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Abstract of thesis entitled

“Making Artist Neighbourhoods: Production of Urban Space and Culture in Hong Kong and Taipei”

Submitted by

Tang Siu Fan, Grace

for the degree of Master of Philosophy
at the University of Hong Kong
in December 2012

This research uses extended case studies undertaken in two artists’ neighbourhoods, the Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre in Shek Kip Mei and Taipei’s Treasure Hill Village in Gongguan, to examine how historical state-owned spaces in old urban cores now have become new sites of production for artists and arts practitioners. It addresses how and why the two cities, with similar histories and urban strategies, have created and defined the artists’ neighbourhoods in different ways, resulting in diverse paths of socio-spatial development. Hong Kong and Taipei have constituted the few examples amongst East Asian cities that have converted state-owned properties into artists’ clusters under the management of non-profit organizations in recent years. In both cities, artists have become a vanguard for the revitalization of urban spaces that aim to serve the interests of the state, the cultural sector and local community through place-making practices, which entail participation in the production of meaning and local specificities of a place.

Research on urban cultural strategies of East Asian cities has put more emphasis on the political-economic factors as shaping cultural spaces but little on the social dynamics involved in spatial production. This study suggests that
the new form of artists’ clusters in Hong Kong and Taipei requires an approach that incorporates the social dimension of space into an analysis of the artists’ neighbourhoods, which have tended to be less economically driven than the art districts run by business corporations. By focusing on Hong Kong and Taipei, this study shows that not only are the orientation and socio-spatial outcomes of the two artist neighbourhoods shaped by history and state definitions of cultural governance, but also by the social dynamics on the ground as configured by the different compositions of cultural space, the relationships between the management, cultural producers and local community, as well as their associated spatial practices.

This study demonstrates that Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre exemplifies a regulated space that has been shaped by contentious politics, in which incompatible spatial practices between the management by the non-profit company and the artists have created confrontations on a daily basis. The tendency of the non-profit company toward management practices, accommodating leisure and consumption experience, and including a wide variety of artistic experience has created contradictions and undermined social cohesion within the artist community. In the case of Taipei, Treasure Hill Village manifested the civic orientation of the state in cultural governance. The officials’ endorsements of social activists as cultural planners and artists as the drivers for community revitalization have reinforced public participation in cultural activities and public meanings of cultural space. The primary aim to foster collective sense of action within the artist community and the local residents in promoting civic engagement and social inclusion through arts has generated greater cohesion among the local actors. The differences between the
two cases suggest that social dynamics have been central to how the experimental processes in place-making are realised and unfolded. (488 words)
Making Artist Neighbourhoods: Production of Urban Space and Culture in Hong Kong and Taipei

by

Tang Siu Fan, Grace

B.A. H.K.U.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy at The University of Hong Kong
December 2012
Declaration

I declare that this thesis and the research work represents my own work, except where due acknowledgment is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signed ..................................................

Tang Siu Fan, Grace
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This study compares how artist neighbourhoods in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Taipei City of the Republic of China (ROC), Taiwan, have been produced in recent years. By examining two case studies, I attempt to identify and explain the production of cultural spaces as a function of the relationship between the state and a growing class of culture workers. I argue that these cultural spaces, which are largely geared toward artistic experimentation and aesthetic innovation, have become an important element in transforming old buildings and urban areas, contributing to local development and image of post-industrial cities (Lloyd 2006; Kong 2009a, 2009b; Zukin and Braslow 2011). In the past two decades, Hong Kong and Taipei have not only invested in cultural infrastructure or urban architecture, but also designated public premises as the sites for artistic production, elevating the visibility of artists and their work in urban societies. Officials in both cities have diverted attention from remodelling city spaces as cultural districts telling and showing culture (Council for Economic Planning and Development 2003; Kong 2007; Ku and Tsui 2009) to rejuvenating old spaces as community-based cultural centres containing artists’ studios for production of culture (Taipei City Council 2005; Tsang 2007; Cartier 2008a). This change has suggested that the everyday work spaces of artists and other culture workers, as compared to other cultural amenities, have received new attention from officials. Along the process, artists have played an instrumental role in these projects of urban revitalization.
The argument of this study is to suggest that in shaping the developmental trajectories of the new artist neighbourhoods, history, the state and social dynamics of local actors matter, and that this approach requires a more social, instead of economic, reading of the spatial production that is situated in publically-owned spaces run by non-profit organizations. In this study, I address the social, cultural and political implications of the emergence of cultural production space in two urban societies, Hong Kong and Taipei. I ask how the cultural production of space, in which publically-owned property has been converted into artists’ studios, has served the interests of the public sector in using arts to propel urban regeneration and cultural production, and the interests of the cultural sector in pursuing arts in Hong Kong and Taipei respectively. By looking at Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC) and Taipei’s Treasure Hill, this study illustrates the similar yet different experiences involved in rejuvenating historic spaces.

Both the cases of Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre and Treasure Hill in this study have connections with the history of post-colonial cities. As both Hong Kong and Taipei once served as colonial trading ports, their old city spaces constitute rich historical architectural heritage that has become available for the governments to retool for local development: Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre was transformed from Shek Kip Mei factory estate built in 1977 during British colonial period; Taipei’s Treasure Hill settlement was once occupied by the Japanese during its colonization of Taiwan before 1945. Despite the different periods in history, there are some striking points of similarities between these two cases of state premises in their development: Both urban forms have originated from colonial times and were originally the work or lived spaces
of vernacular background. Both governments decided to preserve and revitalize the premises around the mid-2000s, while at least part of them are revitalized as cultural production sites, where artists and creative professionals could use the spaces for work. Today, Hong Kong’s JCCAC, which consists of nine storeys with about 110,000 square feet lettable area containing over 100 artists’ studios and other facilities, provides a platform for the arts community to interact with the public through a wide array of activities, such as performances and art exhibitions (Hong Kong Baptist University 2006b). Unlike JCCAC, Treasure Hill, a former squatter community occupying a hillside area of less than four hectares and tops out at a height at eighty meters, now houses 21 original households which have stayed in situ and offers over 20 artists’ studios, a youth hostel and other spaces such as exhibition spaces, jointly creating a living art village that promotes the integration of arts into local residents’ everyday lives (Cho 2010).

By examining how these state premises sharing similar background and colonial history have been shaped by the states, this study demonstrates that the municipal governments have recognized the instrumental use of historic spaces evincing colonial history and have become interested in tying historical space with artist-led urban revitalization that aims to preserve cultural heritage and enhance local development at old urban areas.

I. Rise of Cultural Production in Historical State-owned Properties

As cities have become more concerned with the production of spaces devoted to cultural activities in recent years, many of them have come to develop their own ways in making and defining public spaces for creative and artistic production. Many of these models of development are unprecedented in terms of
their design, and experimental in terms of their configurations when compared to
the cultural districts planned by the state that aimed to reinforce the presence of
high-status cultural institutions dedicated to consumption rather than the
production of culture in the 1990s (Bell and Jayne 2004; Mommaas 2004; Evans
2009; Daniels, Ho and Hutton 2012). During the late 1990s, especially after the
Asian financial crisis, the resultant economic downturn has forced major cities in
the region to look for alternative economic strategies to boost their economy and
maintain competitiveness. By incorporating “cultural elements” into urban and
economic policies, Hong Kong and Taipei have become more active in
developing cultural resources and orienting themselves towards creating vibrant
cultural economies with the use of spatial strategies to redevelop urban areas.
While culture-led redevelopment strategies such as the construction of flagship
cultural infrastructure in Hong Kong and the regeneration of historical heritage
spaces in Taipei have been prevalent since the late 1990s, the urban renewal
strategy of transforming old state-owned buildings into new artistic spaces has
become particularly popular in both cities in the mid-2000s.

What is significant here is the new role that states have played in reusing old
state-owned buildings as workplaces for cultural production, and the new role that
these state-owned spaces play in both cities. This type of planned artist
neighbourhoods, which have emerged under policy initiatives and taken form in
the state-owned properties under the management of non-profit organizations, is
an urban form that has not existed before in both cities. Both Hong Kong and
Taipei have set out to revitalize public derelict premises by moulding arts
production sites within them that encompass their goals crucial to urban fortunes:
preserving historic buildings and districts; encouraging the development of
creative and cultural industries including small-scale cultural production and niche production; and encouraging consumption of cultural space, experience and commodities.

The use of state-owned historic spaces by the states to create new sites of cultural production witnessed that the states are playing a more hands-on role than before in revitalizing old urban areas and steering cultural production by means of artist neighbourhoods, rather than just relying on the spontaneous process originated by the cultural producers. Situated within the broader context of state-building, the adoption of a hands-on approach by the states to cultural production through reshaping the states’ spaces and landscapes, and mobilizing creative workforce, suggests that besides the high normative culture sanctioned by the states (Gellner [1983] 2006), alternative arts and small-scale cultural production is now legitimized and recognized by officials as a medium through which social changes are realized to construct cultural soft power (Nye 2004), and more modernized images of the cities.

More important is the spatial scale and organization that these artist clusters imply. Both Hong Kong and Taipei have consolidated spaces of cultural production that bring in new, collective spaces of artistic life into urban centres, rather than individual artists’ studios that are otherwise dispersed in the city, aggregated in less accessible places or submerged in the city’s heterogeneous form. Such deliberate efforts of the governments in giving particular land and buildings to cultural producers for their production suggest both cities acknowledged that creative production requires not just individual creativity, but specific locales. Both cities have sought to produce place-based communities of creative workers that are conducive to interactions, co-learning and collaboration,
i.e. “individualized mode of collaboration” (Wilson and Stokes 2006), within a local network, thus contributing to creative production process (Drake 2003) and social scenes which suit the work-styles of creative producers (Ho 2009). Unlike older clusters of artist studios initiated by artists themselves, these new artists’ neighbourhoods provide a collection of arts offerings and amenities, from art galleries, artist studios, to youth hostels in close proximity to downtown that are open to the public.

The case studies of artists’ neighbourhoods in Hong Kong and Taipei presented in this study point to this trend: the new role of state in earmarking state-own properties as artists’ work units, the appearance of artist neighbourhoods as offering amenities, as well as the new cultural practices and place-identities associated with them. I suggest in the following analysis that while dynamic cultural space is defined by and is a product of the interweaving relationship between the artists, management of the cultural space, and local community on the ground, the states decide on and administer how culture is experienced through shaping cultural landscapes as a means to build city’s power.

In addition to historic spaces, the spatial practices of artists have become instrumental to the policymakers in both Hong Kong and Taipei. Whether as designers, artists, or other creative professionals, cultural producers and their activities have been used as a revitalization tool to bring the dilapidated spaces into life, advancing local development agendas. In both cities, artists are now welcomed as urban saviours who are seen as having the power to revitalize neighbourhoods and reverse the negative trends of urban decay. The stories of artist-led urban regeneration in Hong Kong and Taipei suggest that the newfound cultural production sites—involving not just the creation, presentation or
performance of the works of art but the everyday experience of people—manifest the multifaceted nature of urban culture that is being preserved, produced and reproduced, and thus requires a more balanced cultural and social understanding of the social processes against the overly economic-led understanding of culture as a source of profit. By approaching the two sites of cultural production as mediating the interests of the public and the state, this study suggests that paying attention to the make-up and the model of operation of the cultural space that have changed the social dynamics between the actors allows us to consider the processes shaping the spaces into what they are in the present.

Focusing on two state-owned sites of cultural production where artists and cultural producers engage in small-scale artistic production, this study finds that the cultural spaces produced by the state in Hong Kong and Taipei have followed different developmental trajectories. These can be explained by the dissimilar make-up and orientations of the social relationships and their dynamics in each place. These have resulted, on the one hand, in contentious politics and an orientation towards viewing culture as leisure in Hong Kong, and on the other hand, the cultivation of civic spaces and the orientation towards treating culture as a combination of civic right and way of life in Taipei. The spatial practices of the local actors that have produced and reproduced social space should be used to decipher the relationships between the artists, management and local community that reflect and define the orientation of the cultural space, and the level of coherence among the artist community. In both cases of Hong Kong and Taipei, the production of artist neighbourhoods as an urban strategy previously untried can be regarded as an urban experiment in which local actors acting as change
agents are included at different degree under certain controlled conditions set by the state.

This study focuses on how the states have leveraged state-owned properties devoted to cultural producers and their production to jump-start projects of urban regeneration aimed at revitalizing local communities and promoting cultural production. In transforming state-owned spaces into places of cultural viability, I suggest that both Hong Kong and Taipei are crafting their art in place-making, demonstrating that the governments of the two cities have attempted to put socially produced space on the map in order to promote culture and community revitalization. While this study demonstrates the different degree of state involvement and intervention between Hong Kong and Taipei in the public sites of cultural production, it also seeks to understand how place-making agents, especially artists, are reshaping places. To address the usefulness of artists to policy makers in rejuvenating old state-owned properties and creating broader socio-cultural benefits, this study puts greater emphasis on the distinction between the state-owned and privately-owned spaces. I argue that paying attention to the nature and the category of space to where these artists’ production sites belong enables us to discover how the artists and their activities lead to different development trajectories of urban places.

II. Production of Artist Neighbourhoods in Cities

Among urban scholars, the most noted outcome of the agglomeration of artists has been the subsequent improvements in amenities and class of residents known as gentrification, which has already been demonstrated in Sharon Zukin’s (1989) study of “loft living” in the SoHo neighbourhood of New York, causing
urban planners to adopt the “artistic mode of production” as an economic strategy that translates cultural production into economic capital for urban up-scaling and gentrification projects. She describes how artists, who rehabilitated blighted industrial lofts into live and work spaces, accelerated a real estate market that capitalized on the notion of living “like an artist” (82), which exerted appeal to the middle-class. In a similar vein, David Ley (2003), based on his analysis of three Canadian cities, suggests that artists and their “aesthetic disposition” contributed to the gentrification process of inner-city neighbourhoods through occupation and aestheticization of space, arguing that “to blame artists for the gentrification that so often follows their residency in a district is a misplaced charge; it is the societal valorisation of the cultural competencies of the artist that brings followers richer in economic capital” (2541). In considering broader urban strategies, some scholars have indicated that culture-led regeneration projects seeking to improve a city’s image and to draw consumption dollars and the leisure or elite class by providing cultural service and infrastructure may have generated gentrification effects and social exclusion, undermining links to local particularities and interaction of culture and economy in the long term (Zukin 1995; Harvey 2001a).

With the establishment of cultural production sites converted from public premises in Hong Kong and Taipei in recent years, media accounts in both places have tended to regard the intervention of artists into urban decaying neighbourhoods as a prelude to more advanced gentrification and commodification of culture. One example of these media accounts, a Chinese article titled “Spatial Contest of Treasure Hill,” published on the art collection section of the website of a Chinese online media SINA in 2011, traces partially the transformation of Treasure Hill from a squatter area into a new touristic site which
includes an artist village and a youth hostel. This article compares artists to cultural “chessman” (Jacobs 1961) used by the state to accelerate gentrification project and to develop a cultural industry that entails practices such as the benchmarking of a place’s popularity and festive activities (Chen 2011). Similarly, other media accounts in Hong Kong have referred to artist villages bracketed with creative industries as a driver of gentrification in old districts that promote property development in the name of revitalization (Leung 2010). An example of this type of perspective is a Chinese essay on Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, written by a young cultural critic in 2011 and published on an electronic periodical of cultural criticism. In this essay, old industrial spaces, which have been revitalized as new cultural production sites, were considered as a potential gentrifier that may satisfy the elites and the rich rather than benefit the disadvantaged local community in the coming years (Leung 2007). The essay exemplifies one major perspective of cultural critique that has tended to believe that the presence of artists, who made post-industrial spaces their own studios within grassroots community, will gentrify the community in long run.

These accounts, however, have taken the process of gentrification for granted and failed to differentiate between the nature of publically-owned spaces and that of the privately-owned ones. Therefore, they have treated all artist clusters, even those produced by the state and housed in public premises, as initiating the same gentrifying process as exemplified by the model of New York. By the mere presence of artists, it appears that the neighbourhoods could attract wealthier residents and businessmen to discover the site and enterprises to germinate, causing property price to rise and displace residents in the same area. As such, they considered the strategy of artist-led urban regeneration as pure
economic rhetoric at the expense of less competitive local community interests, and have thus missed out on a mix of cultural and social dimensions that are found in urban revitalization programmes targeting at public premises.

