performances, etc. It has become a truly lively centre, forming a distinctive space – an alternative artistic and recreational hub for the city. We believe that the ‘Taipei Operations’ event would be extremely beneficial for future development of the four Taipei Districts that have been investigated. Taipei is still a relatively new city with limitless potential for cultural diversity and tolerance. We expect that the Department of Urban Development will be able to integrate all of the new stimulating, imaginative and creative ideas presented through this ‘Urban Flashes’ event and push Taipei further forward as a city. We sincerely hope that all of the international participants will provide us with valuable suggestions and ideas so that together we can establish a better environment for Taipei City.
Recent trends in the food industry provide an alternative to the proliferation of fast food chains. Slow food takes time and care to produce, uses local seasonal ingredients, and is savoured at leisure. It can be seen as a symptom of a lifestyle shift that is generated by some of the possibilities of I.T. The ability to work from home affords opportunities to escape the city, or to walk rather than commute by car or public transportation. The implications for urban design become significant. Does major infrastructure become obsolete or dramatically different? Will new programs be invented to respond to this new sense of time? The focus shifts from the global and city-centred, to the local or neighbourhood.

This shifting sense of mobility is investigated in Yong Kung District. The urban scale shifts downward from busy eight-lane boulevards that define the perimeter of the major city block to congested lanes where pedestrians, motorcycles and cars vie for rights to the roadway. (Most pavements and arcades are overrun with goods that spill out from the shops and restaurants.) One response to the congestion is to overlay an additional system; an upper-storey walkway provides a designated pedestrian thoroughfare as well as an opportunity for further commercial frontages and residential expansion.

Alternatively, the existing urban fabric, swollen (like rice) by illegal structures, is rearranged – added to, subtracted from, slipped and slid – to create a new hierarchy of passageways and spaces that cater for the full range of movement and lifestyles: fast cars for fast food, or a leisurely stroll through the myriad of specialty restaurants. And inevitably, the motorcycle prevails, having the speed of a car, and the mobility of a pedestrian.
Occupied in the 1970s by most of the white-collar workers in Taipei, this district has been very well established in respect of restaurants, business activities and the arts. There are numerous renowned restaurants such as the famous Din Tai Fong and Jing Chou Ying traditional Chinese restaurants occupying this district. In 1996 the region went through a series of positive changes as a result of the implementation of the Taipei Local Community Environment Improvement Program. The support of residents (through the first ever community “referendum” process) in the district ensured that the local community park is revamped with most of its ancient trees left intact, and that the new roads in the region are planned properly and sympathetic to the area. This, as a result, created a community that is highly cohesive in nature and at the same time has its own unique identity all centred on the Yong Kung Community Park. Spread outwards from the park, you can find a university campus, specialty souvenir stores, restaurants serving cuisines from a diverse ethnicity, and traditional Chinese fine arts and crafts stores. As a whole, this district has embodied the essence of metropolitan style for Taipei City, and is currently booming as a must-visit tourist attraction spot for Taipei City.
the time and the space of the street are observed and compared >> shifting of programs over time.
new relationships with the city are established through an upper-level walkway.
Yong Kung the district is graded from fast to slow >>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>time of the day</th>
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<th>slow</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>streetscape</td>
<td>fast</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>streetscape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
at a range of scales and media, in plan and section >>
Dimensions are attributed to each system of movement. Proposed running track to link the community with the universities, secondary & primary schools pedestrian, motorcycle, car.
the urban fabric becomes clogged by illegal structures (before and after)
laneways become blocked; movement is restricted by the overspill of restaurants, shops, etc. >>
the planners recognise this phenomenon; the dilemma is that it is part of the spirit of Taipei.

Town planning map: legal structures (hatched), illegal structures (cross hatched).

Step 1: legal & illegal structures
Step 2: removal of illegal structures
Step 3: slide at ground floor (0m)
Step 4: slide at upper floor (4m)
nothing is removed; simply rearranged, to form new urban spaces.

slide ground floor to form clogged / unclogged (slow / fast) spaces, dead end lanes & piazzas.

existing map with illegal structures removed.
on the roofs, in the buildings and on the ground

65

add: empty space, new legal structure, roof

ground level

levels 1 - 4
to encourage spaces for both pedestrians >>
as well as motorcycles and cars.
Taipei continually transforms itself; all precious space is used, over a 24 hour cycle. Many structures rely upon mobile technologies: kitchens and merchandise spill onto the footpath from restaurant and shop interiors during opening hours. Illegal structures are constructed from easily demountable, disposable materials; the hawkers of pirated goods, for instance, need to pack up quickly to avoid arrest. Some of these activities and installations are perceived as a threat to order – promoting congestion and chaos. Conversely they can be seen as emblems of the vitality and resourcefulness of the citizens of Taipei. (The planners draw the illegal structures in their maps of Taipei, granting this rogue occupation of the city a status that is unthinkable in most cultures.)

How (or why) does one design (or legislate) in this entrepreneurial environment? And how does one avoid becoming seduced by the stereotypical glimpses of Asian ingenuity? A biological model is proposed to analyse the phenomena and develop an organic model – or instruction set – so the system can replicate on its own in constantly changing local conditions. More literal (and faster) change is afforded by the introduction of an automated car park system that moves shop units in pods to the street level during their opening hours to capitalise on optimum accessibility. Keen observation and analysis are the methods for all our actions, yet it is the struggle with understanding the visual and experiential boundaries of the public and private realms that results in a new delineation of property lines in Taipei – based not upon ownership, but by evidence of occupation.

>>pg74
Mobility 1 The scooter is wherever a gap in the street is. According to 2002’s statistics, there are 424 motorbikes per every 1000 people in Taiwan; this is nearly double the percentage for the second largest ownership country, Malaysia, where there are 220 motorbikes per 1000 people. Scooters cause the most traffic problems, yet they are the only transportation mode that enables continuous movement in traffic. They provide maximum mobility in cities, and even though they are a source of congestion and pollution they are the most efficient and economical mode of transportation.

Mobility 2 Entrepreneurs in the food industry make up an invisible economy that is not reflected in any official statistics and reports in Taiwan. Since these small businesses are waived from filing sales tax, the cash flowing in and out is understood but never officially registered. An unofficial account record shows that the ‘Hao Da Frying Chicken’ food stand in the Shi Lin night market in Taipei generates, on average, a net profit of NT$80.5 million in cash monthly. ‘Ice Town’ located on Yong Kung Street generates a monthly net profit of over NT$1 million. It is analogous saying that ‘Ice Town’ generates a net profit of 0.36 million US dollars annually within a store less than 10 m² in area. Universal rules of market trends and demand / supply curves understood by economists cannot predict or estimate this underground economy. This thriving type of mobile economy is unaffected by either macro- or micro-economic conditions. There is no economic recession.

Mobility 3 When the Portuguese egg tart was introduced into Taiwan in 1998, it suddenly became the most popular dessert. The public developed such a craze for the egg tarts that waiting on line for an hour to purchase a box was not uncommon. As the media publicised this consumer fashion, Portuguese egg tart stores opened one after another throughout cities, towns, and even the countryside. On Tien Mu West Road in Taipei alone, there were five stores within 200 metres of each other at the peak time in 1998. None of the five stores lasted more than six months. According to the Executive Secretary of the Chain-Store Association of Taiwan, in comparison to the previous three to four years set-up time for a given entrepreneur store / shop the scale of the Portuguese egg tart store, it only takes one to two days to open a new store at the present time. These small shops all require small investments yet have quick profit return cycles. When consumer trends change or become short-lived, the shops close down. Since every entrepreneur is his or her own boss, the shop owner possesses absolute autonomy in making business decisions. As long as the shop owner is not the last one to open the shop within the given trend, he or she makes profits. Thus, with maximum freedom and flexibility, entrepreneurs follow consumer trends in opening and closing new shops. When a market trend dies, the shop owner waits for the next trend before restarting a new business. Retail programs and shops are conveniently exchanged and replaced in buildings under these rapid market changes. Building typologies are no longer valid categories for any given architecture. Space becomes merely flexible and exchangeable floor area that accommodates any usage. Identical shops are found in any corner in any city when certain products / merchandise are the market trends. Despite their original trained specialty or type of business, shop owners change occupation with the rapid turnover of market demand. Whatever the demand is determines the shop owners’ specialties. Building programs are mobile. Seasonal changes in shop occupancies become an unavoidable result for certain locations within Taipei City. Building industries are mobile. Shop owners are mobile. Space, people, time and order are all transient factors in the urban context. Maximum mobility in allocating resources of any type is inevitable. It is the only answer to efficiency and economy.

