Reflection of Graduation Project

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Design of the Urban Fabric

The relation between this project, the studio topic, and my master track.

Landscape is a broad and complex concept. As a reflection of culture and ideas, it is shaped and in turn affects human society. As a complex product of human civilization, city also presents a special landscape. The superposition and synthesis of various systems build the contemporary city. Human beings have always tried to make the most rational decisions on cities according to disciplines. However, we have never fully mastered cities, their complexity and contingency have become an inseparable part of urban development. In this graduation project, I hope to explore the generative logic of this urban landscape from the perspective of open space and understand the relationship between public space system and other urban systems. In the past, designers were considered to be the dominator of space, but faced with the complex and dynamic changes of the city, designers' fixed overlooking perspective cannot cope with. Therefore, turning to the participants in this landscape is essential. Urban residents have the most direct perception of the city and always subtly and sensitively change the space to meet their own needs. Dynamic and contingency are no longer regarded as unstable elements, but participate in the construction of urban landscape as a dynamic change.

Therefore, I chose this studio to explore the public space form in the modern high density giant cities, while also exploring the more flexible and elastic urban space generation logic. The four lenses highlighted in the master's program will also be integrated into this design to consider the future state of the site more comprehensively.

The relevance of this graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

A network of three-dimensional public Spaces with high quality and walkability can help improve the living standards of the residents of the contemporary mega-city, provide qualified Spaces to carry urban life, and break the status quo of vertical development of residential Spaces while public Spaces are always confined to the ground. The network will also reshape the form of these cities, providing a more resilient and sustainable city. This pattern of public space has a positive significance in the contemporary urban development of China, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other compact mega-cities also have the potential to develop three-dimensional urban public space.

The approach of using serious games is to bring public participation into urban decision-making in a more active and educational way. It is a combination of top-down and bottom-

up approaches, and an attempt of the right to the city, with the potential to revitalize urban life and empower cities with resilience.

Admittedly, accomplishing this combination is no easy task; it is, in fact, an attempt to combine a top-down and bottom-up approach. This project situates this attempt within a specific urban context to explore its feasibility. However, due to my personal limitations in knowledge, as well as constraints in time and space, this project focuses on demonstrating the logic and structure of this approach, but does not truly provide a viable design scheme that fully reflects the reality of Mong Kok. To achieve the latter, it would require close collaboration among experts from various disciplines and the involvement of the actual stakeholders of the site during the operational process. This would undoubtedly demand a considerable amount of manpower and time, but I believe that this method will present us a way to create more inclusive, diverse, and resilient urban public spaces.

What did I learn from this year?

From the inception of the project, I harbored a profound interest in it. The complexity of compact urban spaces has always dazzled me, and Hong Kong, with its unique culture, is a place that fascinates me. I felt numerous possibilities were embedded within it, and I sought out various materials to read. From the urban utopia depicted by Archigram to the right to the city advocated by Lefebvre and Harvey, to the future city envisioned in a highly developed autonomous driving and AI technology context... At one point, I attempted to develop this project into a utopian design filled with futuristic fantasies. However, if disconnected from real urban spaces and physical environments, such discussions might easily turn into one-sided and hollow dreams. Hence, I decided to develop this project using Mong Kok as a backdrop. In this process, I learned to extract and organize content from a wealth of materials, gradually constructing the theoretical framework for this project.

The initial question concerning this project was how to establish a mechanism that could actively develop these spaces, aiding the city to become more inclusive, resilient, and vibrant. At first, through continuous analysis akin to unravelling a skein, it became clear that this was indeed exploring the relationship between people and public spaces. People have an inherent tendency to transform spaces, as it serves not only to create an environment that better suits their lifestyle, but also manifests the control individuals have over their own lives. Discussing urban public spaces inevitably involves discussing how to balance the rights of different groups for space.

As you can see, this project did not have a clear direction at the outset, but was continuously adjusted and advanced during the process. Sometimes, I felt lost amidst the overwhelming amount of material, but every progress made was a cause for joy. This experience allowed me to break away from more conventional and patterned design approaches, enabling me to construct suitable methodologies based on different goals.

Another learning outcome concerns narration and communication. During the project, I had

many conversations with others, and clearly and succinctly presenting this project was not an easy task for me. Sometimes, I wanted to present all the information about the project, only to find that after an exhaustive long description, the audience would get lost in the wealth of information, failing to understand its structure. At other times, brief comments effectively highlighted the project's theme, but could easily fall into a one-sided situation. Throughout the project, I constantly tried to adjust my narrative style, making some progress. The reflection on this process actually helped me to sort out the logic of the project. Communication is the foundation of design, and I hope to continue refining this skill in the future.