This study aims to probe into the socio-spatial, cultural, and institutional factors that change the social dynamics of the artist studio clusters and shape their outcome over the urban revitalization process. Moving beyond the view of treating artists as gentrifiers and state actors as blind-supporters of artist-led gentrification, this study seeks to offer a different way to explain socio-spatial changes brought about by artists on the ground, as the governments have come to put efforts into creating non-profit making spaces used for cultural production activities. In this model of public cultural space, the governments have intended to shield the spaces of cultural production from gentrification process that threatens cultural producers in the locations, and to expand spaces for small-scale production to support artists, designers and artisans, by putting these spaces under the management of non-profit organizations rather than business corporations. I suggest that artists should not be singled out as a key factor for explaining the development trajectory of artist clusters. Instead, I argue that the changes taking place in artist-led cultural production sites take the forms of social, political and cultural processes that involve the relationship between the artists, local community, and state agents or administrators of cultural space, which manifests how culture is administered and defined in the city. The role of the state as an “anti-gentrifier,” in this sense, suggests that the state not only considers artists in post-industrial cities as labour that serves the interests of capitalists, but also the creative workforce valued by the state to initiate urban revitalization and to promote social benefits.
III. Literature Review on the Production of Cultural Space

The linkage between the production of artist neighbourhoods and socio-spatial differentiation in urban areas of Hong Kong and Taipei lends itself to a Lefebvrian analysis of space. Lefebvre’s study of space is useful because it emphasizes “the social” of space. One central idea of his study is that space is socially produced, that is, space is produced through social relations and structures (Lefebvre 1991), and is reproduced and reshaped by social and cultural practices. Using Lefebvre’s analytical framework, spaces, including artist neighbourhoods housed in state-owned properties, are produced through the interplay of threefold components: spatial practices (perceived space), representations of space (conceived or abstract space) and spaces of representations (lived space).

Lefebvre’s first concept of spatial practices, or perceived space, highlights the dynamic nature of socially produced space that “embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (Lefebvre 1991:30). This concept helps this study to analyze the cultural space in which social production and reproduction occur at the same time as the daily activities of inhabitants or users take place in the lived space, where the analysis of this study is based on. Lived space, according to Lefebvre (1991), is:

….space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’….This is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.” (39)

The two case studies I selected are both forms of lived space defined as mixed-use cultural sites consisting of art space where various forms of art is produced,
presented and experienced, and (semi-) commercial venues where leisure and consumption experience is offered, as well as places where symbolic values are produced through artists’ everyday practices. Paying attention to the spatial practices of the local actors, especially artists, is useful to understanding why the states have leveraged artists as revitalization tools that have transformed derelict buildings into new cultural sites in local communities.

Research on the relationship between the state and the artists in defining culture and art in modern China has also highlighted the importance of spatial practices in illuminating the implications of artist’s and institutional practices on the society that could not be discovered without empirical research (Tang 2008). The linkages between spatial practices of artists and socio-spatial development is most evident in the roles of artists as “useful labor” demonstrated by Richard Lloyd’s (2006) study on how the spatial practices and the subculture of artists congregated in a neighbourhood in Chicago become crucial to shaping the urban area into new sites of capital accumulation that fit into the post-Fordist restructuring. In this case, apart from gentrification, artists have contributed to the concentration of entertainment outlets and design intensive media enterprise that emphasized cultural production under macro-structural transformation. As Lloyd (2006) puts it, “the production of space is not only a matter of narrow property speculation; space is also essential to the organization and deployment of labor power and productive process” (46). His study calls for revisiting the concept of spatial practices, linking the everyday life to productive processes and social relations that are often subordinated in theories of gentrification.

In analyzing the political-economic dimension of space, the Lefebvrian concept of “representations of space” (conceived or abstract space), which he
refers to as “space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers,” (Lefebvre 1991:38) is useful in highlighting the inherent political nature, apart from the economic nature, of such spaces. Representations of space, or conceived abstract space, refer to the discourses on space generated by the professions of spatial planning and experts’ knowledge and theories that conceive of space. Conceived abstract space is “tied to the relations of production [and reproduction] and to the ‘order’ which those relationships impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes and to ‘frontal’ relations” (Lefebvre 1991:33).

With regard to the cases of Hong Kong and Taipei, I followed Lefebvre’s proposition about the nature of abstract space that he considers as “politically instrumental” (Lefebvre 1991:285). While conceived abstract space contributes to the processes of capital accumulation, it is basically “a political product of state-spatial strategies—of administration, repression, domination, and centralized power” (Brenner and Elden 2009:359). Conceived abstract space, in Lefebvre’s explanation, is “instituted by a state,” and is institutional and inherently political (Lefebvre 1991: 278-282, 285, 349; Brenner and Elden 2009:359).

Particularly in the case of Taipei, which will be discussed in Chapter Three, I suggest that the establishment of artistic production site in Treasure Hill, a former illegal settlement, was in part a political decision as to rejuvenate the local community as a new public site and expand public participation in the artistic and cultural activities. In tracing the planning of the revitalization project of Treasure Hill, this study shows that the discourses of officials and an activist group, which is comprised of urban planning professionals and graduate students and was commissioned by the municipal government to undertake the planning of Treasure Hill, decided on the composition of Treasure Hill that we see today. The fact that
Treasure Hill is under the administration of a non-profit organization, which is set up by, sponsored by and institutionally situated within the municipal government, suggests the centralized power of the state in administering public cultural spaces. The use of authority by the municipal government to suppress a social movement launched by a group of activists, who protested against the government’s revitalization plan on Treasure Hill, also points to the dominating role of the state in the spatial planning of Treasure Hill. For the case of Hong Kong, JCCAC’s architectural design, which stresses on preserving the building’s inherent characteristics of factory and broadening open space for interactions among the artists and between the artists and the public (Hong Kong Baptist University 2006b), manifests the officials’ discourses on achieving the preservation of historic buildings and striking a balance in creating social and economic benefits through revitalization. The project of JCCAC also shows the government’s strategies of entrusting non-governmental bodies, which have steered the planning and the governance of JCCAC, to administer culture in the city. Given the nature of JCCAC as state-owned properties, this study suggests that rules and regulations imposed by the government over the public spaces of JCCAC have implied the domination of the governmental power over the users of the spaces.

In Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden’s (2009) discussion of Lefebvre’s conception of abstract space, the production of space is a manifestation of a mixture of political interests that leads to socio-spatial restructuring. As they write:

Lefebvre contends that the production of abstract space entails transformations not only in political practices and institutional arrangements but also in political imaginaries: it involves new ways of envisioning, conceiving, and representing the spaces within which everyday life, capital accumulation, and state action are to unfold. (Brenner and Elden 2009:359)
That is to say, abstract space includes not only the existing activities of human and capital but it also demonstrates the visions and capacities of the officials or the political leaders in governing their states. On a city level, my study on the revitalization of state’s public premises as cultural production sites in Hong Kong and Taipei also requires paying attention to the ways in which the cultural space manifests how the governments define culture, while the space (re)produces socio-spatial changes on the ground. In the case of JCCAC, the model of the proposed JCCAC produced in 2006 serves as an example of how the architectural professionals envisioned that the old spaces of a public building could be adapted for a new use as a centre for creative production and arts appreciation, using clean white colour and modern interior and exterior design, and offering spacious gallery spaces (Appendix A). Similarly, the planning of Taipei’s Treasure Hill as conceived by the officials and the planners is shown in a map of Treasure Hill created in 2010, reflecting how Treasure Hill has been organized spatially to incorporate not only the gallery spaces, workspaces of artists, works of public art and homes of the original residents, but also the landscapes for sightseeing and other offerings such as a youth hostel (Appendix B).

Understanding the role of the state and the cultural orientations in leading to neighbourhood changes and socio-spatial differentiation requires that we adopt a more integrated approach to the analysis of production of space. Based on the central ideas of Lefebvre on space, this study follows Gottdiener’s (1994) and Hutchison’s (2000) “socio-spatial” perspective inspired by Lefebvre. This perspective accents the “society/space synergy” in taking a comparatively holistic view of the development trajectories of urban space as the linked outcome of political, cultural and economic factors, and emphasizes that city spaces are
multifaceted expressions of local social dynamics and macro-structural processes (Gotham 2001). By looking at the role of state, this approach helps consider government intervention and the interests in strategies of growth as a major factor in metropolitan change and avoid treating the state as “simply derivative of economic interests” (Gottdiener and Hutchison 2010).

By the same token, political economic approaches have emphasized the direct relationship between the mode of production and urban change (e.g. Harvey 1989), and have tended to ignore the role of social lived space and the differences of local cultures in their symbolic meanings attached to different spaces (Kleniewski 2002:43-44). In this study, I also argue that the actors on the ground should not be excluded from the analysis of cultural spatial production. Production of cultural space involves not just economics but the interactions between the state and the actors. It relates to how the state attempts to leverage these actors, especially the residents and artists, who are the users of the lived spaces, to produce socially constructed space that benefits local development.

Lefebvre’s conceptualization of space as conceived, perceived, and lived space can offer a lens for the analysis of contentious politics as socio-spatial processes because it recognizes different dimensions of space and the contradictions that ensue when they interact:

Sociopolitical contradictions are realized spatially. The contradictions of space thus make the contradictions of social relations operative. In other words, spatial contradictions ‘express’ conflicts between sociopolitical interests and forces; it is only in space that such conflicts come effectively into play, and in doing so they become contradictions of space. (Lefebvre 1991: 365)

In explaining the case of Hong Kong, this view helps me to consider how cultural space is defined by contradictions and regulations, demonstrating a contentious
relationship between artists and the arts management at the site. Participant observation reveals the contradictions between these two groups of actors by examining their incompatible spatial practices of every day. Highlighting the spatial practices of the social actors, the case of Hong Kong indicates that the regulated space has a tendency toward management in order to maintain its financial balance and bureaucratic principles rather than facilitate creative processes. This defining feature of the regulated cultural production site of Hong Kong has figured centrally in enabling the promotion of leisure elements and the incorporation of consumption opportunities into the site through activities launched by the management, entailing contradictions between artists who focus on artistic production and professionals who engage in promoting leisure-led activities. The case of Hong Kong can represent in microcosm what is happening in the “creative city” that becomes an “arena for contentious politics about the character of the city and for whom it works” (Markusen 2006: 1937).

In the case of Taipei, although the cultural space has exhibited no significant contradictions between artists and management, it was the arena for both civic mobilization and social movements struggled over the future usage of and the planning of the cultural space. These social movements were initiated by preservationists and activists, whose interests conflicted with the state’s interests in varying degrees at different points of time in the recent decades. Yet, the subsequent success of a social activist group in collaborating with the state on the planning of the cultural production site has taken forward an orientation toward civic participation. Lefebvre’s theory of space production is useful in understanding the case of civic space in Taipei because it highlights the interplay of social and political forces in shaping space that in turn transforms social
relations within society (Douglass 2008). According to the interpretation of Lefebvre’s work (1991:59) by Douglass, Ho and Ooi (2008), “all social change requires appropriate spaces for its fruition, providing and giving sustenance to civic space is a basic requirement for the promises of genuine citizen participation in governance” (5). The findings suggest that the provision of public cultural space, for the case of Taipei, allows civic activities to proliferate, and reflects the dynamics in civic participation that contribute to the civil society (Lefebvre 1991).

Following Lefebvre’s emphasis on the human aspect, my study highlights the local actions through which actors engage in conflicts over the course of socio-spatial development. As such, space can be considered as an outcome of negotiations and contending interests, involving many interests of the local actors (Gottdiener and Hutchison 2010). Based on a Lefebvrian study on space, this research considers social activities as integral to physical space, that is, social relations affect space and space shapes social relations. Space not just contains social activities, but also constitutes a part of social relations. It itself manifests and explains the outcome that resulted from social processes. To understand and compare how social dynamics has led to different development trajectories in specific places, Lefebvrian theories help this study to consider the integrated character of space defined by the interaction of lived space, where people live and work daily, and conceived abstract space produced as part of urban-spatial strategies.

In order to address and explain the dynamic processes and outcomes of the planned artist neighbourhoods created under urban strategies, this study suggests that using Lefebvre’s spatial production can allow us to link together and engage in the discussions of concepts such as social production of space and political
economy through looking at both the social lived space and abstract state space, where the practices of social actors and the political interests of states intersect at specific locales. A study on artist neighbourhoods that incorporates Lefebvre’s emphasis on lived space thus not only pays attention to the articulation between the state and space of cultural activities, but also illuminates the dynamic social practices and cultural practices involved in the production of artist neighbourhoods and social spaces.

By analyzing abstract state spaces rather than privately-owned spaces, this study highlights the role of state, instead of business investors, in making cultural spaces by reusing state-owned properties as largely non-profit spaces for the use of cultural producers. Although the way capital investors and the state think about space is tied to its abstract qualities of dimension (e.g. size, area, locations and profit), the state does not always take steps only to make run-down areas profitable again (Gottdiener and Hutchison 2010). Gellner ([1983] 2006) has shown that states wilfully select and invent culture, using culture as a tool to construct nations. In the cases of both Hong Kong and Taipei, state actors have employed cultural spaces to engender what is considered important to a “creative city.” Urbanization, for the state, is not just about the mobilization, production and appropriation of economic surpluses. Rather, in both cities, the governments have invested in non-profit generating spaces to prevent the intervention of large business corporations and the overly commercialization process that may displace original communities. They have sought to support creative workforces and identify the cities as dynamic rather than decayed. For Hong Kong, this orientation has allowed the government to strike a balance between cultural-oriented use of space against the economic use of space, while promoting
community development through revitalization and incubating small-scale cultural production. By placing cultural space under the administration of non-profit organizations, Taipei can ensure wider public participation in the cultural space and establish greater public meanings for government’s cultural heritage that is for all but not for a few. Thus, this emphasis on the intervention of state in urban development allows for an understanding of the political economies of urban regeneration, and avoids a purely economic reading of spatial production that presumes that the agglomeration of artists’ workspaces would result in eventual gentrification.

IV. Place-making and Production of Cultural Space

As the cultural economy has taken an increasingly important role in cities, the cultural sector has become not only the component of major development strategies or symbols of post-industrial progress, but also a tool that Asian cities could employ for place-making (Daniels, Ho and Hutton 2012). In order to understand the production of cultural space by governments, there is a need to make sense of the strategy of place-making, which involves the state and the local actors to play a part in the process of making “places.”

Thomas Gieryn (2000), in his sociological analysis of place-making, argues that “places are made through human practices and institutions even as they help to make those practices and institutions (Giddens 1984). Place mediates social life; it is something more than just another independent variable (Abu-Lughod 1968)” (467). Rather than viewing places as an outcome shaped by political-economic or ecological factors, Gieryn highlights the human dimension and social dynamics of places in specific locations, suggesting that a “place is space filled up by people,
practices, objects, and representations” (465). Like Lefebvre’s conceptualization of “lived space,” Gieryn focuses on the everyday life and the social practices through which place is shaped. Following these views, the undertaking of the state in moulding cultural production sites, where cultural producers work and/or live, can be considered as a process of place-making, transforming space into place.

In more concrete terms, place-making, which constitutes a sense of neighbourhood and social life, is a process of giving meaning, identity, and collective memory to specific locales (Ho and Douglass 2008). The core of place-making is different from the concept of place-marketing, as Ho and Douglass (2008:208) put it:

while place-marketing is advanced within the paradigm of growing the urban economy and bringing jobs to people, place-making has to be encouraged for its value in strengthening the social fabric of the city, region and the nation.

From their perspective, the distinction between place-making and place-marketing lies in the different focus of the efforts. Place-marketing is seen as a form of place-making strategy advanced by governments and related agencies to create a city image for economic benefits (Olds 1995) through developing urban quarters, iconic buildings, and the hosting of mega-events (Doel and Hubbard 2002). Examining the role of culture in city-marketing, Lloyd and Clark (2001) indicate that the business of marketing culture and entertaining consumers, which include both residents and tourists, has become the business of the cities that operate as “entertainment machine.” The competition among cities for tourists, expert labour and post-industrial workforce suggests that the aesthetic production (Lash and

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1 The terms place and space in this research are used interchangeably. Based on the views of Gieryn (2000) and Lefebvre (1991), I recognise the rhetorical nuance between place and space. Following the view of Tang (2008), I also avoid the reductionist view that defines both of them as the whole amount of their material components.
Urry 1994; Scott 2000), cultural offerings (Florida 2002), and entertainment components (Hannigan 1998) of cities are strategically produced through political and economic activity, involving the work of various urban actors including artists, and not just political decision-makers or economic investors (Zukin 1995; Florida 2002; Lloyd 2006; Tang 2008). The emphasis of Lloyd and Clark (2001) on adopting a production-based interpretation of urban processes helps me to consider the extent to which entertainment and cultural production overlap in state-owned cultural space in Hong Kong and Taipei. Yet, an analysis of the production processes that take place in both cultural spaces run by non-profit organizations also requires paying attention to the social facet of production, which has put little emphasis on economic returns but more focus on creating social benefits through expanding arts spheres at the locales for public participation.