The mobility in the gaps mentioned above is the mobile mechanism that infiltrates the known regulatory methods that exist. A scooter rider is his / her own boss. With a small monetary investment, absolute autonomy of movement is granted. The rider decides when, where, and how he / she wants to move in between spaces. The route to take and the destination to be reached can be changed instinctively as one wishes. Absolute control, utmost flexibility and maximum mobility are what is possessed. Entrepreneurs are their own bosses. Investing with minimum capital and expecting the maximum profit return is the main goal for small businesses. The minimal money involved per transaction amounts to only two to three US dollars that waives the business from the standard tax regulations. Tax deregulation enables maximum flexibility and possible freedom in mobilising cash within an invisible economic sector. Together, the small cash transactions add up to an enormous amount that no official regulatory system can measure and control. Trends following entrepreneur shops multiply as information regarding current trends is shared via any format known and any media available. Information mobility leads to excessive redundancy that makes deregulation the only way to regulate. Redundancy in shops causes short-lived market trends. Short-lived market trends disintegrate activities, people, events, time, space and order into transient and mobile phenomena. Unable to be quantified, these seemingly subtle phenomena penetrate deep into the cities in both visible and invisible forms. Not only do they influence everyone’s daily lives, the mobility assumed creates visible changes in the urban context. They add and alter a diversified, physical, and visible presence to the surrounding environment.
A genetic model is used as an alternative locally-oriented method to read and organise.

**Genetic Terms:***
- **Genome:** A complete set of genetic material (every chromosome) is called a genome.
- **Chromosome:** Chromosomes are strings of the DNA + serve as models for the whole organism; chromosomes are made up of genes.
- **Gene:** Each gene contains genetic material for one trait; for example, eye colour.
- **Allele:** Possible settings for a trait are called alleles; settings may be as simple as determining whether a trait is present.
- **Genotype:** A particular set of genes in a chromosome is called a genotype.

**Architectural Model:**
An architectural model derived from genetics.
the city; it is believed these phenomena contain dominant survival characteristics.

Entities usually stay in the same position every day. Transportable infrastructure is utilized for its cheapness and size rather than its portability. Generally the bigger the entity, the slower the movement. Examples include fried food vendors, dumpling vendors, and iced drink vendors. Entities tend to keep to regular patterns of movement. Infrastructure needs are minimal. Examples include fortune tellers, street masseurs, and sausage vendors.

Entities that move quickly often tend to have little accompanying infrastructure. Examples include counterfeit watch and handbag sellers, who tend to operate out of blankets on the ground or cardboard boxes.

definition | survival through complete physical mobility; entities which display physical mobility as their main survival trait have the ability to move everything at least once daily, if not more often.

level of mobility:
- low mobility: same place every day
- medium mobility: same area every day
- high mobility: different area every day / week

scale of infrastructure:
- cart-based vendors
- stool + table-based vendors
- blanket-on-ground-based pirate goods vendor

case studies / examples:
- cart-based food vendor in Chung Hsiao district
- stool + table-based fortune teller in Yong Kung district
that will prevent them from becoming obsolete. 

Entity is set up in an alley off a busy main road. Customers are drawn due to the sheer volume of passing foot traffic.

Entity is set up at a night market with other similar entities. Customers are drawn due to the temporary creation of a microdistrict.

Entity is disassembled and stored in its regular weekday position. Infrastructure for this kind of mobile entity is minimal.

Potentially the most wide-ranging of the behaviours, movement at an urban scale involves the consideration of how and why an entity might position itself in a given place at a given time of the day. Certain programs will move more than others, but generally speaking all entities will show a pattern of migration. Issues involve what sites the entities might require and how to deal with the transitory nature of these programs.

Programs with relatively few service requirements often exhibit movement as their primary trait. These programs emphasise the specialist nature of the behaviour and may be abundant in number, but generally show a lack of diversity of program. However, programs which are appropriate, such as food production, tend to be very successful given the ability to quickly adapt to areas of demand.
and allow them to flourish in the current local condition

**Genotype 2: Fragmentation**

**Observation + Description**

- *Non-hierarchical fragmentation:* An entity divides itself into two or more equal parts in order to better address its context; the parts may be copies of each other or may be equal and complementary.

- *Hierarchical fragmentation:* An entity spawns a smaller fragment; an obvious hierarchical relationship exists between the two.

*Definition:* Survival through the physical fragmenting or splintering of a program, where a single entity retains its individuality even when physically separated.

Program needs to expand requiring more space when there is no space available directly adjacent; program is too large to fit into an existing site so the decision is made to spread program across two or more different sites.

**Case Studies / Examples:**

- Pasta shop on Yung Kung Street
- Clothing shops in Snake Alley
it is envisioned that these program revisions could be combined into an original entity

This occurs here, along with some food preparation and serving.

Majority of food preparation and customer service occurs here.

Circulation across public spaces.

Expanding expansion space.

Original entity: advertising and crowding occur here, along with some food preparation and serving.

Genotype 2: Case study | Cello Pasta, Yong Kung Street

When a program or entity becomes fragmented, the definition of its boundary edges may become blurred, particularly if the fragments have no internal hierarchy. Potential areas of investigation include how you define an entity if it is in pieces and what happens if the parts have different functions and require different zoning even if they are all part of a whole.

With the ability to fragment, programs are no longer restricted to the dimensions of their single, current site. This also means that new projects can be planned with the notion of fragmentation considered from the start to allow for greater ease of fragmentation and higher productivity between each of the individual fragments.
An active model that would generate new forms >>

Conservation of space is practiced almost universally in Taipei. These two entities may be equal in program and content but have markedly different physical space requirements.

**Definition**: Survival through the careful or intelligent use of private space; avoiding waste through an efficient or unorthodox use of available floor area.

**Forms in Taipei: Variant Behaviour**: Simply compressing everything into a smaller space; using space in an unorthodox manner to accommodate an orthodox program; modifying a program to conform to a space which normally couldn’t be used.

**Case Study**: General store, Lung Shan Temple district

Conservation of space ensures that all available area is used at maximum efficiency, providing the opportunity for either greater diversity or greater numbers of programs within a given community. At this level conservation means cheaper rents or in some cases no rent at all, as well as making it possible for people with even very small amounts of space to operate a business. Conservation of space may also help the use of other genotypes such as movement, given that a smaller entity is more likely to be capable of motion.

