



palgrave▶pivot

Hong Kong as Creative Practice


Eddie Tay

palgrave
macmillan

Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture

Series Editors

Vlad Petre Glaveanu
Department of Psychology and Counselling
Dublin City University
Dublin, Ireland

Brady Wagoner 
Communication and Psychology
Aalborg University
Aalborg, Denmark

Both creativity and culture are areas that have experienced a rapid growth in interest in recent years. Moreover, there is a growing interest today in understanding creativity as a socio-cultural phenomenon and culture as a transformative, dynamic process. Creativity has traditionally been considered an exceptional quality that only a few people (truly) possess, a cognitive or personality trait 'residing' inside the mind of the creative individual. Conversely, culture has often been seen as 'outside' the person and described as a set of 'things' such as norms, beliefs, values, objects, and so on. The current literature shows a trend towards a different understanding, which recognises the psycho-socio-cultural nature of creative expression and the creative quality of appropriating and participating in culture. Our new, interdisciplinary series Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture intends to advance our knowledge of both creativity and cultural studies from the forefront of theory and research within the emerging cultural psychology of creativity, and the intersection between psychology, anthropology, sociology, education, business, and cultural studies. Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture is accepting proposals for monographs, Palgrave Pivots and edited collections that bring together creativity and culture. The series has a broader focus than simply the cultural approach to creativity, and is unified by a basic set of premises about creativity and cultural phenomena.

Eddie Tay

Hong Kong as Creative Practice

palgrave
macmillan

Eddie Tay
Department of English
Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture
ISBN 978-3-031-21361-8 ISBN 978-3-031-21362-5 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-21362-5>

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2022

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover pattern © John Rawsterne/patternhead.com

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG. The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

To May Lyn, Titus, Tabitha and Peggy.

Acknowledgement

This research project was fully supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. CUHK 14607219).

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Tsim Sha Tsui as Labyrinth	19
3	The Mall and Park as Heterotopic Spaces	37
4	Street Markets of Sham Shui Po: Going on a <i>Dérive</i>	61
5	Embodied Mobilities: On the Subway, Cycling, Running	81
	Conclusion	107
	Index	109

List of Figures

Fig. 2.1	Writing on the wall	23
Fig. 2.2	Along Nathan Road	24
Fig. 2.3	Architecture of consumption	25
Fig. 2.4	Victoria Harbour view	27
Fig. 2.5	Ode to Chinese capital	28
Fig. 2.6	Entrepreneurs of ourselves	29
Fig. 2.7	Consumption	31
Fig. 2.8	The scent of time	32
Fig. 2.9	Waiting at Tsim Sha Tsui	33
Fig. 3.1	Abstract figures	41
Fig. 3.2	Artful abstractions	42
Fig. 3.3	ITSU larger-than-life person	43
Fig. 3.4	Expresscalator	45
Fig. 3.5	Birdcage	46
Fig. 3.6	Shatin Plaza, a housing estate connected to New Town Plaza by a walkway	48
Fig. 3.7	Chinese pavilion in a miniature fortress	50
Fig. 3.8	Bridge	52
Fig. 3.9	Invitation to community	52
Fig. 3.10	Companionship or solitary contemplation	53
Fig. 3.11	<i>Fuwa</i>	54
Fig. 3.12	Engagement	56
Fig. 3.13	Cycling as a core activity	56

Fig. 3.14	Family cycling	57
Fig. 4.1	Selling used hardware	65
Fig. 4.2	Boutique hair salon hidden behind makeshift stalls	66
Fig. 4.3	Selling mini fans, torchlights, showerheads	67
Fig. 4.4	Selling SIM cards	68
Fig. 4.5	Lunch	68
Fig. 4.6	Sham Shui Po as subjective experience	71
Fig. 4.7	Critical judgements	73
Fig. 4.8	Spatial discipline	74
Fig. 4.9	Genial conversations	76
Fig. 4.10	Found art unwittingly masqueraded as shop display	77
Fig. 5.1	Entirely closed off	86
Fig. 5.2	Bodily armour	87
Fig. 5.3	Posture of engagement	88
Fig. 5.4	Ubiquitous photograph	92
Fig. 5.5	Friends	93
Fig. 5.6	On a quadracycle	94
Fig. 5.7	Affection	95
Fig. 5.8	Running alone	98
Fig. 5.9	A space negotiated	102
Fig. 5.10	Shrine	103



1

Introduction

Abstract This chapter addresses the underlying approaches of the book. It looks at the figure of the flâneur as well as place-writing as to argue that the city, apart from its physical infrastructure, is also a state of mind.

Keywords Affect • Autoethnography • Practice-led research • Street photography • Visual ethnography • Writing of place

This book is a practice-led creative research project informed by street photography and creative writing. It seeks to articulate thinking via the process of art-making. It is a research project on affect and the psycho-geographical mapping of various sites in Hong Kong. It examines what Hong Kong is, as thought and felt by the person on the street. By meandering through urban space and taking street photographs, the practice is open to the various metaphors, atmospheres and visual discourses offered up by the street scenes.

As such, this book maps the affective terrain of Hong Kong, through the intertwined disciplines of street photography, autoethnography and psychogeography. Street photography engages with “the literal and the figurative, the given and the possible, the seen and the hallucinated”, negotiating between the actual-empirical and the actively experienced in