The viability of place-making, according to Ho and Douglass (2008), lies in the level of capacities and support in strengthening the social fabric including social capital and social efficacy. Drawing from research emphasizing place-based communities, social capital is defined as networks, norms and trust that facilitate collective action (Putnam 2001: 111) whereas social efficacy is defined as working trust and shared expectations for action (Sampson 2004:108). These two elements, as Ho and Douglass (2008) suggest, contribute to place-making, which in turn reinforce both elements.

This study draws attention to the new policy efforts of Hong Kong and Taipei in the 2000s in producing public cultural space that combines lived space for artistic production with leisure opportunities, attempting to leverage artists to play out the process of place-making at neighbourhood level from “inside out”
(Relph 2000: 34) and “bottom up” (Ho and Douglass 2008). This place-making process involves what Friedmann (2007: 272) described as the intersection between the state, which governs the planning and the use of public premises or amenities, and the people, whose activities in their everyday lives occur in these features. His view on place-making and Lefebvre’s (1991) concept of production of space converge on the position that the material space is shaped through the “dialectic between the governance and the everyday of the governed” (Ng 2009:5).

In this study, I look at place-making as a set of processes and relationships that factor in the social processes, the historic context, and the policy implementation, going into shaping the cultural production sites in Hong Kong and Taipei. To different degrees, both models of place-making in Hong Kong and Taipei are concerned with the development of social collective life built from social relations at the neighbourhood level. When we examine these processes, it becomes apparent that both Hong Kong and Taipei have attempted to involve the local community in activities that contribute to place-making, while rediscovering the local elements of the city through revitalizing historic spaces and offering spaces to diverse local actors for cultural production. The operation of the cultural production sites by non-profit organizations in both cities underscores the shared interest of the states in promoting public interactions and engaging the general public in arts and culture at the neighbourhood level (Taipei City Council 2005; Hong Kong Baptist University 2006b).

The place-making work in the case of Hong Kong, however, appears to have less tendency toward facilitating a collective sense of purpose around the artists within the production site, and a greater tendency toward regulation, management, and incorporating entertainment and leisure elements at the expense
of the social relations and the varying interests of the artist community within the site. Using examples of the regulation practices of the management, the conflicts between the artist and the management over the issue of rental increase of artist studios, and the rights of the artists to the common space, the study demonstrates how the cultural production site has failed to strengthen mutual trust and social relations of the artist community. An example of conflict between the artists and the arts organization over noise nuisance, and the dissimilar orientations of cultural groups further illustrate the weak cohesion within the cultural sector at the production site. I also look at the commercial activities organized by the management and the artist community that have posed challenges to maintaining a sense of place in a mélange of leisure-oriented maneuvers. Through the examples of art works presented by Hong Kong artists, I suggest that the artists have constructed a notion of Hong Kong identity that contributes to the image of an alternative culture, presenting the facet of art-oriented production activities vis-à-vis that of leisure-based activities at JCCAC.

Compared to Hong Kong’s JCCAC, Taipei’s Treasure Hill has tended to experience a greater degree of place-making, as reflected by a higher degree of collective action among the local actors who are actively involved in the local Treasure Hill community. The process of building and maintaining social capital and social efficacy will be illustrated by tracing the role of state and social activists in planning and implementing the revitalization of the neighbourhood which emphasizes the sustaining of social network among the original inhabitants. I also look at the government’s strategy in using artists to engage local community members into artistic production activities and expand civic engagement in arts. The collective sense of purpose around cultural producers in engaging local
community is highlighted in the examples of pocket spaces set up by creative types promoting public participation, and the artworks produced by artists in the neighbourhood that incorporate their everyday experience with the local community. Examples of artistic production further illustrate how art has embodied the official discourse of public participation and social inclusion, demonstrating shared and obligatory orientation between the state agents and the artists toward the local residents in the neighbourhood.

V. Spaces and Culture in Chinese Metropolises

Before moving to the discussion of the case studies on Hong Kong and Taipei where culture and art is produced and experienced in different production sites in subsequent chapters, I first illustrate the rationale of a study on the cultural space of Hong Kong and Taipei.

As Hong Kong and Taipei are not nation-states, the city has played the role as the staging ground for not only building the economic ensembles, but also for administering the city’s culture and how its culture is experienced that is crucial to the city’s fortune in new cultural economy. Scholars of geography in East Asia have focused on comparing the urban-cultural strategies the cities have stepped up to increase their competitiveness and to acquire more advantages in the global stage. Following the global trends, metropolitan cities are required to produce cultural capital, in particular, to create urban cultural spaces. To attain greater global city-ness, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore have followed recipes in transforming places to improve vibrant city life, through iconic architecture and cultural infrastructure, such as museums, libraries and theatres (Kong et al. 2006; Kong 2007). These attempts of city regeneration rely on large investment in
attracting consumption dollars through instigating “spectacle” (Debord [1967] 1995; Harvey 1989) and display for place-selling and “spatial imagineering” (Yeoh 2005). While the literatures on Asian Cities have offered implicit comparative insights by analysing the cultural strategies of the cities, they have mainly surveyed the city strategy of cultural flagship icon as a means to competition. As a result, they have framed the discussion on production of space generally in terms of political and economic factors, and therefore missed out on the social dimensions of space that cause urban change.

This study suggests that focusing on Hong Kong and Taipei can offer three contributions. First, a comparative study between Hong Kong and Taipei can highlight the complexity of experiences of the East Asian cities in producing different forms of cultural spaces and the diverse paths of socio-spatial development of specific locales. It can reveal the alternative ways in which individual cities have produced spaces for cultural production that serves local development, and thus offering explanations on how cultural space can be further understood by moving away from the model of cultural strategies targeting at constructing new cultural space for city-competition and channelling economic capital that has tended to ignore social dynamics as affecting local development. One major similarity between Hong Kong and Taipei is that they have come to initiate community revitalization through cultural production. In the cases of Hong Kong and Taipei to follow, this study shows that both governments have invested in making non-profit oriented cultural space as the policy makers have recognized a need to promote local community development and social benefits using artists’ spatial practices and small-scale cultural activities. Secondly, the complex socio-spatial developments involved in the cases of Hong Kong and
Taipei require that we conceive of cultural space as the outcome of an integrated process of various factors, including history, institutional factors and political development. Although the analysis is limited by the number and type of cities chosen, it attempts to demonstrate how the two cities come to the current state of socio-spatial development through different courses of revitalization of state-owned properties. By analyzing Hong Kong and Taipei, this study can reveal the distinctive features of the cultural spaces of individual cities that have developed in their specific historical contexts, and offer a more focused comparative analysis of the states’ relationships to local cultural actors.

Finally, Hong Kong and Taipei are also selected for their similarities and simultaneous differences that make a comparison feasible. Both Hong Kong and Taipei are local cities that have significant relations with the larger political entity of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and have been influenced by the central government. For the case of Hong Kong, I use “the state” to refer to the government of Hong Kong, under the influence of the government of PRC or its policies. Hong Kong has become a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of PRC and lost its quasi city-state status since the July 1997’s handover of Hong Kong from the British Government to PRC. Although Hong Kong is a semi-autonomous region, it has become a local city that is constitutionally and territorially a part of China. This arrangement has meant that Hong Kong needs to compete with other Chinese cities under the control of the sovereignty of PRC. Meanwhile, Taipei is the capital city of Taiwan, which is neither an independent country nor a province of PRC, but a self-rulled political entity. In my study, the municipal government of Taipei refers to “the state,” which is connected to the central government of Taiwan. Taipei is one of the municipalities of Taiwan, and therefore one of the
highest level cities in Taiwan that is influenced by the relations and interactions with the central government of Taiwan, which holds major resources at the seat of power that the two major parties contend for. Without independence, Taiwan’s stake in upholding and striving for national identity has thus allowed high degree of state intervention in driving the world-city role of Taipei (Friedmann 2006).

As both Hong Kong and Taipei are named as one of the four “Asian tiger economies” along with Korea and Singapore, a comparative study of spatial production between Hong Kong and Taipei can provide a chance to understand the nuances of the relationship of cultural space and the associated socio-spatial activities to the two cities under regional competition. As modern, post-industrial cities in the region of “Greater China” and East Asia, Hong Kong and Taipei are no exceptions in meeting the challenges imposed by inter-city competition due to globalization. Situating the rationale within this regional context, the interest of both cities in promoting the production of artistic space is concurrent to the rise of mainland China in the past decade, with officials emphasising cultural strategies to strengthen cosmopolitan image of cities like Shanghai (Wu 2004). This backdrop has offered a condition for Hong Kong and Taipei to develop production-based strategies that favour creative industries as a way to avoid being overshadowed by China or reduced to the status of white elephant in East Asia. In essence, this study of the role of state is vital because cultural production in Hong Kong and Taipei is categorically different from the gentrification process took place in SoHo in the 1970s-1980s where the state had no stake in “branding” itself at the time.

The two cities, yet, have followed different political developmental trajectories that have shaped the meaning of cultural space. Hong Kong has long
been positioned as an economic city that framed the overall vision of city governance and development. In the 1980s, long-term plans on land development were devised to promote the city’s position as a first-rate financial centre in Asia and in the world (Ku 2010). Since the 1990s, Hong Kong has faced competition not only from cities outside China, but also neighbouring cities in the mainland as its economic development is inevitably embedded into China’s national marketization project, which has a stake in continuing Hong Kong’s position as a global financial centre (Chiu and Lui 2009). After Hong Kong’s handover to China under the banner of “one country, two systems,” this economic-oriented role is still entrenched and evident in some recent research literature on Hong Kong’s cultural space that illustrates how space is primarily regarded as a source of economic profit by the government, often resulting in conflicts between the market-led approach of the government and the civil society (Ku 2010).

Taipei, on the other hand, has been positioned as the capital and the political, economic and cultural centre of Taiwan. Since the 1980s, Taiwan has undergone a transformation in its governance model, changing from an authoritarian government to a liberal democracy that supports and legitimates the growth of a vibrant civil society (Hsiao 2003). The city’s development has been influenced by the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness and national identity since the democratization period that have created undercurrents in pursuing the independence of Taiwan. The socio-political setting that gave rise to political pluralism has prompted the municipal government of Taipei to promote people’s civic rights and the maintenance of democracy, including encouraging local communities to civically engage in community affairs since 1994 through regulations, programmes, and activities that have attempted to democratize
planning practices at neighbourhood level (Huang 2005; Wang 2006). Based on Taipei’s experience, scholars of urban planning in Taipei have identified the importance of community mobilization and institutional support to cities in producing and retooling local cultural resources in the long term (Lin and Hsing 2009). Similar research has demonstrated the crucial role of local actors in shaping urban space by preserving community’s historic built environment against the privatization of national lands, as well as the active role of the municipal government in designating the building area as historic district for public use (Huang 2008). These differences between the visions and imaginations of Hong Kong and Taipei are translated into a repertoire of spatial practices that are manifested in specific urban areas of both cities. In view of their different concepts toward urban cultural space, there is a need to explore the different social dynamics in the specific locales between Hong Kong and Taipei and examine the socio-spatial changes that have been produced and reproduced through the spatial practices of the state and the local actors. A comparative study of Hong Kong and Taipei thus illustrates both the diversities and similarities of the process of urban revitalization and the socio-spatial development in the two cities, as well as deepens an understanding of the comparability among major East Asian cities.

By looking at historic state-owned spaces in Hong Kong and Taipei, this study analyzes the social dynamics of the places where the states have endorsed new sites for artists and creative producers to produce culture and cultural activities at neighbourhood level. Some recent urban research literature examining Japanese cities, for example, Osaka, has looked at how urban regeneration projects undertaken by municipal government as part of community revitalization
and social inclusion strategy have attempted to rehabilitate old spaces as creative places for artists and citizens through the cooperation with non-profit organizations, university and local community since mid-to-late 2000s (Nakagawa 2010; Sasaki 2010). Some studies on cities like Singapore have explored artist clusters housed in state-owned premises, assessed how artists considered the meaning of clustering (Kong 2009a), and looked into other cultural economic strategies taken form as state intervention that facilitated the development of artist-initiated clusters since the late 1990s (Kong 2009b). These analyses, however, did not explore the social dynamics within the space and the relationship between artists and the state that illustrate the significance of the government’s role in revitalizing old state-owned space by leveraging artists.

To address the issues of states’ interests in using cultural producers and publically-owned space for urban revitalization in Hong Kong and Taipei, I have picked the category of state-owned properties. Two places that have been converted into sites of cultural production under governments’ policies are Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre and Taipei’s Treasure Hill, both of which belong to the governments and offer spaces for cultural production. Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre represents the first and only clustering project of artists’ studio units initiated and administered by non-profit organizations in Hong Kong that is entrusted by the government to rejuvenate local community and propel creative industries. Taipei’s Treasure Hill, the first squatter-turned historical settlement which now includes an artist village devoted to cultural production, exemplifies a site of cultural production that is managed by a non-profit organization in Taipei. In addition, Treasure Hill manifests the interests of the municipal government in using artistic production to revitalize the
run-down area and local culture, with a side purpose of promoting cultural production and public participation in arts. Although the two cases are not the only spaces of artists’ studios and cultural production in the two cities, they are exemplary of the new mix of cultural strategies and urban revitalization policies that have driven spatial and cultural production by transforming old state-owned properties into new artist neighbourhoods. Using the case studies to compare the differences in the public sites of cultural production between Hong Kong and Taipei, the study helps to reveal the different spins of policy orientations around the notion of cultural space that underlie the dynamics within the place-based artist neighbourhoods. By examining Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre and Taipei’s Treasure Hill, this study shows the similarities in using historic spaces of vernacular background under governmental ownerships to initiate artist-led urban revitalization, and the differences involved in these revitalization initiatives.

VI. Outline of Study

This study pays attentions to specific cultural production sites and the socio-spatial processes that manifest the relationship between the states and cultural space in Hong Kong and Taipei. I follow and compare the transformation processes of the cultural production sites where artists are leveraged to revitalize local communities in the cities. Using a comparative method, the study investigates the factors, including histories, policy orientations, the configurations and elements of the neighbourhoods’ character that have made impacts on the social dynamics of both cultural production sites, conjointly shaping the socio-spatial outcomes I document.
Chapter Two traces the development of the relationship between city space, cultural industries and local community in Hong Kong and Taipei. I present the changing discourses of cultural policy, cultural economy and urban regeneration from the 1990s through the present. The overview of the history and discourses illustrates the differences between the two cities in cultural governance. This section also highlights the linkage between cultural production and local community in both cities at different time.

Chapter Three examines the case study of Hong Kong’s cultural production site, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC), where contentious politics between artists and the management play out. Means of protests, from posters to banners, devised by the artists either to disapprove the management’s practices including its proposal of rental increase applied to the artists’ work studios, or to complain other renters, signal a red light to the cohesion between the local actors. The conflicts between the artists and the management suggest that their incongruous spatial practices are the source of contradictions.

Moving from Hong Kong to Taipei, Chapter Four gives an account of the case study of Taipei’s cultural production site, Treasure Hill, where civic engagement and art play an important role as the underlying principle of governing the revitalization of Treasure Hill. I trace how public officials and local social activists transformed Treasure Hill Village from an illegal settlement to a listed public historical site, using artists and their activities as the major tool. The revitalization of Treasure Hill through mobilizing artists to promote civic engagement in arts allows the state to maximize the public meanings of cultural space and local community development. The present facilitative relationship between the management and the artists, who are mandated to use their lived
experience with the residents at Treasure Hill as raw materials for their art works, demonstrate a collective sense of purpose around artists.

Chapter Five looks at the socio-spatial outcomes that characterize the cultural production site of Hong Kong and Taipei respectively. The section on Hong Kong suggests that JCCAC is shaped into a regulated cultural space and illustrates the tendency of the management toward tidying up common space and accommodating leisure elements that may diminish JCCAC’s partial role as an artist village. Artists find themselves confronting regulations and rules, troubled by the management’s orders that violate their spatial practices, and in negotiation over their rights to public space. Meanwhile, the promotion of consumption and leisure experience in JCCAC, through handicraft fairs organised by the management, artists’ studios offering art-jamming activities and retailing activities, has created contradictions within the artist community. These varied fragments of consumption experience, together with different groups of actors offering artistic experience in high art and community art, have inadvertently produced incoherency and weakened sense of collective action.

The section on Taipei considers Treasure Hill as a civic space in the process of cultivating its cultural advantages. Taking advantage of the geographical locations of Treasure Hill, the cultural planning of Treasure Hill has created a milieu favourable for cultural production. The role of the artists in rediscovering local culture and engaging the community is reified by a newspaper art project conducted by a resident artist in 2011, narrating the little stories and social histories of the residents of Treasure Hill. Emphasis on local culture and neighbourhood ties is further illustrated by the attempts of the management in engaging the local residents in activities that enliven the village life, and in
designating creative spaces conducive to public dialogues, interaction, and civic participation. The work of management and social actors including artists and residents consolidates a collective purpose to sustain the culture of Treasure Hill and the local community.