**Case Studies / Examples**: General purpose store near Lung Shan temple

**Genotype 3: Conservation of Space | Explanatory Diagram**
the juxtaposition of a more open planning model hopes >>

complete assimilation; some entities have no rented (private) space of their own and operate entirely in public space or sometimes in space owned by others. These entities have a minimum assimilation requirement just for their infrastructure (deep fryers, gas bottles, shelves etc); temporary space required to serve customers is acquired on top of that.

partial assimilation; some entities with stable, rented premises still rely heavily on assimilation of public space for survival. Temporarily acquired space is valuable for entities whose programs have peaks and troughs in patronage.

definition: survival through the appropriation and transformation of public space into private space; the assimilation of public space may be either total or partial, possibly involving a permanent acquisition or one that occurs during business hours, with the space released at closing time.

forms in taipei: variant behaviour:
- acquiring public space with physical objects
- acquiring public space with sound
- acquiring public space with human presence

case studies / examples:
- fruit shop, clothing shop, computer shop (expansion by placing stock in adjacent public space); mango ice store (appropriation of space for crowding / advertising); auto repair shop (appropriation of public space for use as work space)

program type | food vendor
program type | women's clothing store

...
It can be safely assumed that any entity will try to appropriate more space than it has actually paid for. However, successful applications are often temporary or subversive in nature. Appropriate levels of acquisition are also a concern and it raises the issue of how much space should be allocated for semi-private use and how much space is required in order for it to remain public. The effect of assimilation may also vary with the juxtaposition of smaller programs relative to large urban entities.

The ability to appropriate space ensures that entities can operate at a larger scale without any extra overheads. This may manifest itself in a store offering an increased range or greater number of products or having the ability to provide services, e.g. seating, that it would normally be unable to provide.
and therefore enable production of more appropriate future outcomes

**grouping:** for the purposes of this study, a micro-district is defined as being formed from the grouping of three or more separate entities with similar programs. There is safety in numbers, even for direct competitors.

**symbiosis:** a relationship between two different and separate entities for mutual gain is a symbiotic relationship. Usually one entity is larger and more stable than the other. Examples include food and beverage vendors next to each other, and flower / incense sellers outside temples.

**definition:** survival through the use of positioning to create adjacencies where similar / complimentary programs can congregate; these juxtapositions can potentially – though not always – lead to a condition of mutual gain.

**forms in taipei:** variant behaviour: symbiotic behaviour usually involves a major entity that owns real estate and a smaller more mobile partner; grouping behaviour usually occurs between larger numbers of similar entities.

**case studies / examples:**
- Furnace and temple supply micro-district near Lung Shan temple (grouping).
- Fried food / cold drink vendors next to each other in Yang Kung Street (symbiosis).
Grouping behaviours tend to manifest themselves at a planning level where it becomes obvious that certain program types are clustering in certain areas. Grouping may occur when programs sell a similar item or they may have similar requirements for services. For symbiotic behaviour, consideration might need to be given to the potential relationships that might form and the need to allocate space for symbiotic partners.

Grouping benefits vendors as they are expected to have an increased longevity as the pulling power of a district is far greater than a single store. Therefore consideration should be given as to how similar programs might be allowed to interact with one another. The formation of symbiotic partnerships means that single entities can become more specialised, without fear of loss of functionality.

Both entities draw customers independently of each other; then the customers are shared due to the entities' complementary but non-overlapping programs.

Genotype 5: case study, beverage store, Yong Kong street.
automated car park systems place stores in pods that move
throughout the day to take advantage of the most accessible positions.
each program has a most productive time period
and needs for maximum accessibility and visibility.
how does one differentiate between private and public space in Taipei?
property lines are irrelevant in respect of these multiple thresholds (of perception)
of add-on structures that encroach upon the street or openings that reveal interiors >>
what is the plan if this is the section? >>

storage

laundry
spaces are catalogued and defined by traces of their occupation: objects, goods, people. >>
these perceptions are inflected on the existing map of the northern terminal bus district and places i felt i could go

illegally occupied territories
buildings
ambiguous territories
projected interferences
offer strategies to augment the range of public and private spaces that extend into the street.
It is a paradox that the invisible systems in our cities have a significant impact on our mobility. Networks such as the telephone and communications exchanges, the internet, surveillance, and the abstractions of money movement make few physical marks on the landscape, yet their influence is comparable to the more physical networks of highways, railroads and bridges. Political systems make their marks in surreptitious ways. The tree-lined boulevards of Taipei can be perceived as a prescriptive presidential route from palace to parliament – a means to escape the grit of Taipei. An anarchist’s map would privilege the back lanes and alleys which fuel the city. The most pervasive network of the city however is amongst its inhabitants, as neighbours, through transactions, in service. The complexity of this infinite layer of connections is the real fabric that binds a society together.

The pedestrian streets Hsi Men District come alive at night, with the bright lights of the cinemas, trendy shops, and bars and restaurants fascinating to residents and tourists alike. What is considered a blur or overload of media for some is a place of awe and beauty for others. New additions to the street are proposed that integrate and locate information, and add further (virtual) stimulation to the existing cacophony, respectively.

Taipei’s far-from-invisible ‘add-ons’ or layers of cables, connections, and antennas provoke the desire for a new reading of the district that is more attuned to the prevalence of new technologies. The overlay of a grid of transmitters makes its mark on the streets and provides communications access for all.
If I do not want to engage in combat, even though I merely draw a line on the ground and defend it, he will not be able to engage me in battle since we turn his movements aside.

Sun-Tzu, Art of War, 500BC

Non-visual approaches in architecture and city planning have long been misunderstood as being impotent in reality. To conduct design or planning in a non-visual way indicates two possibilities. One is the theorising of the invisible part of the world. The other one is to utilise silent languages to communicate and to make proposals.

Historically urbanism has been conceived in tangible forms of variations under hard-headed ideologies. However, the hidden side beneath the visible forms in fact occupies the major part of our public realm which is bewildered by the flux of emotions and exigent actions. People are constantly making strategic moves to gain benefits or to escape from danger. In situ interactions are found as art that may go beyond set rules and modes of negotiation.

Our instant encounters have even more fluctuations with the use of mobile telecommunication. Cable lines, antennas and halfway stations, often without integrated planning or without permits, are attached to existing buildings. They do not follow any spatial order and divert activities in the city from long distance. Another important invisible dimension of Taipei is the settlement embedded out of ancient Feng Shui principles. It was conceived by the reading of celestial bodies in the sky and surrounding landscape. The mystic dragon was used as a reference to describe the land forms.

The orientation and location of Taipei City was carefully chosen to rest at the dragon’s tail along the river. As a city in its naked state, Taipei shows pre- and post-modern planning conditions which reveal the invisible natural and social plasma holding the operation of the whole organism. How to investigate these transient phenomena and to delineate them in a more comprehensible manner is truly a long-term task. The students from RMIT and Tamkang University had been persistently trying to decipher their in-situ studies on the dragon network, earthquakes, typhoons, taxis, vendors, the homeless, Betel Nut Beauties, illegal additions, neon lights, electric cables, advertisements, wireless antennas, garbage collection, fake goods and dreams, etc. in the hope of finding their own approaches.

These personal observations applied to dealing with urban issues will probably draw skepticism and non-the-less be futile. These non-formal languages could eventually be coordinated through a process of juxtaposition and most of all become valid in representing the everyday awareness of the city we live in.
a media arcade consolidates the discordant signage and information in hsi men.
hsi men's visual stimulation is layered onto traditional and virtual space  >>
Bubble devices are information distributors that create sound, temperature, light and texture.
existing taipei communications technology is clipped-on and physical
mobile phone and related IT networks become the main source of future infrastructure
the city is re-formed by flying antennas and the structure of new networks. >>
giving the neighbourhoods constant access to the world beyond.
The city is composed of series of programs that generate living, work, recreational, commercial and service spaces to support the lives of its citizens. These form the basis of stories that make a city unique, and the mark of a good city is one that is capable of sustaining an infinite number of narratives. Street life is generated not only by the scale and design of the infrastructure and buildings, but also by the events of daily life. Real time is about specificity – of the unedited passage of time and the immediacy of a tangible scale. It is a necessary accompaniment (or an alternative?) to the urban master plan.

