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Urban Loopholes

Creative Alliances of
Spatial Production
in Shanghai's City Center

Ying Zhou

Book Presentation by Dr. Ying Zhou

Friday, 4th August 2017, 19:00 @Sphères, Hardturmstrasse 66, Zurich

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Free for SCAA Members, CHF 10.- for Non-Members

Registration via Email until 28.7.2017: info@scaa.ch

more information: www.scaa.ch

Book Presentation for the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Architects and Artists (SCAA)

Venue: Sphères, Hardturmstrasse 66, 8005 Zurich

Time: Friday, 4 August 2017, 19:00

Author: Dr. Ying Zhou, Assistant Professor at Department of Architecture, HKU

Book: *Urban Loopholes: Creatives Alliances for Spatial Production in Shanghai's City Center*

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Dr. Zhou's book is a culmination of five years' of fieldwork research in Shanghai for her dissertation at the ETHZ, looking at the city center's urban transformations in detail, incorporating also extensive knowledge of historic conditions of many of the places and their international linkages. The book takes cases from the until-now little analyzed un-demolished remains of city center neighborhoods in Shanghai, and unpacks the seemingly anarchic and opportunistic urban spatial production system of the contemporary Chinese city to address what has perplexed Western public as well as scholars alike. Going behind the scenes in neighborhoods that increasingly appear like trend quarters in the West, it divulges how the effortless vibe that is experienced today were imagined, constructed, and then scripted. The constellation of actors, from the expanding global network of multilingual cosmopolites to the dialect-speaking local party officials, form the malleable public-private alliances that are producing the newest forms for urban reuse, creative production, consumption, and heritage protection. Under an institutional framework that remains uniquely Chinese, how the ambiguous property rights and the institutional vestiges from planned economy could harbor an entrepreneurial prowess and creative potential that is a remarkable manifestation of globalization in the context of its changing local institutions reveals the logic behind a 'China Dream.' The book analyzes the neighborhood transformations in Shanghai through a conceptual framework, which the author proposes, of the 'urban loophole' that describes opportunities for spatial production under rapid transition in political economy. The *urban loophole*, which results from gaps, ambiguities and exceptions in existing urban production systems of cities undergoing structural transformations, in turn developing a new system, are pragmatic opportunities contingent on the influx of global resources, in capital and knowhow, as well as the evolving and acquiescent state. Pliable and redundant, they not only mediate between the persistent coexistence of planned and market economies, but also balance economic efficiency for political stability, sustaining the success of what Harvey called *neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics*, or what Castells called *Chinese developmental nationalism with socialist characteristics*. As Shanghai's urban development slows from the demolition-redevelopment mode of early economic transition to a more paced emphasis on urban spatial quality, the book is a timely probe for the city center's economic and cultural potentials.



Dr. Ying Zhou [周穎], is currently assistant professor at the University of Hong Kong (HKU)'s Department of Architecture. Her research interest on the relationship of contemporary urban developments and the growth of cultural industries and new economies in East Asian cities, global linkages and architectural knowledge exchanges developed from her work with the chair of Kees Christiaanse at the Future Cities Lab of the Singapore-ETH Centre and with the chair of Herzog & de Meuron at the ETH Studio Basel. Born in Shanghai, Ying holds a B.S.E. in Architecture and Engineering from Princeton, a M.Arch. from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, a Ph.D. from the ETHZ, and was a Fulbright fellow at the University of Stuttgart. She has practiced and taught in New York, Shanghai, Detroit, Boston, Basel and Hong Kong.