Chapter Six will discuss how the production of art has helped to construct the identity and a sense of place in both cases through giving meanings to the places in different ways. Examples of art works produced or displayed at the two production sites show that the meaning of art is changed by the make-up and the dynamics of the cultural space in Hong Kong and Taipei. In the case of Taipei’s Treasure Hill, production of art by both local and foreign artists sharing the common purpose of creating art out of lived experience often involves public participation and social inclusion, coalescing neighbours’ social relationships around cultural production that catalyse place-making. Unlike Treasure Hill, Hong Kong’s JCCAC helps to incubate art produced by local artists, who make use of the quality facilities of JCCAC to launch experimental art shows at cheap costs, developing a sense of local identity for JCCAC. In terms of public art, the surrounding public art of Treasure Hill reflects the central role of the state in sponsoring public art and investing in meanings of the space to revitalize urban areas, while its equivalent in Hong Kong demonstrates the spontaneity of artists in bringing art to public space through connecting the community fabric such as social networks, and reflects the role of district councillors in harnessing artistry to give meanings to localities with the input of art institutions.

The concluding chapter will compare the socio-spatial development of the cultural production sites in Hong Kong and Taipei and discuss such development as processes of place-making. I revisit Lefebvre’s study of production of space to
emphasize space as a dynamic product resulting from the social relations of production and reproduction. Relating the social dynamics I observed in earlier chapters to the historical and policy context, the configuration of the relationship between the state and cultural space in both cities have made impact on the development trajectories of the cultural production sites. This chapter considers the role of place in the production of art in light of the emergence of artist neighbourhoods and the production activities in the two sites. It discusses how factors such as live-work arrangement, physical environment, social interaction, and different governmental approaches to management associated with a place can define production of art in specific locales and contexts.
Chapter 2

History, Policy, Geography and Research Methods

The production of new artist neighbourhoods by the state in Hong Kong and Taipei represents the changing attitude and strategies of the state toward cultural economy and urban regeneration. As a way to improve the city’s image, the transformation of urban anachronistic spaces into new urban destinations and culturally-relevant nodes helps to rein in urban decay. This strategy indicates the importance to probe into the historic, socio-cultural and economic factors that renders artists and their activities as useful revitalization tools in the two cities.

This chapter first introduces the two artist neighbourhoods, JCCAC and Treasure Hill, where this research is based on. It then presents the history of the relationship between city space, cultural industries and local community in Hong Kong and Taipei, framed in the discourses of cultural policy, cultural economy and urban regeneration strategy from the 1990s till this day. With the aspiration of elevating the city status and faith in the capacity of the globalised marketplace, the rise of cultural industries as an engine for city growth has motivated Hong Kong and Taipei’s government to use culture and arts as a broader urban revitalization strategy to develop local community economy. Despite the convergence of revitalization and production of cultural space, this chapter provides a comparable picture of how the models of Hong Kong and Taipei combined different promotional and economic aims with wider social and cultural values. By leveraging culture, art, and historic space, revitalization projects such as the creation of artist villages, arts centres, creative quarters and art spaces in rundown
areas have taken on more instrumental values in city’s public cultural agenda.

After the discussion on urban cultural policy, the last part of this chapter describes
the methodology that I utilised to generate the findings.

I. **New Artist Neighbourhoods in Hong Kong and Taipei**

a. **Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre**

Opened in 2008, Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC) is a standalone state-owned building, which was converted from a disused factory estate into a mixed-use arts centre offering cultural amenities and an urban artist village for creative production. The renovated building was originally built in 1977 by the British colonial government and was named the “Shek Kip Mei Factory Estate.” Hong Kong served as a crucial manufacturing centre in Asia during 1970s to 1980s due to its abundant cheap labour. Previously one of Hong Kong’s most important communes of cottage industries, the estate offered industrial spaces to residents relocated from squatter settlements in Shek Kip Mei. By the late 1990s, it was abandoned and the government planned to demolish it to build new public housing. Nevertheless, the Shek Kip Mei Factory Estate had escaped from the fate of most old industrial estates in Hong Kong—being torn down by wrecker’s ball. After public discussion, in 2005, it was planned to become an arts centre, i.e. Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, where the first batch of tenants moved in during March 2008. By providing a platform for the public to engage in arts and offering studio space for artists and art groups, JCCAC is positioned to foster arts and culture in the community and nurturing creative talents in Hong Kong. Without a spectacular landscape, JCCAC is, however, an award-winning architectural conversion from the former Shek Kip Mei Factory
Estate to the creative arts centre. The project of JCCAC, which has been initiated and managed by non-profit organizations, is a message to the city that the government’s new urban cultural policy has come to recognize the importance of cultural producers.

b. Treasure Hill

In contrast to JCCAC and many other arts districts in Taiwan, Treasure Hill is not situated in a disused factory or standalone building but a former squatter settlement that can be dated back to the 1940s. Opened in 2010 as the first listed historical settlement in Taipei, Treasure Hill, or Treasure Hill Village, known as Baozangyan (寶藏巖) in Mandarin, is composed of the homes of the village’s original residents, an artist village and an international youth hostel. Under the management of a non-profit organization, Treasure Hill offers studio spaces for creative production through programmes such as the project of artist residency, while it also cultivates “a village lifestyle encouraging participation for all segments of the community” through a “curatorial approach” of workshops, exhibitions and other educational programmes (Arts in Residency Taipei 2010a). The composition of Treasure Hill spells out the mission of Treasure Hill in cultural preservation and community revitalization through which Treasure Hill’s original inhabitants, including social groups such as old veterans from the mainland, their foreign brides from South-East Asia, and migrants from central and southern Taiwan, were not forced to move away but allowed to continue to stay in the village. Its demographics have earned it the name of Taiwan’s “Rennie’s Mill,” the Hong Kong enclave that was home to many soldiers of Kuomingtang (KMT), which is also known as Chinese Nationalist Party, after the
Nationalist government’s relocation to Taiwan in the 1940s. Compared to the other two artist villages established by the Department of Cultural Affairs in Taipei City, Treasure Hill has caught considerable attention from local and global media, and has been celebrated as both a historical settlement area inhabited by original residents and an artist village carved out from the natural landscape. After the debate over whether to raze it in the early 2000s, Treasure Hill has been selected as one of Taiwan’s tourist destinations by The New York Times in 2006 and 2008. In 2006, Treasure Hill was also visited by a crew from Discovery Travel & Living’s programme, “Lonely Planet Six Degrees.”

As the two artists’ neighbourhoods represent the new efforts that both Hong Kong and Taipei have put in to rejuvenate old city spaces that are owned by the governments, the production of artist neighbourhoods cannot be understood without reference to the policies of the two states. In the next section, I will examine how the policy discourses of Hong Kong and Taipei have differed in the emphases placed on each city’s cultural space, cultural and creative industries and local community.

II. Urban Space and Art in Hong Kong and Taipei

Despite different contexts, a combination of forces and policies regarding urban revitalization and cultural economy has motivated the governments of Hong Kong and Taipei to make space for cultural production and activities. Both states have chosen to approach city space and culture at different points of time respectively to serve a variety of purposes that have made impacts on urban landscapes and cultural development. Taking into account the development and changes in policy discourses between Hong Kong and Taipei, the emergence of
JCCAC and Treasure Hill as the new artist neighbourhoods reflects not only the similar interests of the states in connecting the existing fabric of historic spaces with cultural production, but also the underlying divergences in how culture is defined in the city.

a. **Hong Kong**

During the mid- to late 2000s, Hong Kong’s new revitalization strategy aimed primarily to expand cultural and artistic production in accord with a broader cultural economy discourse. Examining the historical context of the cultural economy policy discourse, I demonstrate the focus of the discourse of cultural economy has shifted from grand narratives about world city competition by means of tourism and cultural quarters to the notion of local community economy. The changing emphasis has meant that the Hong Kong government has chosen to soften its economic-led policy in dealing with cultural space, including heritage buildings, and cultural art districts. The subsequent demands from the society on the government to foster local cultural development and the active role of non-profit organizations in putting forward a culture-oriented revitalization scheme together have made the government switch to a revitalization policy capitalising on art and culture to promote the local community economy.

i. **Creative Industries and Tourism as City’s Panacea (1997-2004)**

After the handover of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China on 1st July 1997, a new discourse of cultural economy started to develop with which Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government sought to propel tourism by promoting historical buildings (Tung 1998) amid the Asian
financial crisis of 1997. On the heels of the economic downturn, the “creative economy” has become a popular buzzword in metropolitan East Asian cities such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei and Seoul. With a developed base of arts and cultural industries, Hong Kong and the regional cities nearby had come to employ alternative economic strategies to secure “world city” status and to boost their economy and maintain competitiveness (Kong et al. 2006). By capitalizing on cultural and historic spaces, cultural tourism has become a strategy for Hong Kong to attract consumption dollars and stimulate the local economy.

The promotion of cultural tourism in Hong Kong has brought with it mixed opportunities and also constraints for the production of artists’ spaces. On the one hand, the discourse in principle created more opportunities for the development of local culture and preservation of heritage than colonial period. On the other hand, the incorporation of culture into the economy under early post-colonial governance in practice subsumed culture under market considerations. As Agnes Ku (2010) has argued, the new discourse, spearheaded by a newly established Tourism Bureau, was “in effect a product of the deepening of the market principle under the ideology of neo-liberalism and a worldwide expansion of the tourist industry. The gist of the discourse is to turn culture, arts and heritage into business while passing the economic burden of restoration, maintenance and development from the government to the private sector” (384).

The push from China to perpetuate Hong Kong as a market-led society in the post-1997 period has continued to influence the economic policy as well as culture-related decision making. Former Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa embarked on a plan in 1998 to shape Hong Kong into Asia’s entertainment capital by forging a state-of-the-art performance venue which would then become the
West Kowloon Cultural District. The discourse of the cultural economy in the late 1990s persisted with the focus on the needs to foster cultural environment and creative industries. In 1999, Tung’s policy address stated the need to get beyond the focus on cultural hardware:

Hong Kong’s future development is not just a matter of pushing forward with physical construction. What we also need is a favourable and flourishing cultural environment that is conducive to encouraging innovation and creativity in our citizens. (Tung 1999:54)

In spite of a vision for a better cultural environment, the adoption of an “arm’s length” patronage mechanism for the arts in Hong Kong has meant that the role of the Hong Kong government in supervising cultural policy has remained largely regulatory. Similar to the model of countries like the United Kingdom, the Hong Kong model involves distributing public funds indirectly through specialist organizations, e.g. Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), which decides the allocation of the funds and the types of arts under patronage, while private sponsorship also contributes to the total patronage. Although there was no clear and comprehensive policy on the creative industries, the concept of the creative industries began to evolve in Hong Kong after the HKADC first introduced the concept that emerged from the discussion among the cultural sectors in 1999 (Hui et al. 2007).

Channelling resources to develop the cultural industries was regarded as a way to trigger economic development by providing job opportunities, creating wealth through production and consumption (HKTDC 2002); and to enhance living quality of the city, promote tourism and attract investment (HKADC

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2 While the term “creative industries” was not specified in any Chief Executive’s policy addresses from 1997-2002, this term was commonly used in several policy documents (HKADC 2000; HKTDC 2002; HKGCC 2003).
Artistic creation was viewed as a “cohesive agent in building community identity”, promoting “a deeper understanding of the Hong Kong spirit” among local people and foreign visitors (HKADC 2000:6). Along a line more reminiscent of China’s attention to international cultural exchange (Kong et al. 2006), Hong Kong narrative also recognised the possibility of “promot[ing] mutual understanding between people and countries” (HKADC 2000:6).

While together the multiple roles of creative industries were laid down in the policies of execution units such as HKADC, the Chief Executive’s discourse on the creative economy has been oriented overtly toward economic purposes during the early 2000s, centring on the notion of using creative industries to shape Hong Kong into world city in the age of economic restructuring. In Tung’s 2003 policy address, the “creative industries” have officially emerged as a key framing component in the knowledge-based economy, which were seen as contributing to the building of “Asia’s world city” (Tung 2003:7). The slogan, combined with the logo of a flying dragon, was incorporated into a new strategy for branding Hong Kong as a regional and international global city. Since 2003, the “creative industries” have been given varying degrees of attention within the Chief Executive’s Policy Addresses. Kong et al. (2006) have pointed out that the major narrative strands in Hong Kong’s policy discourse are very similar to Singapore’s, but the Hong Kong government has played a less directed role in planning the creative industries when compared to Singapore. Unlike Singapore’s engagement with the specific concept of “creative clusters” and “creative manpower”, the Hong Kong government has not mapped out a long-term plan in regard to the creative industries. Yet, Hong Kong policymakers have embarked on an effort to measure the value and the size of creative industries. According to the Baseline
Study on Hong Kong’s Creative Industries (Hui et al. 2003a), commissioned by the Central Policy Unit of the government, eleven creative industry sectors in total contributed about 4% of the GDP, with 170,011 people engaged in the industries in 2001 to 2002.

ii. Urban Revitalization and Local Community Economy (2005-2010)

As the creative industries became formally integrated into the government’s economic policy in 2003, it had not articulated a specific agenda on advancing a cultural policy that embraces heritage preservation, cultural planning or support for the production base of the creative industries. Throughout 2000 to 2005, the city’s historic spaces remained dominated by market forces because the government encouraged the private business corporations to tender for the adaptive reuse of the buildings, and thus championed a cultural economy discourse that treated culture and space as having economic values based on market principles. This cultural-economic approach had discouraged regeneration of local culture but kindled a discussion over local cultural development.

Under the market-led policy context, two types of cultural issues have led to a heightened awareness of cultural development, the preservation of cultural heritage, and Hong Kong identity in the early 2000s, forcing the government to take a better cultural-led approach to city space and to step up efforts to further local cultural development under the pressure from the civil society. The first polemic issue centred around the planned cultural flagship project—West Kowloon Cultural District (1998-2006)—as an aggressive cultural economic policy (Kong et al. 2006) that aimed to stimulate Hong Kong economy and to assure Hong Kong’s position on a global arts map by means of global architecture
and fabricated urban culture. As Lui (2008) demonstrates, the abortion of West Kowloon mega-project (1998-2006) can be attributed to the state’s dodging of the basic questions concerning the consensus from below and “what” the project is for and “whom” the project serves. The set back of the initial plan also signals the crux of Hong Kong’s cultural development: the lack of vision of cultural development and coordinated cultural policy that supports sustainable local artistic development.

The second type of issue is related to public rows against sacrificing historic buildings for the sake of commercialism, a guiding principle over urban projects by the HKSAR government and the developers. After the handover in 1997, spaces of historic heritage have been more safeguarded as two pieces of legislation in relation to environmental assessment and urban renewal helped integrate heritage protection more with city planning practices (Cody 2002). Despite these good signals, the weak preservation culture pre-1997—as a consequence of colonialism that devalued history of place, the priority of British colonial government in turning Hong Kong into a financial city, the migrant mentality of majority of people, and shortage of land—had persisted through the post-handover period (Cheng 1999; Cody 2002; Ku 2010). The imbalance of commercialism and the safeguard of cultural values can be exemplified by the governmental structure that lowers the authority of the cultural units responsible for heritage preservation, such as the Antiquities Advisory Board, while enabling ultimate decision over the destiny of the historic buildings at the discretion of a handful of top-tier executive policy bureaux. Such institutional arrangements have reinforced what Abbas (1997) called the “culture of disappearance” and has continually consolidated the role of government as a regulator rather than a
facilitator over local cultural development, and thus its lukewarm support toward preservation of historic sites after 1997.

While the West Kowloon mega-project (1998-2006) revealed the lack of policy orientation in nurturing local production, a growing momentum within civil society to confront commercialism has started since the early 2000s (Ku 2010). By the 2000s, the tension between the government’s interests in cultural economy and civil society’s expectations had given rise to a series of struggles, for instance, over reclamation in Central and Wanchai, the preservation movement of the “Wedding card street” in Lee Tung Street neighbourhood, and the demolition of Star Ferry Pier in 2006 and Queen’s Pier in 2007-2008.