Four identical walks through the streets of Taipei prompt a different story of the city from each participant. This becomes the model for the exhibition of our work in Taipei where each visitor would be encouraged to make their own reading of the city, a narrative in response (or in addition) to ours. The notion of ‘event’ has a long tradition in place making. The cinema is one such program, and the throngs of teenagers and motorcycles at night in Hsi Men are made as much of a spectacle as the film or exhibition showing. Events and their supporting structures can be ephemeral or temporary; mobile parks are proposed to bring the mountain and the beach to the workers in dense Taipei City. The usage and appropriation of space can be theatrical (especially in Taipei): an incident worthy of pure epic cinema with crowds building, queues forming and a crowd controller stepping in. This could be a rock concert, or the expectation of a late night treat at ‘the world famous mango ice store’!

>> pg 136
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- expanded
- time
- compressed
- indigenous
- culture
- introduced
- public
- ownership
- private
- intermittent
- usage
- constant
- flowing
- circulation
- congested
- open
- access
- closed

comparative studies | food: international / local; melbourne / taipei

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4.01
mango ice store on yong kung street

questionnaire: mango ice patrons

4.01
The factors influencing the success of the mango ice store:

- A relatively clear view of all major throughfares
- Ability to annex large amounts of public land when business demands space
- Enough surrounding space for crowds to linger, encouraging more business

Environmental effects of a successful store:

- Customer parking encroaches onto road causing traffic congestion
- Popularity leads to crowds encroaching on neighbouring businesses
- Lack of eating space requires new places for consumption

Stage 1 | Morning: Tables push implied boundary to the site edge
Stage 2 | Mid-afternoon: Customers parking vehicles extend territory of site
Stage 3 | General business: The entire corner is occupied generating congestion
Stage 4 | Peak operation: Patrons flood immediate area expanding shop to maximum size
a walk through the taipei operations exhibition is a paradigm >>
of a walk through the streets of Taipei.
the spirit of the mountains (or the circus) is created >>
temporarily within the dense urban center.
During the Japanese occupation period, the northern part of the west district in historic Taipei Town was once a lively commercial centre. However, during the 1980s, the development of multiple centres in Taipei, and the commencement of the MRT construction work led to a progressive shift of commercial activities towards the eastern part of Taipei City, and a gradual decline of the west district in general.

Hsi Men Din District, being one of the liveliest centres in the west region, was also adversely affected by the decline. To reverse this situation, the Department of Urban Development started devising programs that aimed to revitalise and bring back people to the district. Since the start of the 1990s, we began to promote the formation of a pedestrian mall (network) in Hsi Men Din District; projects ranged from assisting with the establishment of local businesses and community organisations, introducing city marketing campaigns, repositioning the Hsi Men Din District in the overall development of the city, and encouraging new investors.

In 1999, major construction and infrastructure works for the district were accomplished, and a brand new spatial image began to take shape – in particular a much-improved nightscape. At the same time, the MRT and railway networks were completed. The district now contains Taipei’s busiest and liveliest transportation and interchange hub.

Much renewal and revitalisation work is still underway in the Hsi Men Din District under the direction of the Taipei City Government, such as the Movie Theme Park (the reutilisation of an old gasworks), the Red House and the Hsi Men Market Cultural Complex (the reutilisation of a historic theatre and its associated buildings), and the Country and Town’s Forum towards the northern part (the refurbishment of a historic building). The renewal and revitalisation efforts will continue in this district. The completion of works such as those stated above has brought in a crowd of one million to the district every month, and an estimated commercial potential of six billion dollars for Taipei City as a whole. It has once again become the new ‘developing’ district of Taipei.
the pedestrianisation of hsi men generates urban piazzas >>
extensive undercroft spaces respect motorcycle culture and active night life >>
Taiwanese film culture is promoted within this burgeoning film district.
Marginal landscapes are found in most urban environments – leftover spaces, abandoned sites, or those where property ownership is ambiguous, beneath or beside major infrastructure such as highways, for example. They are inhabited by people or programs often considered to be at the margins of society: the homeless, stray animals, illicit activities, storage. Many contemporary theorists and practitioners consider these areas to be important to the richness of the life of the city, but this view is not often shared by government and planners. These spaces (and their occupants) generally become the first candidates for urban renewal (or eviction).

The homeless have appropriated niches, pylons and undercroft spaces; the city parks their garbage trucks under and around the Chung Hsiao Bridge in Hsi Men. ‘Storage’ becomes a metaphor for this type of inhabitation and new infrastructure is proposed that offers opportunities rather than prescriptions for occupation. (It should be noted that while there are ten websites in Taipei for stray dogs, there is only one for homeless people.) Illegal structures abound in Taipei and Hong Kong (see 5.01), from the resident trying to appropriate a little more space, to the restaurants and traders who hawk their goods. Sidewalks, arcades, gaps and empty lots are fair game. This appropriation of the public realm is considered vital to this life in the city (where wonderful food can be sampled at every five metres) and provides an atmosphere that makes the streetscape vibrant. (Note the difference between the shopping experiences at the department store and the street vendor in the ‘Diary of Two Louis Vuitton Handbags’.)
Phenomena capture the (unconscious) actions of the city.

The images and ideas presented here investigate phenomenon where the appropriation of space is derived from the unplanned, the unconscious and often the un-built. Aberdeen in Hong Kong, a former fishing village and now a high-density residential area with a decaying industrial centre is sampled as a test case. The intention is to establish new strategies for architectural intervention in the city.

In Aberdeen the phenomena observed reveal not only the unconscious or unplanned actions of the city but they provide new possibilities for the way in which architectural interventions could occupy or appropriate space within a city.

The Phenomena catalogue that follows is an attempt to reveal clues, follow hunches and generate possibilities. Phenomena of particular interest are those that allow for, or result in occupation and reveal the elusive and often intangible identity of a city.

In Aberdeen, ten classification ‘types’ relevant to the appropriation of space are catalogued and named. By their very nature the phenomena of a city are not fixed and must mutate and evolve; the catalogue is therefore not fixed and can be added to or altered each time the site is ‘sampled’ or mapped. The possibilities implied are thus potentially unlimited.

Accretion is both phenomenon and process; the act of adding may involve subtraction from other areas of the landscape. The most interesting thing might not be what is added but what was taken away and from where.

Possibilities: the phenomena of accretion suggests possibilities in which a site insertion may continue to accrue material and programs, to physically change the landscape over time. The land / water edge or any edge may not be clearly defined allowing for accretion in either direction. The landscape may be on water and the water may be on land.

Where does the built environment exist?

Grafting is the continuous mutation of volumes (involving both addition and subtraction). There is a continual shift between volumes, often resulting in hybrid spaces that cannot be easily defined as inside or outside. A graft may alter the programmatic possibilities of both the ‘parent’ and the ‘graft’, i.e. to create a hybrid. A graft will leave traces or a line of ‘memory’ through the site without precluding new possibilities. A graft relies on the existing fabric or structures. Grafting may create a paradoxical union, i.e. steps that lead nowhere.

In Aberdeen an industrial building is added to the waterfront, covering but not erasing, sea wall steps, which now lead...
Transplanting occurs when parts of the physical site or site programs are transplanted to seemingly unrelated or unexpected regions of the site. Structures or landscapes that are commonly perceived to be land-based or water-based are the most recognizable transplant examples. The transplanted fabric may in time alter the surrounding fabric or open up new programmatic possibilities.

Examples in Aberdeen include a mechanic shop floating in the harbour, a fruit shop in a kai do, a fish wholesaler in town, a market in a library building and a church in a residential building.

The actions of the waterfront may become part of a building typology, when a water-based program is transplanted inland, i.e., the hoisting action of the crane and connection between several levels is incorporated into an industrial building several blocks back from the harbour. Mobile platforms are found within a building rather than floating on the

transplanting suggests that it is possible to create links that are not necessarily physical. Transplanted programs may form an invisible connection between the harbour and the town centre or between old and new areas of a city. Transplanting suggests that it is possible to generate change and renewal from several locations across a city rather than creating a tabula rasa in the generation of one big site.