As a response to the unprecedented public concern for the relationship between heritage buildings, community sentiments and local identity, the official discourse of creative economy since 2005 has placed a newfound emphasis on fostering the development of local community economy through urban revitalization amid the failing West Kowloon Cultural District project. This new urban strategy discourse mirrored the value change undergone in the society unprecedentedly in Hong Kong history in the early 2000s. The functional roles of the creative industries under this discourse were extended to include the “creation of an urban image” and “community building” in the 2005 policy address. While urban renewal was framed as a form of economic strategy, the revitalization of old buildings has become a tool for trickling down economic benefits, including the growth of cultural creative industries. As Tung’s 2005 policy address stated:
Everyone has a stake in using cultural and creative industries to spearhead economic restructuring. Successful overseas experience underscores the importance of rejuvenating old districts in cities to create a cultural atmosphere, thereby attracting talent, fostering cultural and creative industries and developing local community economy. The city itself becomes a brand. Renewing old districts and rehabilitating old buildings can be a major force for economic growth. It will also increase employment for the construction and related industries. (Tung 2005:34)

By the mid-2000s, creative economy discourse reflected the government’s preferential treatment of certain types of creative production activities over others as a key agent in boosting city’s image and urban regeneration. The 2005 policy address has refined the term creative industries as “cultural and creative industries,” and has defined these industries as eleven categories of: “design, architecture, advertising, publishing, music, film, computer software, digital entertainment, performing arts, broadcasting, and antiques and art dealing.” The omission of visual arts such as painting, calligraphy, photography and sculpture in the list, however, implied the institutionalised and marginalised status attached to visual art, which lacks potential for profit-making in the eyes of policymakers.

Though policymakers have not sought to incorporate visual art into being part of the “creative industries” in accordance with the official definition, ironically, the shift in priorities to producing a better and favourable urban environment for creative economy has resulted in making space for, and the promotion of local artistic production including visual art. In the 2006-2007 Policy Agenda, for example, the last one on the list of the 11 new initiatives proposed by the government was to “establish a creative arts centre at the former Shek Kip Mei factory building to help nurture budding artists and create a clustering effect for the development of creative industries in Hong Kong” (Government of the HKSAR 2006: 46). The change in the attitude of the government toward the project was self-evident, as this arts centre project was
originally not an option picked by the government out of a list of projects proposed by the Jockey Club Charities Trust, the largest philanthropic organization in Hong Kong under Hong Kong Jockey Club (Cartier 2008a).

Creating an innovative milieu had allowed more room for culture-led urban revitalization as the government began to endorse the revitalization of its buildings as artistic production space during 2006 to 2007. The greater importance of the local economy increased the need to drive up urban revitalization. Unprecedented initiatives in regard to revitalization were laid down in Tsang’s 2007-2008 Policy Address, in which Tsang put forward a concept of “progressive development”, “promoting community development through revitalization” to “create economic and social benefits” (Tsang 2007:3). One crucial initiative of the policy was to introduce a scheme which allowed non-governmental organisations to apply for adaptive reuse of government-owned historic buildings.

An example of these government-owned historic buildings was the Central Police Station (CPS) compound, a listed historic monument in the central business district of Hong Kong, Central. The adaptive reuse of the Central Police Station (CPS) compound represents the gradual change of the government’s approach to revitalization of old space. In its 2007-2008 Policy Address, the government announced its acceptance of the Hong Kong Jockey Club’s proposal, which the Hong Kong Jockey Club decided to revitalize the CPS Compound as a hub for heritage, contemporary arts and culture, as a result of the combined efforts of social actors to confront the government’s economic-led policy over the heritage building. Policy measures to adopt an arts-oriented incubation plan has meant that the government had discarded the earmarking of the historic compound as a tourism project, originally placed under the Economy Development and Labour
Bureau that had planned to develop the compound into an entertainment-led complex (Ku 2010). This policy turn has provided greater room for small-scale cultural activities as stakeholders in revitalization projects of state-owned buildings began to involve non-profit organizations, thereby diminishing the influence of business groups and corporations over urban revitalization. Given the revitalization policy context, the “Conserving Central” project proposed in 2009 reflected the role of government in striking a “balance between economic development and cultural conservation” (Tsang 2009), with a plan to preserve and revitalize heritage buildings, e.g. Central Market.

However, when the revitalization strategy started to be applied to not only state-owned buildings but also private industrial buildings in 2009, the government had forced the removal of art and studio spaces nestled in the industrial blocks from 2010 to 2011. To release new land resources for commercial uses, the government announced a package of measures to encourage the redevelopment and conversion of a potential of over 1000 old industrial buildings by owners (Tsang 2009). One of the measures allows building owners, to apply to convert industrial buildings that are over 15 years old for “other uses,” chiefly for the commercial use of space. The measure exempts these owners from paying the premium to the government, starting from 1 April 2010 and effective for three years.

The policy of revitalizing industrial buildings, nevertheless, made the redevelopment of whole block of buildings easier and cheaper than before, and resulted in the escalation of the prices of “strata-title” (a type of ownership in multi-storey buildings) units in the industrial blocks that compelled small-scale owners and artists, who rented the industrial space but could not afford anymore,
to move (McMillan 2010). Over the course of 2011, both the prices and the rental rates of industrial lofts in Hong Kong rose to new heights for the first time since 1997 (Appendix E, Table A.2.). Beginning from a series of protests against the revitalization policy of industrial buildings, it started to dawn on the art community that the government fell short in protecting their creative spaces and production environment amidst a vibrant market of property speculation.

In addition to the strategy of urban revitalization, it is also important to notice that the Hong Kong government has, on the other hand, invested in new institutions, to an unprecedented degree, to steer creative production. For example, an agency named “Create Hong Kong” dedicated to drive the creative industries was set up in 2009, aiming to build Hong Kong into a creative capital in Asia. Yet, the debates over a lack of encouraging cultural environment and vision of cultural development in Hong Kong have continued throughout the early 2010s. A solution that political leaders considered to employ included the pledge of setting up a Culture Bureau by the Chief Executive-elect Leung Chun-ying, toward the end of 2011 during his election campaign, which would provide the local cultural scene with a more promising future. With a plausibly expanding opportunity structure for creative workers, urban space in Hong Kong remained to be a contested ground wherein the state and creative workers intervene to propel their own interests, and the culture and arts never cease to play a prominent role in reshaping city’s space.

b. Taipei

The use of the arts and culture to revitalize urban space in Taipei resulted from two major policy discourses that point to the changing attitude of the central
Taiwan and Taipei municipal governments toward cultural policy in the 1990s and 2000s. The first discourse was evident in the advent of Taipei’s cultural industry policy in 1994, using local cultural resources as urban regeneration tools to rebuild and revitalize the local community, thus to build community consensus that helped to create social capital and to generate impetus to encourage the residents to participate actively in their communities. This discourse also emphasizes that cultural resources help to consolidate Taipei as the capital of Taiwan, as well as the cultural capital of Asia that emphasised local-global interaction. The second discourse of urban-cultural development was a response to the growing global inter-city competition, placing more emphasis on the integration of “cultural creative industries” with local culture, symbolic space and aestheticization of life since 2002.


In the postwar period, Taiwan’s native society and its cultural development were used to be restrained by the authoritarian rule of the KMT and were the object of administrative scrutiny from 1950 till the late 1970s. Through controlling media and education, democratic ideals such as representative governance and freedom of expression were interpreted as not befitting Chinese culture and society. Even after authoritarianism was softened from 1971 to 1986, only limited political participation was allowed at the local government level (Chang 2005) and the Party portrayed itself as the genuine guardian of Taiwan. It was only after the lifting of Martial Law in July 1987 that Taiwan’s democratization overwhelmingly turned the environment into one favourable for cultural activities, laying the basis for cultural-industrial and media development.
The process of “indigenization,” which coincided with the democratization process after July 1987, led to a new affirmation and understanding of Taiwanese nationalism that contrasted the values and identities previously imposed by Chinese nationalistic traditions. Subsequent waves of democratization also accelerated the process of “de-sinicization” that replaced “China” with “Taiwan” in substance and in name (Chang 2005).

It is within this context of democratization that culture became more diversified by the late 1980s. The former Minister of Council of Cultural Affairs (CCA)⁴, Chen Chi-nan (2008: 6-7), pointed out that the cultural policy of Taiwan from the early 1980s grew from a focus on investing in high culture and its associated cultural activities and amenities (such as concert halls), to an emphasis on local cultural development and an equitable distribution of cultural resources toward the mid-1990s. This change of focus has meant the transfer of power from the central government to the local units, following France’s cultural policy model of “decentralisation” of power in the early 1990s (Chen 2005). In this new model, culture in Taiwan has become not only the responsibility of a dedicated national-level ministry, but also the duties of local governments and administrators that can decide on the local development of culture through allocation of cultural resources.

After Taiwan’s democratization, in the early 1990s, Taipei’s cultural policy concentrated on “the anthropological definition of culture as a way of life” (Lin and Hsing 2009) under the influence of locale-based initiatives aimed to bring about community renaissance, despite the fact that the existing cultural policy also emphasised the revitalization of Chinese culture to maintain political stability.

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⁴ On May 20, 2012, the Council of Cultural Affairs was upgraded to the Ministry of Culture (MOC) as a result of reorganization of government.
Culture-led urban regeneration in Taiwan began to surface in the 1990s, during which the cultural policy of Taipei City dovetailed with the national cultural masterplan, using cultural resources to revitalize local communities so as to advance Taipei as the capital of Taiwan (Lin and Hsing 2009). Although this form of policy intervention in local development corresponds with the cultural strategies of other Asian cities (Chang 2000; Yeoh 2005), nevertheless, the policy context of Taipei City in respect to urban growth has to be considered under the national framework. The year 1994 serves as the turning point of Taipei’s urban cultural development. One of the key national cultural policy endeavours, “comprehensive community building” (shequ zongti yingzao) [社區總體營造], was put forward in 1994 by the Council of Cultural Affairs (Council of Cultural Affairs 2004b). This initiative was then linked to Taiwan’s “Cultural Industry” concept, originated from 1995 when The Council for Cultural Affairs brought up the theme of “Developing Cultural Industries, and Bringing Culture into Industries” (wenhua chanyehua, chanye wenhuahua) [文化產業化、產業文化化] in the Conference on the Cultural Industry (Council of Cultural Affairs 2004b).

The culture of communities and their associated arts activities and products have become viewed as a form of local industry that leaders would seize upon to propel local development.

Through the cultural initiatives of “community building”, the government stressed the cultivation of a sense of belonging among local inhabitants, and the strengthening of community participation, community education and community aesthetics. During the 1990s, local historic space, such as Taiwanese temples, demonstrated its use in connecting the local traditions, community, and arts and culture events for accumulating social capital and promoting local industry.
development (Foundation of Environmental Planning and Urban and Rural Studies 2003). This model has given rise to community consciousness and facilitated civic engagement in local community affairs and in public life. At the local level, Taipei City led by then Mayor Chen Shui-bian (1994-1998) promoted social participation in urban space through measures such as “space liberation” (Huang 2005). By reopening buildings and spaces which were exclusively reserved for the KMT party (e.g. former residential palaces of Chiang Kai-shek) to the public, the government attempted to restore a sense of publicness in city’s space and create real public space for people’s use.

The importance of rediscovering local cultural resources has grown as the Taipei municipal government embraced a new cultural governance regime in 1999. Taking up the new role to develop cultural policy, the Taipei City’s Department of Cultural Affairs (originally called the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Taipei) was established in 1999 as the first local level cultural arm of the government in Taiwan. Under such context, the Taipei local government gradually shifted from its role as a “regulator” to “facilitator” of cultural development and community regeneration (Lin and Hsing 2009). This turn could be exemplified by a remark of Ma Ying-jeou, the former Mayor of Taipei, in a foundation ceremony of the Department of Cultural Affairs on 6 November 1999:

The engineering and buildings can make cities bigger, but only cultures can make cities greater….Cultures were regarded as the instrument of political activities before; Government now is using the state’s power to serve cultural development (Ma 1999). (Lin and Hsing 2009:1326)

Towards the latter part of 1990s, cultural policy discourse revolved around the notion of nurture and promotion of local culture to compete on the global stage. From the 1999 to the 2000s, the Department of Cultural Affairs, Cultural Industry
Development Commission, and Local Cultural Heritage Conservation Commission, together comprised Taipei’s cultural governance regime.

Three overarching principles, including “culture must take root in life,” “modernity must be refined by tradition” and “globalization must be defined by localization”, have meant that Taipei municipal government started to coalesce the “going global” strategies and urban strategy of local development. To establish cross-border cultural network in order to enhance city’s competitiveness in globalization, Lung Ying-tai, the first Commissioner for the Department of Cultural Affairs, attempted to promote Taipei as an “Asia’s Cultural Capital” in 2001, joined by 15 international cities. Because of Taiwan’s political isolation in foreign relations, promoting cultural exchange in the unit of “city” instead of “country” served to break the political barrier of Taiwan (Taipei City Council 2000). The Department of Cultural Affairs, however, was a key department controlled by the Kuomingtang (KMT) in Taipei while the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) had been taking control of the central government. The project was boycotted by counties controlled by the DPP due to different political goals. Since 1999, Taipei’s cultural policy has continued to view local communities as an important cultural force, as Lung stated in a regular meeting of Taipei City Council in 2000:

But the first thing is, culture must penetrate into the community. This is something I support one hundred per cent. And hopefully, in the end, all our policies should be that—after thirty years there would be a very small Department of Cultural Affairs but a strong community with huge civil power. (Taipei City Council 2000)

Aligned with this statement, the policy derived from the concept, “culture emerges from the alleyways” (Wenhua jiuzai xiangzili) [文化就在巷子裡] gradually linked artistic activities to the everyday life of Taipei residents. With a
vision for local culture, City government had designated 30 historic buildings and
28 cultural landscapes as preserved heritage during 1999 to 2005 (Council of
Cultural Affairs 2006). Together, the ideology of appreciating a local
community’s culture and the actual transformation on the ground paved the way
for a better culture-led urban strategy to come.

ii. Interweaving of Cultural Planning and City Revitalization
(2002-2010)

It was not until 2002 that the national government of Taiwan began to map
out strategies for the development of “creative industries” (Kong et al. 2006).
Against the backdrop of intensified globalization, Taiwan resembled other
developmental states in Asian cities which sought to use local resources and
cultural activities, apart from iconic flagship architecture and mega-events, to
eaestheticise urban landscape in order to counter globalization (Yeoh 2005).

Since the early 2000s, policymakers at the national level have envisioned
cultural creative industries as a key form of “investment for future” targeting to
accumulate “cultural software” as part of growth strategy toward the making of
“Green Silicon Island” (Council for Economic Planning and Development 2003).
Cultural industries have been recognised as an adaptive means second to the high-
tech industry for Taiwan to survive in the new knowledge economy. An official
integration of cultural industry into national economic agenda was initiated in the
As a competition strategy, “Challenge 2008” indicated that “the value-added
model of the knowledge-based economy should be the core of innovative design
in production, especially artistic and esthetic creation, which has been ignored
during the past” (Council for Economic Planning and Development 2003).
Cross-national studies in Asian cities suggest a “global reach” of creative economy discourse into Asia, as policy-makers turn to the knowledge of other countries to serve their own ends (Kong et al. 2006). The Cultural Policy White Paper, a key document produced in 2004 by the Council of Cultural Affairs, adopted the strategy of cultural creative industries, using the definitions employed by the British Government and United Nations. The government coined its own terms, for example, “cultural creative industries” and “creative living”. The use of this new “cultural creativity” signals the intention to set apart the new initiatives from the older “cultural protection”, in which Taiwan regarded and presented itself as the authentic guardian of “Chinese culture” (Abbas 1997) to lay claim to its political legitimacy following Cultural Revolution in mainland China.

The focus also shows the new emphasis on 13 different sectors that the government has selected to develop including “visual arts, music and performing arts, crafts, cultural display facilities, the design industries, publishing, TV and broadcast, movie, advertising, digital recreation and entertainment, designer fashion industry, architectural design industry and lifestyle industry” (Council of Cultural Affairs 2004b). While the government attempted to take forward the national project “Challenge 2008” in 2002, Taiwan’s cultural and creative industries have since grown substantially. From 2002 through 2007, the accumulated business turnover of cultural and creative industries reached NT$632.9 billion (or US$19.18 billion), which grew by 7.7% on average (Council of Cultural Affairs 2009), and translated into 3.18% of Taiwan’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007 (Industrial Development Bureau 2008).

As cultural industries have continued to play an increasingly vital role in attracting capital and stimulating local urban growth, a new policy discourse of
urban cultural revitalization has emerged, leading to new waves of production of cultural space by the government in various localities. In the 2000s, local cultural resources that have been emphasized since the 1994 community renaissance remained a core component in urban-cultural development of Taipei City. Since 2003, local grassroots culture and cultural heritage have been considered distinctive assets for cultural tourism. As Lin and Hsing (2009) demonstrate, social and cultural meanings of locales are predominantly emphasised in the regeneration project of the western districts, as local governments in Taipei have come to acknowledge local cultural development as a crucial step in urban regeneration. Cultural policy thus also aimed to revitalize traditional culture by means of social inclusion strategy that appreciates the values and the culture of grassroots community (Taipei City Government 2006). The rising importance of the social meanings of place in policy realm is evident in the government’s approach to the preservation of city space. The values of vernacular city space are acknowledged in the Cultural Heritage Protection Act that was amended in 2005 to recognize the social meanings and values of built environment as a criterion under which new categories of space such as “historical settlement” and “cultural landscape” that were added to the scope of cultural heritage by the government can be preserved (Huang 2008). One example of a designated historical settlement is Treasure Hill. Unlike the Western District redevelopment, the preservation project of Treasure Hill did not belong to a broader urban redevelopment project, but rather one of the initiatives taken by the Department of Cultural Affairs in turning Taipei into a “humanistic city” through revitalization of city’s cultural heritage (Taipei City Government 2003). The strategy of creating an artist village at Treasure Hill, influenced by the social inclusion concept, not only aimed to
“preserve city’s memory and stimulate cultural industry” (Taipei City Government 2003) but also helped to deepen “grassroots community culture” through protecting the historic and cultural landscape of Treasure Hill (Taipei City Council 2005).

The Taipei City government’s revitalization strategy contributed to the artistic landscape of Taipei by foregrounding creative spaces inhabited by artists within both urban areas and suburbs. Since the first half of the 2000s, the emergence of local and foreign artists’ live-work spaces that have been transformed from state premises illustrates the growing importance of artistic production to Taipei’s policymakers in the making of a cultural capital. Taipei Artist Village, which was established in October 2001, was revitalized from a public building originally used for the Maintenance Engineering Public Works Bureau. The village was the first artist village in Taiwan to work consistently with other cities for its international artist exchange programme after the City government started to push the international exchange of resident artists in 1999.

Other policy measures like “Arts Incubation Network” launched by the Department of Cultural Affairs in around 2004 have released pockets of vacant or underused state spaces to art groups. Rather than being “occupied” or “discovered” by the artists themselves, suitable spaces identified by the government were made available on the network, serving as platform for needy art groups looking for space at zero rental fees. The main group of beneficiary has been the theatre and dance groups because the “lofty” and large spaces are more suitable to be used as office and rehearsal room, and therefore too large for individual artists.

In remaking old spaces, artist villages with artists in-residence have also become a new means by which the City government can promote the goals of
“bringing art into daily life” (shenghuo yishuhua) and “bringing art alive” (yishu shenghuohua) [生活藝術化、藝術生活化] (Taipei City Council 2004). From 2002 onward, the Council for Cultural Affairs launched the “life arts movement” that aims to make aesthetics part of the duty of the citizens by raising their awareness of “cultural civic rights” and their participation in “life arts.” According to the Department of Cultural Affairs’s 2004 work report, artist villages helped to fulfil such goals by “strengthening the interaction with the community” and “making arts and cultural activities part of the lives of the general public” (Taipei City Council 2004). Such movement toward a lifestyle filled with arts has persisted through this day, as the Council of Cultural Affairs (2010) has put it: “Cultural policies in the past were focused more on artists, yet the life arts movement today requires citizens of the entire country to commit themselves to the right and duty to beauty.”

In the 2000s, the attention to a new creative industry led the policy makers to employ the adaptive reuse strategy of derelict spaces that served both preservation and local economic opportunities. To engage the public in the arts, the adaptive reuse of state-owned buildings as new sites of cultural activities in Taipei City has been one of the prime jobs of the Department of Cultural Affairs, before the “Challenge 2008” was proposed in 2002. From 1999 to 2004, over 20 city-owned venues, e.g. Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Red Theatre in Ximen, The Mayor’s Residence Arts Salon and Taipei Story House, were contracted-out to various agencies for art and cultural use (Taipei City Government 2005). The residences of reputable Qian Mu, Lin Yu-tang and the late President Chiang Kai-shek’s Grass Mountain Chateau were reconstructed to be open to the public. Since 2002, the City government had started to further
enrich the cultural landscape (Taipei City Government 2002b). Under the goal of “facilitating city’s cultural renaissance” in 2003, the City government began to take forward the revitalization of industrial buildings as cultural and performance zones, e.g. Songshan Cultural District (Taipei City Government 2003).

At the national level, adaptive reuse of abandoned spaces (xianzhi kongjian) was incorporated into the national plan, “Challenge 2008,” for the first time in 2002. Major efforts of this policy aimed to transform former industrial spaces into five creativity parks, namely, Huashan, Taichung, Chiayi, Tainan and Hualien. Among these five parks, only the Huashan Culture and Creativity Park is located centrally in Taipei City. The Planning and the setting up of “Creative Culture Parks” led by the national government, as the official document indicated, serves as a paradigm for the regeneration and reuse of “industrial cultural heritage” in Taiwan’s post-industrial age. From 2007, the original “Huashan Art District” which had been turned from an abandoned space into a cultural incubation and production space by artists in 1997 has become the new “Huashan 1914 Creative Park,” renovated and operated by a commercial enterprise to offer entertainment, exhibition, and performance venues.

Toward the latter part of the 2000s, urban space became a frequent policy agenda on Taipei City’s cultural planning. The project of “Urban Regeneration Stations” (URS) launched by Taipei City’s Urban Redevelopment Office in May 2010 marked a further expansion of reusing state-owned space as new cultural venues. By interweaving “cultural creativity” with “genius loci,” URS projects aimed to revitalize and reuse old community space and abandoned urban space that would become the future targets of urban redevelopment projects (Taipei City Government 2011). The URS spaces have served as a new platform for private
enterprises and non-profit organizations to produce cultural synergies for the good of the public. To make use of clustering effects of street and community culture, the 2011 Culture White Paper of Department of Cultural Affairs mapped out eleven “creative street blocks” in Taipei City as a way to forge creative clusters (Hsieh 2010). Together, these spaces, which have the potential to contribute to the creative economy, continued to be important resources for the local and the national government to promote urban development.

By actively transforming the derelict city spaces into new bases of post-industrial production and providing already existing public space new context for numerous forms of innovation, the government has stretched urban-cultural space across Taipei City by the early 2010s, preserving city’s memory and accelerating the pace of development in urban culture conducive to the new economy.

c. Summary

Tracing the policy orientations with regard to cultural economy and urban regeneration from the 1990s through the 2010s, I show in this section that Hong Kong has endorsed economic-oriented policies toward the use of cultural space since the late 1990s, focusing on using space as a source of economic revenues in tourism and creative industries, which has become recognized for its potential value in improving urban image and revitalizing local community and economy since the mid-2000s. Unlike Hong Kong, Taipei’s cultural space has been rooted in its cultural and political values as a realization of democratic ideals of the society at community’s level since 1994, emphasizing the goals of the government in rebuilding communities, developing local culture and promoting citizens’ civic cultural rights in public cultural space, which has then been used to serve the
economic targets of the early 2000s. In contrast with Hong Kong’s instrumental approach to cultural production, Taipei’s primary approach toward urban cultural space has been largely based on policies oriented towards the civil sphere.

The fact that artist neighbourhoods have become part of the outcome of the states’ policies is a reflection of the growing use of arts-led revitalization in Hong Kong and Taipei. The differences between the two cities in policy orientations, however, require that this study investigates the place-specific characteristics of each of the artist neighbourhoods, JCCAC and Treasure Hill, to discover how the instituted processes have defined the artist neighbourhoods, which carry the manifestations of how the governments conceived of cultural production and its associated spaces, intertwined closely with the practices of local actors and the social dynamics between the actors.

III. Research Methods

The primary data comes from semi-formal interviews with 25 informants (Appendix F), informal conversations and participant observation that I conducted at various art districts and venues in Hong Kong and Taipei. I first began my fieldwork in Taipei based in the artist village within Treasure Hill, the first historical settlement designated by Taipei City government in 2004. I worked two months as an intern at the operation office, run by the Department of Artist-in-Residence of a non-profit organization, Taipei Culture Foundation, commissioned by the Taipei City government’s Department of Cultural Affairs, which took over the operation of the Artist Village officially in 2010.

Treasure Hill was an appropriate place for me to observe how urban revitalization strategy in the form of injection of artists into an old neighbourhood
bears on local urban development with socio-cultural and economic consequences. Situated on hill slopes along the banks of Xindian River next to Fu-He Bridge (Figure 2.1), Treasure Hill Village stands close to the bustling “Wen-Luo-Ding” neighbourhood, which has been termed and branded as one of the city’s most “creative street blocks” (Liu 2010) by the Department of Cultural Affairs since the early 2000s. Formed by the triangle of Wenzhou Street, Roosevelt Road and Dingzhou Road in Taipei’s Gongguan area, the “Wen-Luo-Ding” neighbourhood is the only one among eleven “creative street blocks” developed around universities in Taipei City (Appendix C).

Figure 2.1. Treasure Hill Village in Gongguan, Zhongzheng District, Taipei City. Photograph taken by author August 3, 2011.
Despite the academic and liberal milieu of Gongguan, Treasure Hill Village is a long-forgotten community that many have never heard of. The iconic historical Treasure Hill temple, a Buddhist temple for Guan-Yin (Goddess of Mercy) built in Qing’s Qianlong period, standing at the entrance of the village and giving Treasure Hill Village the name, formed one’s first impression on the village. Following the bohemian traditions, Treasure Hill Village represents artistic urban spaces where artists could persist in the city of Taipei. Treasure Hill Village is situated in the Gongguan area near National Taiwan University (NTU) (Appendix C), and several universities⁴ that are located in Daan District, one of the old districts including also Datong, Zhongshan, Zhongzhan and Wenhua in Taipei.

During the internship period in Treasure Hill’s artist village, I worked normally three to four days full-time a week. The operation team of the village consists of handful staffs: three to four full-time staffs, around five interns including myself from Taipei and Hong Kong joining the team at different times, and a few volunteers in their early twenties. Even as a graduate student in Sociology, I felt less an outsider surrounded by often highly educated artists who have graduate degrees, and colleagues who were also doing their postgraduate programmes in specialised area such as arts administration.

The office is hidden in a small one-level house on a hillside above wandering tiny staircases, along which dotted by a few work-and-live units of artist-in-residences and gallery space. Operated from ten to six normally on a Monday-through-Friday schedule, and occasionally on weekends, the office

⁴ Besides National Taiwan University, the area is the home to two important national universities in Taipei: National Taipei University of Technology, and National Taiwan Normal University.
administers art projects and other programmes regarding the artist village, the youth hostel whose renovation was still underway, and collaborates with original residents on some activities. During my “apprenticeship,” I met overseas artists-in-residence, local artists, art groups and original village residents. As a member of the village management team, I was immersed in tasks like Chinese-to-English translation and interpretation, to manual work like painting gallery floors before art shows and moving furniture after the resident artists left. I was also tasked with taking foreign artists to art show openings outside Taipei City and with accompanying my supervisor on meetings with original residents for collaboration activities. I attended various art show openings held in the village and was able to talk to artists and creative workers, both overseas and local, when they dropped by the office from time to time for chit-chat, work or meetings, and to join the artists on some occasional social activities.

In addition to the work in Treasure Hill Village, interns also helped out in activities held by the Department of Artist-in-residence outside the village, such as the open-studio day of Grass Hill Artist Village, standing on the Hill of Yang Ming Shan in northern suburban Taipei. To see how and where artist neighbourhoods and venues have evolved, I travelled extensively across urban and suburban Taipei City. Going to Treasure Hill from my apartment, near Shida’s night market in Gongguan area, took me about half an hour. Though the village is located in Gongguan and connected by Metro railway transit, it still requires a fifteen minute walk from the bus stop or metro railway station for one to get to the village without bicycles or motorcycles. The trip to Treasure Hill Village, in general, can be a pleasant urban excursion if it does not happen to take place in the blazing summertime.
The opening of Treasure Hill on October 2, 2010 attracted nearly ten thousand people, including artists, original residents of Treasure Hill and other members of the public, to come to Treasure Hill and participate in the cultural activities (Hsieh 2011:15). Treasure Hill has since become a new cultural destination, where it is not uncommon to see local and foreign visitors, on an individual or group basis, taking photos in the afternoons. But besides cultural activities, Treasure Hill’s waterfront area is also popular for other outdoor activities as a bicycle trail is located at the foot of Treasure Hill along Xindian River.

To compare and contrast the Taipei counterpart, I base my fieldwork in Hong Kong at JCCAC. The location of JCCAC as the first arts hub constructed in Shek Kip Mei is geographically significant. Not only is it located in the old neighbourhood of Shek Kip Mei, where Hong Kong’s first public housing estate was built in the 1950s, it is also situated in Sham Shui Po district (Appendix D), which is the poorest district in Hong Kong according to the government census in 2010. This nine-storey building, resembling the shape of a Chinese word “口”(mouth), houses mostly small units sized from around 200 sq. ft. to 400 sq. ft., which were occupied by manufacturers of industries like printing, shoes-making, plastic, and furniture in the past (Figure 2.2.).
Figure 2.2. Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, Shek Kip Mei, Sham Shui Po District, Hong Kong. Photo taken by author November 20, 2010.
I worked in an independent art space, named the “Museum of Site” (MOST), a small sized, non-profit oriented gallery-art space run by a Hong Kong contemporary artist-curator. The director of MOST owns another art space in Yuen Long, a suburb of Hong Kong, but prefers the location of JCCAC because it is connected by subway. I worked a few days a week on a flexible schedule across three months, depending on the activities of JCCAC and the art space. Compared to the spaces of other tenants in JCCAC, MOST is one of the “rare species” that focuses on Hong Kong contemporary art, curating art shows and renting out space for cultural activities, actively opening to the public. At MOST, I worked as an assistant to the art space, looking after the space when it is open to the public. Conforming to the “rules” of most galleries, the walls are painted in pure white with considerable free space in the middle, making it appear exceptionally spacious as compared with other studio spaces on the same floor.

Being a staff worker in this space allowed me to observe the behaviour of visitors, passing by and walking into the art space, and to communicate with members of the public. On another front, I also helped with creative planning for an art show, doing curatorial research and discussing curatorial themes of art show with the curator. During the period of my internship, I was responsible for the promotion work of two art shows held in JCCAC and presented by MOST. I dealt with visitors, artists, part-time helpers, caterers, and staffs of JCCAC. As a multi-functional staff member, I also wrote exhibition guide notes and press release drafts, designed and sent out electronic invitations, documented pre-show preparation work and attended meetings with the staffs of JCCAC. The payoff of this unpaid work was that I could engage in and witness the everyday practices of the tenants and staffs of the centre. In addition to such practices, I could gain more
insider news about the actions and the reactions of the tenants and the staff of JCCAC on diverse issues. Being based in MOST only intermittently across three months made me realise one thing: working inside the art space could only help me partially understand the spatial activities of the people flowing in and out this massive centre of nine storeys, inhabited by over one hundred creative workers. To explore the varied facets of JCCAC, I spent time zigzagging through the corridors and open space at different times, sometimes peeking into studios and offices through window, and attending various activities and events happened in JCCAC. At JCCAC, I was struck by the antagonistic atmosphere fuelled by posters, banners and slogans made by the tenants themselves targeted at the managerial policies of JCCAC and several tenants. Although far from being “deserted” by tenants, JCCAC might appear to be silent and empty when the tenants are either away or are busy running errands inside their own studios on most weekdays.

The experience of working in these two locales helps me to explore the place-specific forms of urban socio-spatial organization that have crystallized within two different urban spaces (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer 2009). This comparative study uses Michael Burawoy’s (1991) extended case analysis to understand how the macro, wider structures shape the micro situations. The macro-micro link refers to “a structured one which the part is shaped by its relation to the whole, the whole being represented by external forces” (Burawoy 2000:27). When combined with case studies, comparative analysis could provide a solid link between local insight and global generalization, and could decipher the interplay between the general trends of urban restructuring and the place-specific consequences within the cities.
Chapter 3

Hong Kong:

Industry and Art as Instruments of Urban Revitalization

—The Case of Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre

In Chapter Two, I discussed the context and the discourse of cultural creative economy in Hong Kong and Taipei and how the two cities have developed similar strategies with different emphases since the 1990s. In this and the following chapter, I examine how public cultural space manifests the ways culture is administered in Hong Kong and Taipei respectively. Using the case of the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC), a public cultural hub run by a non-profit company in Hong Kong since the fall of 2008, this chapter considers public cultural space as an instrument for the city to promote creative industries and social interests. The chapter begins with examining Hong Kong’s JCCAC as public cultural production site imprinted with new opportunities and a new model of cultural governance. In moving from the removal of artists’ studios to the production of artists’ studios, officials have come to recognise the value of cultural producers and creativity to the city. However, because of the inherent and imposed constraints within the artist’s studio buildings, Hong Kong’s artists still need to employ flexible practices to sustain their spaces. I also look at the case of Oil Street artist village to shed light on the continuity of regulation tactics over public cultural space. By examining a series of artist protests against JCCAC’s management, I suggest how the public cultural space is being subject to noticeable market and bureaucratic principles.
In the case of Hong Kong, I look at the relationship between the artists and the state represented by its agent, JCCAC, where the contentious politics between artists and the state over the right to public cultural space in Hong Kong is played out. JCCAC is the best example of a contentious space that defines the features of the relationship between the artists and the city. The artists’ emphasis on individual rights to space and the hierarchical management of JCCAC’s use of power to regulate the cultural space have become a flashpoint of conflict over the meaning and purpose of artistic production in the city. Spatial contradictions are apparent when considering the two actors on opposite sides in spatial practices: the bureaucratic management of JCCAC, whose role is to organise and regulate the public cultural space; and the artists, who are frustrated by regulations that govern and threaten their everyday practices and professional identities. It is in this context that the two sides of the contention and the site of analysis—JCCAC—must be understood.