The wider implications of the transplant phenomena are the local / global connections. Programs previously found in Aberdeen may now be found along the coastal areas of China but still service Hong Kong and Aberdeen, i.e. fishing boat repairs, fish markets, fishing grounds.

Possibilities: the reuse of existing structures or fabric does not rely on total erasure; the most interesting areas of a site may be what is left behind once grafting has taken place and hybrid structures or programs are created. It would be possible to apply this strategy to decaying areas of a city allowing new programs to evolve without clearing existing programs or structure.
The phases of occupation in Aberdeen typically include: boxes on steps or in interstices; mobile trolleys; mobile trolleys remaining stationary; contracting / expanding kiosks incorporating mobile trolleys; canopies becoming attached to adjacent structures.

Possibilities: new interventions could exploit this phenomena through the multiple replication of small fragments that, if removed, are capable of reforming and reappearing elsewhere. Occupation of voids is not necessarily limited to the in-between and may include voids within a building.

Every morning a car park adjacent to the Aberdeen waterfront is flooded and functions as a live fish market. There is a blur between what is land and what is not. The car park is completely occupied by the activities of the live fish market, then is cleaned, drained and returns to life as a car park. The repetition of this cycle has left behind permanent traces and alters the way the site is used -- contrary to planning or design intentions; (fish tanks sit permanently in parking bays with parking meters). A paradox arises as a result of program requirements and the continual transformation / reformation of the site. The physical site mutates to allow multiple programs to co-exist during the daily cycle of transformation. During festival periods a stage or dance floor is erected at night, but by morning the car park is once again flooded with water and the frenetic activity of trading, loading and unloading seafood recommences. The water's edge is constantly shifting as a result of cross programming rather than tidal fluctuations.

Possibilities: the transform / reform phenomena suggests possibilities for the way in which an intervention on the site could negotiate or exploit a transformation between what is floating and what is not, what is building and what is not -- a phenomena that could potentially transform many edge conditions. Parts of the landscape and actual building interstices in public or transitional zones. Squatter settlements are gradually established downhill from the parent program -- the public housing estate -- on which it relies.

Occupation of a site may take seconds but establishing the site location may have taken months; local network knowledge and the right (granted by a local community) to occupy are probably essential. Removal may take less than a few minutes or years depending upon change in the local government policy and the success of development and planning proposals. A splinter may be a fragment of a larger program or structure, i.e. a home with fridge, clothes-line and bed but without a floor, roof or walls.

Possibilities: the splinter phenomena raises the notion of fragments that are capable of lodging like a virus in the urban fabric; predominantly they will be temporary in nature and are easily removed but may persistently reappear and in time begin to alter their surroundings. Small splinter programs may begin to lodge in scattered areas of the urban fabric and begin generating change.

Occupy (void) describes the occupation of interstices / gaps between programs. The programs may be housed in buildings or may exist as designated voids, i.e. roads or bus stops. Even a designated void may not be immune to occupation. Companion or parasite programs occupy the interstices and may even penetrate building envelopes.

Occupy (void) relies on opportunist programs, similar to the phenomena of ‘splinter’, in that the programs lodge in the interstices of the urban fabric. However, programs that characterise occupy (void) have not necessarily split from any parent structure or location. The phenomena of occupation with multiple small programs occupying interstices may often define the character of the street rather than the buildings that delineate it.
Storage creates a specific landscape phenomenon, which pauses at different speeds. In Aberdeen the evidence of storage is prevalent along the working edge where there is a continual exchange of goods at differing speeds. Storage suggests a fragmented factory spread throughout the site where multiple connections are made at different speeds and in different locations rather than in one building. The site IS the building.

Storage of goods, data, transport and people include: 1 minute: electronic signboard; 1 hour: trolley; 1 day: fish / concrete; 1 month: ice / sewage; 1 year: dragon boats; 10 years: public housing residents; 100 years: cemetery residents.

Possibilities: different speeds of exchange may result in storage where people, programs, goods, dates and even structures may be left behind. At what speed and at what scale will an architectural structure or program be stored on site?

Chessboard is the continual evolution of changing parts of the urban site – the process of change in which one function is shed and another takes over. The transition phase may only be a pause but an intermediate program will fill the interstice almost imperceptibly so the beginning and end are never clearly evident. Typically the opportunist or
intermediate use is mobile, with minimal or easily demountable structures. When there is a rapid movement of the chess pieces (empty lots) phases often slip from one into another; it is not clear when the old use stops and is replaced by another as there is often an intermediate use which may co-exist with the end and the beginning. Across Hong Kong, vacant lots are in fact never empty, but are constantly allowing for transformation. Gutierrez and Portefaix describe the actual moment in time when demolition is almost complete and the lot becomes vacant as a rare opportunity “to catch the moment of transition when these fragments are visible like traces or ruins, as a vacant plot is immediately reused, for example as a temporary parking lot whilst anticipating its next mutation.” Possibilities: assume fragments or parts of an intervention are not permanent or are capable of mutating to allow occupation by other programs and structures. Could you map a city by following these sites? Would an intervention on a site begin with an intermediate or temporary program that anticipates mutation?

Retail shops, offices, factories, banks or even residential floors are occupied in the transition period before demolition or re-leasing for the purposes of a sale. Anything and everything could be the bargain of the week. Small pockets will buzz with heavier than usual crowds in an already busy district for a week, two weeks, a day or even a month and then, without notice, the sale is finished and there is no trace of occupation. The seller moves on but will resume business in another pocket or building to be re-leased or demolished and the frenzy of sale begins again in somewhere new. Sale relies on anonymity and must constantly shift to maintain interest in a one to three week sale that never really ends – just moves. Sale is opportunistic and exploits the pause in the cycles of demolition and construction or leasing and re-leasing.

Possibilities: sale suggests that some programs do not require purpose-built architecture or static addresses. Do some programs require a ‘shifting’ plan, a staged map of occupation across a city rather than an architectural plan, or a guidebook for occupation and appropriation rather than a building?

1 Stefano Boeri and Francesco Jodice explain the title and objectives of their studio – the “sampling” of “hidden structures” in the “backwaters” of Tokyo City as a way to “capture the unconscious and unseen phenomena” which, though invisible, contribute to the contemporary urban condition. “hunch No. 1 1999, The Berlage Institute, pp 36-37.

2 A project in Amsterdam employs a similar strategy as the basis for a new ecological project. Nine locations across the city were chosen as points where vegetation would be introduced to attract a particular species of bird. The open-ended nature of the project did not preclude the possibility that the intended species may not appear. The act of transplanting a particular program type would still generate change and attract other species of bird or animal. Refer “Snacks” in H. Bekkering, ed., The Artificial Landscape, 2000, NAi, Rotterdam, p.163.

3 The Lieu Unique Cultural Centre – a former biscuit factory – in the city of Nantes, France illustrates how occupation by a small fragment on the margins of society may open the way for exciting new possibilities in decaying areas or sites earmarked for demolition and “renewal”. The factory had been condemned, yet demolition was halted when squatters occupied one side of the building. The occupation opened the way for a more formal appropriation of the space as an alternative venue for theatre and artistic events. The next level of appropriation began in 1997 when construction commenced on the Centre Unique, a formal and legal occupation, but the spirit in which the building was originally occupied suggested ways in which a cultural centre may be built and allowed to inform new interventions on site. Refer to “Lieu Unique” in Quaderns No 230, pp112-119.

4 Stefano Boeri described the voids of Tokyo City as “a chess board of vacant lots” in Tokyo Blanks’ hunch No 1 1999, The Berlage Institute, pp.40-43.