I. The Background of JCCAC

This is an interactive work: I arranged five one-dollar coins into the shape of a flower and placed them at the street corners around Ngau Tau Kok and Shek Kip Mei. Then I drew a twig and leaf and date (as a mark), waiting for those “in need” to pick them up. The one who picked them up would be like picking flowers. The twig and leaf and date would remain, as well as the feeling of luck and blessing.


Like most artist villages in Hong Kong and Western classical examples such as the Latin Quarter of Paris and New York’s Greenwich Village, Shek kip Mei’s new role as an art incubator began with a low-rent neighbourhood of disinvestment. Land with little market value enables the designation of the area as
art enclaves through the staging of cultural production in the old urban cores.

When Hong Kong artist Pak Sheung-Chuen used the streets of Shek Kip Mei as his canvas to paint the eleven “coin flowers” in 2005 (Figure 3.1.), he probably could not imagine the government-owned dilapidated concrete factory building a few blocks away his then disappeared flowers would be set aside, in the following year, for a colossal hothouse of art that incubates local cultural production. Pak’s performance-art photography of the flowers somewhat preluded the new phrase of urban development in Shek Kip Mei. In 2008, the opening of Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre filled the void of the disused factory estate with an influx of over 100 tenant artists and art groups, as a result of the state’s interest in promoting creative industries and the initiative of the non-profit sector in cultivating arts and culture. Hong Kong artists, a group that had often been ignored, have become regarded as a dynamic agent useful to the local community and the city development. Shek Kip Mei, which had been known as a squatter settlement zone, marked the commencement of Hong Kong’s public housing programme in 1954 that turned it into a residential area of public housing estates over the past fifty years. It was not until the setting up of JCCAC that She Kip Mei started to usher in innovative synergies.

Figure 3.1. Pak Sheung-Chuen, A Little Flower for the Passer-by, Hong Kong History Series 04, 2005. Source: Blog of Pak Sheung-Chuen.
The story of the Shek Kip Mei art neighbourhood is about the beginning of urban change: postindustrial production has started to permeate into the residential and public housing area, manifesting a new regime of making space for art that brings complex impacts on the art community, local community and urban culture. The decision of the establishment of JCCAC was announced in 2005 and was laid down as a policy initiative of the government in the 2006-2007 policy address. On October 31, 2005, Secretary for Home Affairs Ho Chi-ping presided over the launching ceremony of the revitalization project of JCCAC. At this occasion, the planning of JCCAC was recognised as a contribution to promoting Hong Kong’s creative industries and connecting creativity of the cultural sector to enterprise investors and the business sector. It was revealed that JCCAC was considered as a pilot project conducted by the government to convert old structures into new public art space, following in the footsteps of many successful cases of foreign cities.

JCCAC was revitalized into a complex of artist village and arts centre from a public building of a former factory estate, under the leadership of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) with its strategic partners, Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) and Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC). JCCAC is an unprecedented urban form because it is the first artist village initiated and managed by non-profit organizations in Hong Kong. In this new model of governance over artist village, JCCAC is run by a private non-profit company called “Hong Kong Creative Arts Centre Limited” (HKCACL), which is a subsidiary wholly owned by Hong Kong Baptist University and was entrusted by the Hong Kong government for the operation and management of JCCAC. This has also meant that JCCAC is situated within the institutional framework of Hong
Kong Baptist University. Led by an Executive Director who takes charge of the management and operation, JCCAC has over 10 staff running three departments: Program and Development, Operations, and venue management.

The legitimation of JCCAC to the public land is endorsed by the government. While JCCAC operates on a self-financing basis, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) of Hong Kong’s government supported it through subvention of market rental for non-profit use of government’s land on a short-term basis. It also received an interest-free loan from HKBU to defray its operating deficit at its foundation (Hong Kong Legislative Council Panel on Development 2010).

Aiming at providing studio space for artists and art groups, and fostering arts and culture in the community and nurturing creative talents, the project was sponsored by Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (JCCT) through its $94.4 million donation for redevelopment, conversion works and partial start-up costs (Hong Kong Baptist University 2008). The income of JCCAC comes mainly from renting out over 120 spaces as working studios to artists and art groups, and several spaces as commercial outlets (including a commercial gallery, a cafe, a tea house and an art tool shop). Other income come from running a performance venue (Black Box Theatre) and exhibition spaces including two galleries and a central courtyard, for public hire.

The governance of JCCAC is a reflection of the government’s reliance on non-departmental and non-commercial statutory bodies (including HKADC, HKBU and HKAC) in moulding public cultural space at arm’s length from the government. The operation company for JCCAC is overseen by a Governing Board, which is chaired by a lay member nominated by Hong Kong Baptist University, holding power in policy making. The Governing Board’s members
consist of high-ranking executive professionals from the key parties including two representatives from HKBU; one representative each from Executive Director of the strategic partners HKADC and HKAC; and two independent lay members, with the Executive Director of JCCAC acting as Secretary on the Governing Board (Asia Art Archive 2010). In addition, a Management Committee, which is made up of representatives from all of the organizations on the Governing Board and one representative from District Council, serves as the communication bridge between the tenants artists and the management of JCCAC. Above the governance structure, Home Affairs Bureau of the Hong Kong government oversees JCCAC’s compliance with the entrustment agreement.

The revitalization of Shek Kip Mei’s factory building into JCCAC revealed that old vernacular buildings of everyday lived spaces, which were devalued during the colonial period, had begun to assume greater instrumental value to policymakers. At the same time, as with the other artists’ work spaces in multiple parts of Hong Kong, the public cultural spaces like JCCAC are reminders of the efforts of different actors necessitated in the making of urban cultural landscapes.

II. The Landscape of Discontents

a. Ecology of Artist Studios in Hong Kong

The transformation of a former factory building like JCCAC into a creative hub would never have been realised without the already existing artist studios clustered in industrial buildings that had made an impact on urban culture and inspired the city leaders to intervene in local arts spaces. These postindustrial artist studios, located in the city’s peripheral industrial districts, including Fo Tan,
Chai Wan, Kwun Tong, Ngau Tau Kok, San Po Kong have started to grow since Britain’s handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. In the post-handover period, many factory units in these areas were left vacant and underused as a result of economic downturn and the shift of industrial production establishments from Hong Kong to mainland China. Low rental prices made factory units affordable to visual artists, musicians, and drama practitioners. These creative workers, who rented, co-rented or owned the industrial lofts, have become the main users of the mid-rise blocks used for art-related activities (Hong Kong Arts Development Council 2010). Some major galleries in Hong Kong’s Central District, such as Osage and 10 Chancery Lane, opened their branches in Kwun Tong in 2006 and Chai Wan in 2007 respectively. These artist studio clusters, as Carolyn Cartier (2008a) pointed out, had caught the attention of commercial arts professionals and government policy interest that led to the project of JCCAC. In planning the project of JCCAC at Shek Kip Mei, government officials had referred to Fo Tan’s studio clusters, from where the officials tried to invite artists to “move to” Shek Kip Mei (R22). Besides the industrial spaces, artist studios clustered within commercial-residential buildings, e.g. Foo Tak Building, in downtown also helped propel the government to take forward the setting up of JCCAC (R25).

Unlike most art neighbourhoods in Hong Kong, JCCAC does not owe its existence to the spontaneous clustering of creative workers. It exists because of an urban cultural policy in favour of cultural industries and a growing initiative from non-commercial bodies to develop arts hubs in the city. But despite that, JCCAC is often used as a base where the art communities get their message across the city. By exercising their rights to space, tenant artists made use of JCCAC to organise some “meetings” that could allow dialogue between artists and leaders of art
institutions, e.g. Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), on topics central to the development of Hong Kong culture.

On a Sunday evening in December 2011, the clashes between the spatial practices of freewheeling artists and inflexible governmental rules led to a seminar based on the statement, “Managing artist village under a bureaucratic structure is a failure,” which was held as part of the programme for the Arts Festival at JCCAC. This event revealed the tensions within different art communities in Hong Kong. Two local artist interest groups, including Shek Kip Mei Arts Union, comprised of artists at JCCAC, and Factory Artists Concern Group, set up by artists whose work units are located at industrial buildings in Hong Kong, took advantage of JCCAC as a venue open to the public to discuss ways to better the conditions of the artists and art studio clusters. One of the aims of the seminar was to deal with a recent policy of HKADC named “Arts Creative Space” Project, an initiative through which HKADC collaborated with owners of industrial units to offer renovated creative or rehearsal space units at below-market rates, open to arts groups or practitioners for application. At the seminar, several artists expressed their concern over the project, doubting whether the new industrial units released by HKADC under a bureaucratic framework would benefit artists as much as they expected.

Compared to JCCAC’s artists who received noise complaints from their neighbours, artists based in industrial buildings, especially performing artists, had faced a much more precarious situation: they were accused of illegal use of space by the government at times that put them at risk of being evicted. An artist from a music group which established a live house called “Hidden Agenda” in 2009 based in a rented unit in Kwun Tong industrial district, for example, received
letters from Lands Department repeatedly, warning the renters that their use of the industrial premises as live music venue open to the public uses were in contravention of the lease. This led to the unwillingness of the unit owner to renew the contract with the live house, forcing the live house to relocate to a more expensive industrial space in 2011. In the case of Hidden Agenda, the threat it faced shaped the hopes and fears that performing artists held for the industrial blocks, as Hidden Agenda began to develop reputation as a site of music event in last two years. Like Hidden Agenda, another artist, Horace Tse, who had established multiple creative spaces named “Loft Stage” for independent theatre groups to work, rehearse and perform in industrial buildings in San Po Kong since 2001, had received similar complaints. He pointed to the grim fact that under the operation Hong Kong’s market system it would be simply impossible to change the land use of industrial buildings without any incentives and policy initiatives from government to facilitate the designation of industrial buildings as artist districts. At times, artists need to pretend running a warehouse instead of a theatre studio in order to get by the inspection conducted by officials. Restrictions on the industrial spaces have made it unfeasible for artists, especially the performing artists like Horace, to freely conduct their activities.

The land use and licence issue of these industrial spaces in Hong Kong inherently hindered the development of nascent underground and cultural scenes. Because of the land use problem, cultural production activities that take place at industrial buildings become susceptible to the regulations of the government which demarcate whether a space is used for commercial purpose or industrial purpose. The marginalised status of artistic production at industrial space had become obvious when the officials considered such production activities as illegal
commercial uses of industrial lands. This can be evident in the revitalization policy of industrial buildings introduced by the government in 2009, attempting to encourage conversion of industrial land into commercial space by giving the owners of industrial blocks incentives. Yet, the regulation of government over artistic use of industrial spaces had loosened due to increasing readiness of the officials to recognise the instrumentality of artists in the city. As Homan Ho, sculptor and props artist who rented a studio at Fo Tan’s industrial building and organised Fo Tan’s Open Studio, recalls the changing attitude of the officials:

When the revitalization policy of industrial buildings was introduced, artists’ industrial lofts were said to be illegal. The Lands Department banned our advertisements [of open studio event]. They didn’t know what we did is legal or not […] Then their discourse changed and they said artistic production did not, and should not, belong to commercial use of space. In fact, to do what I’m doing at commercial buildings is just impossible. Now, perhaps West Kowloon [Cultural District] is nearer and so the government has become very positive towards Fo Tan. (R22)

Till today, Hong Kong’s privately-owned industrial spaces neither allow residential use nor any performance use in accordance to the laws. When artists began to use the industrial spaces for work and residence (e.g. in Fo Tan) and for performance (e.g. in Kwun Tong), they did so illegally. This constraint has made one local artist who had moved back from New York to Hong Kong for two years to suggest the government “building some public housings for poor artists” as supporting facilities near the art studios in Fo Tan (R23). The restrictions against industrial spaces in Hong Kong echo the 1960s’ New York where artists were not allowed to use the spaces as homes—only by the mid-1970s did New York’s city leaders not only legalise the conversion of former manufacturing spaces into residential use, but also legalise the practices of artists creating live-in studios that

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5 For more details of the revitalization policy of industrial buildings, please refer to Chapter Two.
had given rise to what Sharon Zukin (1989) termed as “loft-living” movement. To situate the artists’ studio districts of Hong Kong within the global map of art, Carolyn Cartier (2008a) has argued:

These emergent arts districts cannot be assumed to be the basis of arts and creative industries districts as they are known in Europe and North America, nor have they yet developed in size to match the assemblage of studios and galleries at Suzhou Creek in Shanghai or the 798 area of Beijing. Indeed restrictions against using industrial buildings for residential space in Hong Kong fundamentally constrain the development that has characterized lofting in downtown Manhattan, for example, or gentrification in neighbourhoods around the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London’s East End.

Unlike the artist districts in other major cities, Hong Kong’s studio clusters of artists do not have any live-work arrangement. JCCAC’s building, partly converted as an artist village, was not designated by the government as both live and work units for artists either. Its lawful use of land as arts-related site, nevertheless, has somewhat shielded the performing artists from much precariousness that had entangled those cultural performance space located at industrial blocks. Yet, JCCAC should not be considered as a feasible solution that fits all, at least for some performing artists. JCCAC has a majority of matchbox-sized units that are closely situated next to one another, thus its physical space, in effect, does not seem to work out for independent music bands (especially rock bands) which produce constantly streams of loud noise, and theatre producers who need ample space for rehearsals. In this regard, many performing artists continue to base their production studios in private industrial spaces, rather than move to JCCAC.

Over the course of past decade, the stock of building spaces, lofty or tiny, where artists work or live illegally has not been stable enough to assure artists of the importance of their practices. No matter the planned artist village of Jockey
Club Creative Arts Centre, or the industrial landscape of artists’ studios, the combination of institutional policies, statutes and laws of market prevailing in the “field of power” (Bourdieu 1993: 38) remain a barrier for the artists struggling to reshape their role as cultural producers and to redefine urban culture. When the cultural production space became subject to the political and economic rules, artist had to resort to a repertoire of strategies to safeguard their everyday work practices. In Shek Kip Mei, to be tenant artists in JCCAC is to be members who are willing to mitigate their quest for autonomy in return for low rentals, geographical and socio-spatial advantages that attracted them to settle in, often without realising the potential contradiction that they must endure in the very first place.

b. The Apocalypse of Oil Street: Public Premises as Art Hub

Many tenant artists of JCCAC came from Oil Street, one of the success stories of Hong Kong local art scene that is considered an “artist village,” with great diversity of artists’ types and proximity to a middle class neighbourhood (R25). After it was shut down, the artists carried with them certain expectations for JCCAC which were hard to uphold because of high bar. Compared to their earlier counterparts of Oil Street, artists of JCCAC are less likely to be free-spirited individuals under the operation model of a non-profit company. Unlike JCCAC, which is a top-down planned artist hub, Oil Street Artist Village was formed by artists who set up alternative art spaces in rented units within public premises after 1997. While industrial spaces were cheaper than ever for renting in the post-1997 period, artistic producers found their urban oasis in rentable state-owned spaces. In 1998, a group of artists began to cluster in a government
warehouse which had formerly been used as the Government Supplies Office on Oil Street in North Point, an eastern district on Hong Kong Island. The government warehouse was rented out at low price as the auction of the site was shelved due to stagnant property market. Being the first-of-its kind in Hong Kong, more than 20 artists and arts groups, including several major experimental art groups and organizations in Hong Kong (e.g. 1a space, Artists Commune and Videotage), rented spaces of the government building on Oil Street on month-to-month lease and became directly involved in debates about culture and the city. As Oil Street warehouse was under supervision by property management and was put on the site list for impending sale and redevelopment, it become obvious that the government had no intention to develop this emergent arts hotbed into a central cultural hub (Tsui 1999).

Foreshadowed by a lack of support, the government forced Oil Street to close in 1999 and the tenants were ordered to move out by the government which announced the restoration of land auction. After a series of protest and campaign launched by the Oil Street tenants, they were relocated to the Cattle Depot, an artist village thereafter in the Ma Tau Kok area of east Kowloon. Housed in the heritage complex which was once an Animal Quarantine Depot built in 1908, the Cattle Depot is a mere temporary measure for the government to accommodate the artists who were forced to leave Oil Street in 2001. Under the supervision of a property management firm, coupled with short-term leases and a less convenient location, Cattle Depot has been hampered from evolving into a full-fledge, more dynamic contemporary and experimental arts scene. The Cattle Depot thus had remained an adaptive reuse for the relocation of artists by the state. In recent years, however, the Hong Kong government has gestured its scepticism in furthering the
development of the place. Commissioned by the Hong Kong government, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council conducted a study on the feasibility of the continued operation of Cattle Depot as an artist village in 2009, leading to a report in mid-2010. But till now, no blueprint as to the future development of the Cattle Depot has been made.