5 Stefano Boeri describes similar phenomena in Tokyo City where the “flickering of cells” are indicative of the thriving or failing economy of a city. The transition phases where an intermediate use fills a void are suspended, pausing until once again speculation demands the void is filled and another is found. Boeri describes the slower more diffused flickering of empty cells as the only evident clue of crisis in the Japanese building industry. Ibid

6 Gutierrez and Portefaix discussing “soft disappearance” in L. Gutierrez and V. Portefaix, Mapping Hong Kong, 2000, Map Books, Hong Kong, p.117.
the location and disposition of illegal structures in Hwa Shan District.

5.02

Addition on top of illegal shelters

Formation of the street level illegal structures

Void between buildings

Map of illegal buildings in Hwa Shan District.
ORIGINAL V S PIRACY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louis Vuitton</td>
<td>NT$18,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand X</td>
<td>NT$2,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
same? handbag, different shopping experience: department store / street hawker.
traces of occupation are found in the unacknowledged spaces of hsi men
at the margins of the city – the edge of the river and the city limits >>

marginal situations

margins

cropping

marginalised crops

legend

homeless dwellings
homeless hang-outs
scooter
car
pedestrian

push to the edges
appropriate the gaps
within the highway pylons >>

01. infrastructure
02. niches
03. support
04. infill
and within the dike, bridge and highway structures >>
the river’s edge holds the possessions, rubbish, services and memories of the city. >>>

- park benches
- permanent
- trolleys
- mattresses
- rubbish tip
- rubbish bags
- factory storage
- basketball court
- package bins
- portable office
- personal effects
- vegetation
- broken-down bus
- bike repair
- water pump
- home #1
- drive-thru store
- home #2
- scooters
- illegal infill
- trolleys
- under the steps
- personal effects
- found polaroid
- permanent
- trolleys
- under the stairs
- personal effects
- found polaroid

storage spaces: quantities + duration
operations modify the river wall to accommodate "storage"
pedestrian and motorcycle routes are added onto bridge and highway structures.
access to the water’s edge through and over the dike >>
and a new foreshore edge to the city.
a stray dog's view of ku ting market...
Highways, bridges and transportation systems – infrastructure – have traditionally been the domain of the engineer. Rarely do we consider them ‘designed’ despite their large scale and significant visual impact on our cities. Their implications extend far beyond physical mobility and the pragmatic movement of vehicles and goods. Environmentally they can pose threats by their adjacencies to incompatible activities: access can become restricted, traditional neighbourhoods can be divided. The relationship of pedestrians to cars has always been problematic.

The following projects investigate the opportunities (rather than the threats) that large scale infrastructure affords. The ambiguity between the pedestrian and vehicular realms becomes positively intensified in the amorphous world of movement in the car park. Multi-level overpasses in Hwa Shan provide a vertical dimension for a complex series of temporal and spatial negotiations that occur on these program-laden horizontal planes. A bridge and road network becomes the armature for re-developing the marginal spaces that are the by-product of infrastructure appropriation. Rarely are the spaces and that are formed underneath, beside, and above the highway considered by the engineer; they often become filled with the detritus of mobile society – car parks, storage, and rubbish. The special qualities of these sites generate a formal and programmatic response to the length of the elevated Jian Guo Expressway that re-knits the neighbourhoods that have been divided by it.

>> pg 202
an analysis of hwa shan's built and void spaces
introduces walking (through the car parks) as a mobile intervention.
taipei traffic is a system of continuous negotiation
01. mobile program: the hawker stall

02. variable program: the parking lot

03. transient program: daylight market

04. fixed obstacles: gutters & road markings

05. fixed program: program occupies a fixed area

06. blockages & connections: driveways

07. mobile obstacles: traffic vehicles

Highway overpasses provide new ways to interconnect disparate elements on the site. 

jamming devices: connections and obstructions
and allow multiple events to occur at different speeds and durations on the horizontal planes.
the jian guo expressway divides the adjacent urban neighborhoods.
the linkage of programs affords opportunities to reconnect the urban fabric...
by reassigning the often misused spaces below the highway (parking lots)
both formally and qualitatively into the surrounding context >>
as a multi-program facility for both the local residents and the city.
A linear city uses wasteland adjacent to bridges and highways...
the existing infrastructure is the armature
for temporary and permanent structures to reanimate the site >>
and to integrate the surrounding events and activities.
The servicing of the city needs to be considered holistically in urban design – in strategic, physical and social terms. Dense populations place a significant strain on the environment: rubbish, wastewater, sewage, and emissions from vehicles and factories are produced in great quantities at a daily rate. Rethinking how the city might work at a range of scales could reduce the movement of goods and services and have a subsequent impact on road use. Shifting some of the responsibility (and consciousness) to the individual, for example, at a neighbourhood scale, may provide alternatives to the traditional practice of locating large facilities on the periphery.

A recycling system starts with the individual and his/her bag. The tiresome practice of waiting for the scheduled garbage truck to arrive is replaced with a network of neighbourhood centres. Schools are affiliated for educational purposes. Existing shop houses with related trades are co-opted. Abandoned Japanese houses are converted to reading and sewing rooms; in their gardens, food is composted to fertilise communal vegetable gardens and the greening of the lanes. The urban fabric becomes revitalised with these new programs and immune to gentrification. The mobility in this instance is less about movement than an evolution over time, like most good sustainable practice. At an even larger scale in the Er Chong water relief canal, which protects Taipei during storms, the ebb and flow of flood waters is one of the cycles proposed to irrigate a range of floating and stationary urban farms and reed beds. In addition, waste water from the illegal factories in San Chung is reclaimed, and a supplementary irrigation system is installed to provide a more stable alternative to the flood-vulnerable agricultural and recreational areas.

>>pg232
The garbage truck arrives at the park at 7:30 p.m. on Monday nights. It plays a digitised version of Beethoven’s “Für Elise” to gather the neighbourhood together. You deposit your assortment of garbage directly into the truck. Generally some kind person offers to help if your load is heavy. The recycling trucks follow closely behind. A man stands inside and sorts the plastic, metal and glass into separate bags. Some rubbish is more valuable than others and gets whisked away by entrepreneurs prior to collection. Raw food gets made into compost. Cooked food is binned for the pigs. Garbage tax is charged on the official bags that are purchased from the local 7-11. No other bags are accepted. Apparently the garbage trucks in Taichung now teach their citizens to speak English – a new digitised phrase each day. By 8:00 p.m. the village meeting is over. The park is empty again.
schools, parks, and derelict Japanese houses become local recycling centers
abandoned buildings, empty lots and laneways are recycled as well as the rubbish. School students are helping to recycle plastic, glass, bottles, aluminium and more.
the network will expand over time to rejuvenate the neighbourhood

year 2001 | proposed recycling sites in yong kung district
buildings, laneways & open sites become absorbed in the recycling network

year 2021 | proposed recycling sites in yong kung district
buildings, laneways & open sites become absorbed in the recycling network
existing small shops are preserved and new amenities are created.
the er chung water relief channel diverts flood water away from taipei city

flooding studies

existing flood relief channel: traffic, riverway, farming, urban fabric
the land is contoured to enhance predicted floodwater levels. >>
existing elements on the site anchor proposed floating systems during flood stages
the addition of water reclamation and irrigation systems create artificial flood conditions.
that provide water to hydroponic greenhouses, elevated fields.>>
floating farms and floating farmland >>
the water-based infrastructure integrates the adjacent industry (reclaimed wastewater)
with tenable agriculture (irrigation) and recreational facilities (water sports) >>
subsequently new life is formed along with the new land.
The cycle would continually repeat every five years. Today, half a century later, this remains an apt observation of major cities worldwide – whether American, European or Asian. This is a common trend, where the speed of change presents increasingly unfamiliar scenes, in turn unsettling its inhabitants.

Accidental City

In the last decade, urban designers have come to realise that much planning is based on a limited understanding of a city’s affairs. As a result, plans on the drawing board are moving further away from the reality of the city. The infinitude of a city’s constructs, causes and interactions are themselves impetuous and ever changing, evident in Taipei today. ‘Dark Room’ observed these diversities, proposing means for understanding between citizens, city authorities, and urban students and the city.

Consider one such communication, taking place as an early autumn meeting of October 2001 in a large room adjacent to a prehistoric cultural park, Pei-Nan in Taitung. Locals, administrators, artists, specialists and academics gathered to negotiate between the processes of an archaeological dig and a public art proposal for the park. In the process of negotiating over a period of time, the methods of negotiation continuously changed, and the results became increasingly unpredictable. This is a classic example of the decision-making process for contemporary cities within a problem-solving model. This was not a complicated urban issue, yet the negotiations involved an extraordinary group: public sector authorities including central, local, tourist, education, culture, transportation, audit, communication, civil construction, and environmental protection; private sector authorities including local residents, local communities, stall vendors, commerce, political parties, estate developers, religious groups, the indigenous group, historical cultural groups, environmental protection groups and art / cultural groups; professional associations including archaeological, architectural, landscape, construction, planning, accounting, financial and legal. To envisage the difference of opinions occurring between the groups, and the decisive compromises that eventuated to reflect these differences, is to envisage the ambiguous features and outlines of an accidental city. Decision making in city development should reflect the city as being a container for multiple coincidences and diversities in formation.

Free Body

Jean Baudrillard observed that “violence appearing today is of an altogether different kind … an implosive violence no longer resulting from the expansion of a system but from its saturation and contraction.”

New cities need not be envisioned through nostalgia for pre-industrialised lands; it is akin to an attachment with redundant knowledge.

Nostalgic City

Nostalgia – difficult to bear yet yearned for – is an expression that literary critic Wang Te-Wei uses to distinguish periods within Taiwan’s history. One such period occurred in the fifties, when China’s Nationalist Government was exiled to Taiwan and a yearning was romanticised by writers Chu Hsi-Ning, Szu-Ma Chung-Yuan and Pai Hsien-Yung for lands across the sea. Another period occurred in the seventies, when Taiwan industrialised its agricultural society. Exile from the village to the metropolis is described by Huang Chun-Ming, Wang Chen-Ho, Chi Tong-Sheng, and Wang To who write of their generation’s nostalgia for village life from within the city. More recently, for the period of the nineties to the present, Li Yung-Ping and Chang Kuei-Hsing’s writings collage time with place, village with metropolis and reality with virtuality. Literature from these periods represents nostalgic efforts at recreating scenes of past and retrievable lands.

Nostalgia for lands past coincides with our living environment at present, and literary musings accurately identify two subsequent traits of Taipei. Firstly are its ambiguous, accidental characteristics; another is the city’s constant morphing. Taipei’s ambiguous character is summarised in the Dark Room installation, presented at the 2000 Taipei Biennial. A massive darkroom was constructed inside the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, with trays of chemicals organised on a table amidst red safety lights. The premise of the installation was that anyone could process their negatives in the darkroom, but a duplicate set of the developed photos was to remain. At the end of the Biennial, the artist presented all sets on display, each of which presented a Taipei visitor’s personal point of view, each set a fragment of the urban map in its totality. By no means an absolute view of Taipei, this intriguing map nonetheless reveals a previously private spectrum of Taipei’s public.

The speed of city-transformation today is fast increasing without signs of slowing, a constant moving landscape. When visiting America in the fifties, the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre noted. “To Americans, their city is a moving landscape, while to Parisians, their city is a home.” Sartre was observing the pace of change continually made within the same place, where an old apartment building would be sold for demolition, for a larger one to be built in its place.

The cycle would continually repeat every five years. Today, half a century later, this remains an apt observation of major cities worldwide – whether American, European or Asian. This is a common trend, where the speed of change presents increasingly unfamiliar scenes, in turn unsettling its inhabitants.

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Free Body

Jean Baudrillard observed that “violence appearing today is of an altogether different kind … an implosive violence no longer resulting from the expansion of a system but from its saturation and contraction.” Models and
methods developed to solve city situations are arguably limited by the professional training of urban practitioners. These are solutions derived from experiences of the past, yet the city’s situations are continually developing in the present. It is thus difficult to fixate clearly on patterns that could prompt solutions of urban issues, as much of the city’s pulse and movement are concealed.

On closer look at pulses and movements, we find our century based on business conducted between productivity and consumerism, that penetrates everyday, everyone and everywhere. On an international level, circulation of people, commodity, capital and information is increasing. Obstacles towards production and exchange, finance and law, ideology, and even security management systems are gradually being eliminated. Markets, regions, networks, passages, trades and professions are looking for new platforms that dissolve the barriers in between. In an environment of such motion, the building unit or city container that gathers systems, regulations, circulation and software, now faces the same challenge. Signs of the city container now struggling with this challenge are revealing new city outlines, indicative of the enormous flexibility and freedom required of a city. Rem Koolhaas explains this requirement: “... this kind of city needs the freedom liberated from the ideology of the pursuit for the city’s harmony, liberated from the false image created by the community, as well as the freedom liberated from the persistence in the traditional behavioural patterns.”

Taipei need not be built with a nostalgia reacting to lost homelands, pre-industrialised lifestyles or disorienting cities. It follows that a reluctance to give up experiences of the past would allow less suitable methods to persist in the present. Paris along the Seine, familiar for its romantic imagery, tourism and business activity, no longer exists for its citizens as it did in the past. Amidst an area five to six times larger than the older town, its residents are establishing themselves outside the Paris of old. The new city of Paris has come to resemble American and Taiwanese suburbs, with residents retreating to city peripheries of medium-low density, regional division and labour, with controlled natural and built environments.

New Homelands, Taiwan In recent years, city development in Taiwan has occurred in two extremes. One is the multi-functional metropolis, a tightly arranged city with a multifarious nightlife. Another is the extensive land situated between cities, where countryside and city are open to cross-penetration – an extensiveness resulting in poorly shared resources and administration, thus becoming a provisional, transitional city. The metropolis is recognisable as the city to most Taiwanese, despite the provisional city including over 90% of Taiwan’s city population. Authorities and the public are attentive towards the metropolis, as little is known of the alternative, the provisional city in continual transition.

Its public sector characteristics are that of a second-class city: inattentive administrations, management voids, resource shortages and a lack of public facilities. Individuals of the private sector are prone to abusing authority in allocating personal justice. With its urban make-up comprising attention-seeking visuals and cheap building cosmetics of questionable standards, both international chains and local gangs profit from a relatively reduced land capital, advertising desires both global and local. Crossbreeds of globalisation and localisation have fragmented the city, with both mobile cultures and city discards forming new havens for Taiwan’s middle class. Similar unfamiliar landscapes have been termed as non-places by western theories, akin to ‘Soft Urbanism’ or ‘Weak Urbanism’. Yet its traditions remain persistent; Taiwan’s persistence is a localised persistence. In times of low prosperity, traditional symbols – boxes printed with fairy maidens and betel nut girls – are cultural remnants found near old highways and ruined village communities.

These are traditions not particular to Taiwan, but urban traditions apportioned to the life cycle of all cities. What is unique is the rapid change of structure for Taiwan’s politics, economy and industry; in recent years; what is common for all cities is a search for solutions. If we are flexible in following the methods from our past, we shall be able to share the methods of others while exulting in the journey. Let us look now, to new voices and new journeys. The following are four cases of urban methods that negotiate urban solutions with passion and pragmatism.

Parc de la Villette In 1982, President Mitterrand commissioned ten major projects for Paris through an international design competition. Two projects submitted for Parc de la Villete have come to challenge urban planning to the present day. The winning project was contracted to Bernard Tschumi, formerly of Columbia University, who laid an abstract grid of red squares over the park and its edges. Each red square, an independent ‘Folly’ of reinforced steel, is a device to...
lead activities into the park and provoke the surrounding environment as baits in the park to draw out a life of the park’s own: an open source and open-ended system.

The other competition entry, from Rem Koolhaas, allowed for interactions between ‘urban ingredients’ instead of prescribing logic for the interactions, for with the urban ingredients continually changing, the logic of interaction becomes near-unpredictable. The project’s strategy laid the vertical section of a skyscraper upon the park plane. Dividing floors and the obstructing blocks between floors from the skyscraper, when used in the application for the park’s planning, became opportunities for the release of urban energy. Koolhaas divided the park into numerous belts, supplying each with different functions, facilities, activities and personality, to arouse unpredictable activities and incidents in the urban parks. This, too, represents an open source and open-ended system.

Urban Gallery and Urban Curation

Both are concepts of Raoul Bunschoten, professor at the Berlage Institute and founder of Chora, an independent research laboratory conducting workshops, studies and commissions in architecture and urbanism. Methods of the laboratory are described in the Urban Flotsam publication, in which proposals for the ‘Urban Gallery’ and ‘Urban Curation’ tackle the ‘un-schedule-able’ and ungraspable flotsam of city transformations.

The Urban Gallery, a knowledge-management system, charts urban evolution. It is constructed of four layers: the database, the prototypes, the scenario games and the action plans. The database collects information from randomly selected spots of an urban area, using sampling methods, to build a basic database. The prototypes – urban organisation frameworks – are borrowed from other cities, to implement database information. The scenarios use actors and groups to test out desires and compulsions, within these prototypical frameworks. Subsequently, the prototype becomes malleable to the specific territory. The action plan realises the subsequent prototype, through processes of planning, projections, regulations and negotiation. To this end, the action plan is a monitor of shifts, responsive to transformations of the territory.

Urban Curation describes the monitoring of phenomena causal to and caused by the Urban Gallery. Developed with the artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, the concept was explored through a project for the City Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome, where transient art forms (non-categorical for institutional or physical reasons) would encourage new curatorial prototype practices.

Conclusion

In deciphering our city for solutions, we appropriate new methods, in turn provoking responses from the city, thus creating a vicious cycle of informational exchange between the devised methods and the city it created. As such, the city’s logic may just be the basic rules, which satisfy the basic needs for survival, and a long-term mission is impossible. A calm solution to the reality of this impossibility is to reconcile with the merits of short-term responses, when faced with the potential impossibility of accurate long-term predictions. The post-WWII generation lost both heart and spirit, while our generation risks losing out to a disorienting concrete landscape. To be more precise, we are familiar with chaos. At ease with blurred visions and unknown futures, we lack awkwardness towards our loss of self-identity. Perhaps this is another urban characteristic of our generation, a metaphor of the city as literary musings of distinct wordings: chaos before order. Drawing us away from the land, imposing homelessness, it is a characteristic enforcing us as foreigners in every generation and place. Taipei’s features have its optimistic phases; it also has its dark and disappointing chapters. We are accustomed to each other’s company, but we lack passion for the company. The city bears a nostalgia that we are unable to deal with, and thus remains the final destination for people of modern times.

1 Wang Te Wei is currently a professor at Columbia University.
2 In 1949, when the Communist Party of China gained power of the Republic, General Chiang Kai-Shek declared Taipei as the temporary capital of China. The civil war had merged with WWII and continued after its end, resulting in the arrival of two million Mainland Chinese refugees in Taiwan.
Taipei avoiding the traffic chaos and congestion at ground level

project: local communities and traffic circulation | site: yong kung district

Observation and analysis have led to the identification of several unique characteristics of Taipei city. Firstly, it can be read as a motorcyle city, then as an environment where cyclists have an extraordinary power in creating their own urban planning (addition and illegal structures) and finally as a city with mixed traffic culture. It is these characteristics that have been used to produce an interactive map for Taipei City. Balancing addition and subtraction tools with actions that act on both the scale and paths of transportation routes, a new formula has been achieved to attain a passively implied map.

2.02 Iteration and feed back | PETER RYAN + ALASTAIR FLYNN

This project has been driven by the idea of Taipei as a flexible system capable of producing incremental difference and thereby ‘actively organizing itself into new structures and forms’ (Manuel De Landa, ‘Uniformity and Variability’). Through detailed urban analysis, a set of native urban survival behaviours are identified and studied. This project is an attempt to develop an urban model or instruction set based on complex and constantly changing local conditions: a container for self-emergence.

2.03 Variable hierarchy: movement, time and program | MICHAEL KING

The nature of Taipei City is time variable. Many stories go through a daily cycle of programmatic change to meet needs and demands. Each program has a most productive time period, but the competition for street space limits access to advantageous sites, producing spatial ambiguity. The need to be visible aids the confusion as stories fight for attention through signage.

This project adapts automatic car park systems to places storing in pods. The stops move throughout the day to their most advantageous position while providing the consistent...
In the terrain. Interventions mutate the original where marginal space bleeds into its edges, suggesting types. Operative devices create intervening discontinuities "gaps" and "niches" produce conditions for mutating "storage" rather than the continuity of these spaces. Appropriated under-side, wall behind-side – reveal the fragmentation occupation of these unacknowledged spaces – freeway empty, yet actually are incised by invalid programs. The Unincorporated margins surround Taipei, defined by the river bridge, hsi men of unclaimed space | site: under and around chung siao project : infrastructural additions to promote existing uses Taiwanese film culture with the provision of cinemas and response to the city as an organic (a system of organs…not place to observe complex interactions of people in a series complex / park | site: corner of ken ting + omei streets, hsi project : multi-use temporary structure | site: zhong xing bridge This project is about leading people back into one of the city's degraded spaces for an organic structure which relies on the infrastructure which exists at the boundary or edge of the city. The site is weak and spatially decayed. It has to be influenced by being in new forces. The concept is to create a linear city to topple the original city structure. All of the surrounding events and activities are reintegrated in this straight-line linear city.

Tian’s battle against increasing rubbish production has been going on for the past twenty years. The key solution to this recycling is each individual plays a role in contributing to the mountain of rubbish seen around Taipei City. Therefore it is appropriate to solve this problem from the community angle by involving everyone in the act of recycling and raising rubbish. The idea of recycling abandoned Japanese household items by producing urban recycling centre for recycling activities is designed to give a sense of community togetherness.

Taipei’s summer always excites and makes one’s imagination run wild. In such a highly dense and fast developing city like Taipei, it never fails to surprise one. Trumpteors, heat waves, bubble milk tea… yet in this city we live in, the reality of nature’s forces needs to be faced. How well can Taipei as a city adapt and welcome the huge amount of energy being released by nature? Tag: 50 years of Chung-Wei.

The proposal for a multi-program car city showcase which incorporates qualities of its immediate neighbours (highways and parking lots) as well as its wider context. 6.03 house of under-bridge spaces | LU BING HUA JIANG YUN CHUAN (JUAN) project : multi-functional ‘car city’ showcase | site: Jian Guo highway bridge The impact of the large scale infrastructure inserted into Taipei City’s delicate structural system provides an architectural intervention for the multidimensional under the Jian Guo highway bridge. A soft approach is taken to counteract the impact of these large structures on the city, using different working with different programs to solve the problematic relationship between program and parking lots and waste recycling | site: HUNG SHIH PI projects / taipei city project : multi-use temporary structure | site: zhong xing bridge project : project site: san chung project : mobile park / infrastructure in a water relief channel | site: yong kung district / taipei city project : connecting structures amongst tower blocks | site: zhong xiao east road project: project site: zhong xiao east road project: project site: san chung project: project site: zhong xing bridge project: project site: hwa shan project: project site: zhong xiao east road project: project site: hwa shan

8.02 transformation of site and virtualisation of physical media | LIN XING-FAN project: project site: san chung project: project site: san chung project: project site: san chung
appendix | 8.04 workshop | exhibition | book credits

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**Installation (melbourne): first site gallery**
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