As JCCAC was often regarded as the experimental miniature of Hong Kong’s first planned mega-cultural district—West Kowloon Cultural District—tenants at JCCAC, especially those mid-career and established creative workers, considered themselves contributing to the art ecology in Hong Kong. One pottery sculptor, Chan Kam-shing, who had participated in the short-lived Oil Street art scene and started a studio at JCCAC comments: “If we are a forest, and you owned the land, we would go away if the place started to head for desertification….In the end, what matters is not who is in charge but whether the place has a mission” (Chan 2012). For him, artists do not need to be “managed,” and the existing form of JCCAC’s management did harm to the cohesion of the artists. Another tenant artist, who also shared personal memory of Oil Street, had lamented over the unpleasant experiences he had with both Oil Street and JCCAC by identifying a similar sentiment: “We were forced to leave from Oil Street, and now, in JCCAC, we are also being forced!”

The story of Oil Street had prefigured the fated trajectory of artist village housed in state premises—from experiencing the domination of the powerful that contradicts artists’ values of an ideal lifestyle, to the subsequent predicament that the art community in these neighbourhoods were forced to face within the frame of regulated space. Unlike Oil Street, JCCAC is a planned art hub revitalized from

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6 Private conversation, November 30, 2011.
public land made available by the government and governed by its entrusting party—a non-profit company. However, there remains state’s regulation of cultural space and emphasis on commercial formulas that continues to create tensions between the artist tenants and the landlord of the space. While Oil Street artists were expelled by the government overtly based on commercial calculation and a lack of interest in promoting artist’s studio, JCCAC is subject to bureaucratic regulations of public departmental bodies, non-departmental and non-commercial statutory bodies, and a governance framework vulnerable to financial pressure. With the lessons learned from Oil Street, some tenant artists at JCCAC have adopted strategies that cohere with the agenda of the artists inhabited in other artists’ enclaves of Hong Kong to resist the bureaucratic mode of spatial practices that favours safety and profits more than cultural development.

c. Migrating to Shek Kip Mei

The establishment of JCCAC had extended the scope of important dialogue on the relationship between culture and the city that had been initiated upon by a handful groups of artists’ studios located in some of the lost corners of Hong Kong since 1997. The fabric of these artist neighbourhoods shares many common features, and artists had flocked to these locales out of similar and universal reasons, such as cheap rentals. The main reason for artists choosing to move their studios to Shek Kip Mei’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre had been the rentals and the location of the art hub. Artists consistently indicated the unrivalled rentals and the accessibility to a wider audience and network, which is allowed by the clustering of more than 100 artists and the convenient location of JCCAC, as pull factors.
Today, artists relocated their studios from less accessible places to JCCAC to be in close proximity to downtown areas. One of the artists who moved the work unit from suburban area to the location of JCCAC was theatre director and visual artist, Hoi Chiu. In the earlier days of his career, at age 23, he was inspired to pursue puppet art seriously and subsequently established the first Hong Kong Puppet Centre on Lamma Island, an outlying island in Hong Kong. As he did not charge any fees so as to promote puppet art, the centre closed after six months because he lost his patience waiting for only a few people to come in on weekdays under meager income support. Having calculated the amount he could afford, that is, around 2000 HKD per month, he put in application to the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre where he later located his own workspace called “Wooden Men” in 2008 and carried on his puppetry dream and other art forms. “Rentals have increased to 2500 HKD. It’s crazy. But I am able to afford. The monthly expense is huge. Yet, the advantage is that the unit allows people to find me […] The most important point of a space is one where people could contact me—like [a shoemaker who is open to orders for] making shoes—people would get to know me.”\(^7\) For Hoi Chiu, the experience with Lamma Island led him to consider the practicality of locating his cultural space in downtown urban areas, where he could promote his art more easily.

Another artist Andrew Lam, also moved the art space to Shek Kip Mei for a similar reason. He established his independent art space named “MOST” in 1997. Before being moved to Shek Kip Mei in 2009, MOST was located in Yuen Long where it was housed in a three-level building in a historic walled-village called “Kai Hing Wai,” built in 1662. In Yuen Long, Andrew aimed to bring museum

\(^7\) Interview conducted by author, January 17, 2012.
education and contemporary art to the schools and the community in northwest Hong Kong through community outreach activities. But now he had shifted his focus to curate art shows and to make MOST a site for contemporary art. Losing interest in promoting community art, Andrew stopped hiring three to four permanent staff as he did in the past at Yuen Long. He also stopped applying for administrative support grant from HKADC as he felt that the process was “too institutional” and he wanted to free the space from red tape and the “sake of supporting the staff” that required mindful budgeting. Now the space in Yuen Long is used as his warehouse.

Comparing JCCAC to other locations in Hong Kong, Andrew indicates, “the rent here is comparatively cheaper. And also there are many artists here. I make contemporary art, and much dialogues help nurturing [art]. These are two main reasons. Many crossover possibilities.” Being surrounded by like-minded artists, to Andrew, is important to his artistic experience. The chance of crossover of one aesthetic form to another appeals to artists. And like other modes of production, the potential benefits that creative production gained from clustering at the early stage of production process is also important. “Moving to here—besides clustering effects, the artists here and the rentals—is perhaps because of the promotion of creative industries by the government. Being here, my projects will be better profiled. Unlike Central, or New Territories—we had always based in New Territories. So perhaps the profile will be better.”

To artists like Andrew who focuses on artistic production at present, being based at JCCAC symbolises the artist’s association with the creative industries and its emphasis on commercial self-sustainability, which benefits his curatorial practice. The move of the art

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8 Interview conducted by author, November 5, 2012.
space from Yuen Long to Shek Kip Mei had its cost—the transition to Shek Kip Mei signifies the shrinking of MOST from around 3000 sq. ft. to 455 sq. ft. This sacrifice, nevertheless, had allowed the alternative art space to be flexible in its action. And the relocation also proved to be a right decision that the building at which MOST inhabited in Yuen Long “would be sold by the property owner in the future because of urban renewal.” As MOST is repositioning itself by shaking off its old ways, Andrew’s relocation of his art space to Shek Kip Mei represents an attempt to refashion his alternative art space as a new player in the creative industries under JCCAC, a well-supported institution which is already on the map.

The reason for young artists to come to JCCAC relates to the package of incentives offered by the management exclusively for the young artists. The establishment of JCCAC has helped to cultivate creative talents, especially those who lacked an affiliated art hub. By tradition, art districts in Hong Kong bear affiliation with art institutions or colleges. While fine art professors and groups of fine art graduates from Chinese University of Hong Kong have formed their studios in Fo Tan industrial blocks since 1997, art graduates from Baptist University Hong Kong (HKBU) and Hong Kong Art School had no fixed point of geographical aggregation before the setting up of JCCAC, which is committed to fill the spatial gap for this new creative cohort of cultural producers. The reason behind this “privilege” accorded by JCCAC to these art graduates is thoroughly understandable in light of the institutional arrangement of JCCAC, in which HKBU and Hong Kong Art School⁹ comprised the key stewards. To support young artists, around 17 units are allocated to fresh graduates who have been out

⁹ Hong Kong Arts Centre, another key initiator and steward for the project of JCCAC, owns the art institution, Hong Kong Art School, which branches into the JCCAC with a ceramic studio, photography studio, and painting studio.
of school for no more than two years. On top of that, from 2008 to 2011, the monthly rents (inclusive of management fee and government rates) of art students/graduates and artists/art groups were fixed at 5.2 HKD and 7.5 HKD per square feet respectively, meaning that young art students/graduates enjoyed much cheaper rental rates.

One novice artist who benefitted from this policy was Annie Li, a visual art graduate from Hong Kong Baptist University admitted as a tenant artist in 2011. After graduation, she started working as a full-time visual art teacher at a secondary school. She indicated that she preferred to locate the studio, named “Utopian,” at JCCAC because it was one of the limited choices offering cheap rentals in Hong Kong. As a visual art graduate, she could enjoy the art students/graduates’ discount on rentals. To further cut down on her expenses, she co-rented the unit with her classmate, Debe, from undergraduate days the studio, where they work on paintings, small sculptures and offer classes to students. By virtue of cheap rentals and the availability of small-sized units, JCCAC had become a congenial place for art graduates to start an art studio. “Those units in Kwun Tong offer $7 per square feet—around $7 something to $11 per square feet. But the point is, they do not have such small-sized units.” Compared to the factory work-lofts in artists’ studio clusters like Kwun Tong, the tiny yet affordable units of JCCAC suit the needs of art students/graduates. To Annie, small units could reduce the number of people needed to share the rentals of studio and therefore avoid frictions between the co-tenants. “I came here very often before I moved in, and hoped that I could find a place like this. This is enough. And I don’t need those of several thousand square feet.” She views JCCAC as the “only choice” of a well-managed artist village in Hong Kong that could ensure safety, provide
management service and sound facilities (e.g. gallery), and facilitate exchange with the public that are not guaranteed in other industrial blocks like Fo Tan. While the artist village helps people to know her as a young artist and maintain her “own passion” for art, all the amenities and support offered by the fully-serviced JCCAC, for Annie, had been a key factor second to rentals in her choice of Shek Kip Mei. But her choice also hinged on the location of JCCAC. “Location is very important. For Kwun Tong, the industrial buildings are not that near to MTR. So then here is more convenient. It is better to be near to city center. For Fo Tan, we don’t even go there normally so it would not work surely [if setting up a studio there].”

As JCCAC is located at an underground railway-accessible site in north Kowloon of Hong Kong, it further out-competes the other studio clusters in Hong Kong in terms of convenience.

Another aspiring artist admitted to JCCAC as tenant is Michael Lim, a full-time graphic designer, who had completed the Master of Fine Art (MFA) degree jointly offered by Hong Kong Arts Centre and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University (RMIT). He was admitted in 2010 when he established the studio with his friend during the master programme days. Michael decided to apply for a tenancy out of “a coincidence”—during the days in his part-time MFA programme, he regularly had classes at JCCAC, where one of the classrooms of Hong Kong Art School is located. As he describes, at that time, he was attracted by the idea that JCCAC could provide “a gathering place which aggregates all different artists and facilitates much cultural exchange.” With increasing interest in fine art, he jokes that he puts all his time after work in his own studio where he makes art works and runs his “art-jamming” course, teaching people skills in

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10 Interview conducted by author, January 16, 2012.
painting. He would also have quit his day-job if he was financially stable. Like all his cohort classmates, Michael took the opportunity offered by the policy of JCCAC where a certain amount of studios are allocated for fresh fine art graduates. He felt very lucky and surprised that he was admitted only through one application under intense competition, as he recalls, “at the beginning I just wanted to try, because getting in here is very difficult[……]. And it has some little spaces that are opened for art graduates or art students. And I was lucky to get it.”\footnote{Interview conducted by author, February 1, 2012.}

As reflected by the accounts of these artists, some artists were pulled in primarily by location and rentals, while some of them were drawn to Shek Kip Mei for increasing their exposure in the public and for the idea of artist cluster that could enhance communication and exchange among the art community. Their choices of location also follow the affordability, viability of the space, and personal pursuit of art as both a career and interest. With the advent of JCCAC that suits the artists’ complex expectations, the personal stories suggest a low-rent urban artist village had now been made possible under the patronage of the government and charity, which painted a more diversified artist landscape that had been hindered by locations of higher rentals and dominated by privately-owned industrial buildings in Hong Kong. Yet, even with the benefits for many artists, especially those who have no money to branch out to any other places, JCCAC as an artist cluster is itself ridden by discontent and controversy.
III. Artist Village as Contradictory Space

The disappearing artist village.
—A Protest Poster posted on the door of a studio at Jockey Club
Creative Arts Centre 2011

JCCAC had never garnered as much as attention—or negative coverage—as
in 2011. What had caught the media attention was not art itself, but rather the
contention over JCCAC. During the Arts Festival launched by JCCAC in
December 2011, some tenant artists took the opportunities to protest directly
against the management of JCCAC and to seek public attention to their situations
through posters, on which one of the artists declared that the artist village was
disappearing under the non-responsive management which created a bureaucratic
black hole that swallowed up their demands (Figure 3.2.).

The controversy over JCCAC towards the end of 2011 illustrates the
contradictions that JCCAC’s management faced in the convergence of practical
consideration and their ideal missions. While the non-profit operation company of
JCCAC had a commitment to promoting local art, it also wanted to maintain a
financial balance. In October 2011, JCCAC announced for the first time that the
rental fees for the group of art student and graduate, and the Artist/Art Group
tenants commencing 2012 respectively be increased by around 4% to 5.4 HKD
and 7.8 HKD per square feet to partly defray inflationary pressures on the
operation cost. Either before or after the rental adjustment, getting a work unit at
JCCAC has not been easy. Despite the foreseeable rental increase, JCCAC
received around 200 applications from April to June 2011 (Mingpao 2011) and
was still among the cheapest options in Hong Kong. Yet, the rental increase had
irritated some longstanding artist/art Group tenants who have been paying the rent
set in 2006 (i.e. 6.5 HKD per square feet, inclusive of management fee and government rates). They would need to face a much higher rental increase as their rent would be increased by 20% (from 6.5 HKD to 7.8 HKD) when their tenancy expired in 2012. Apart from rent, some tenants, in their meeting with the Management Committee in October 2011, pointed to the rigid management style, complex and hierarchical governance structure of JCCAC as the major basis for their complaints. They questioned whether there was any justification for rental increase under such ineffective management and a lack of overall strategy in promoting the cultural scene of JCCAC. On the other hand, artists considered the rent hike as a commercial decision of JCCAC, which, however, had not lived up to the standard of private sector in terms of its “service.”

Figure 3.2. Protest Posters on the door of a studio, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. Photo taken by author, December 4, 2011.

In defence of the rent adjustment in a press interview, Lillian Hau, the Executive Director of JCCAC explained that JCCAC would face at least a loss of 700,000 HKD if it did not increase the rent (Mingpao 2011), as she stated: “[w]
couldn’t satisfy the wishes of all artists. [We] hope to make it better with the artists in the same camp” (Mingpao 2011). The claim of the Executive Director exemplifies the burden of finance that has led the management to disregard overtly the opposing views of many of its tenants. Not only has such statement filled the artists with despair, it also touched off the outrage that has been simmering among many tenant artists, who demanded direct communication with the top management of JCCAC to reflect their opinions.

On November 18, 2011, a special meeting between the tenant artists and the Governing Board was convened by the management under the tenants’ demands. At the meeting attended by around 30 to 40 people including tenant artists, management of JCCAC, journalists and members of the public assigned with a “guest” label like me, dissatisfied tenant artists got their first chance to speak to the Chairman and other members of the Governing Board. Frustrated by the dismal situation, artists had demanded to become part of the Management Committee which oversees the daily operations of JCCAC, to release the financial report of JCCAC and to freeze the current rental rates. Although artists have a regular tea meeting every 3 months with the Management Committee, artists do not have a channel to communicate with the Governing Board of JCCAC.

Spaces, on top of that, become a contested ground between the most irritated tenant artists and the management. Artists expressed their false hopes as they criticized the promised availability of pottery, ceramics and sculpture studio by JCCAC in 2008 as no more than empty talk. The artists referred to the tenant brochures to prove the failed promises. One pottery artist voiced his disillusionment, citing that ample spaces at JCCAC had been rented out to the Hong Kong Art School as classrooms rather than converted as communal pottery
and sculpture studios for artists. Another ceramic artist, some days after the meeting, posted a poster of writing on a wall that reads: “The desperate truth: this Centre is operated purely on the basis of commercial calculation” (Figure 3.3.).

Such criticism against the management of JCCAC expressed the uneasiness among the artists as the management favoured financial balance above assurance of artist’s sustainability. When artists were trying to defend cultural space from being undermined by the commercial motives of the management, at this point, JCCAC as an alternative-culture incubator had literally experienced a mode of “insurgency” initiated by the artists that resists the forces driven by economic pressure.

Figure 3.3. Protest Posters on Walls and Floor, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. Photo taken by author, November 22, 2011.

a. Positioning of JCCAC

Over the past three years since JCCAC opened in September 2008, the relationship between the tenant artists and management has gotten worse as a
series of shortcomings had put the management in question. Unlike other art
clusters in Hong Kong, JCCAC’s management had the very authority entrusted by
the government to decide on the important areas such as the promotion strategies
for arts, future’s direction of JCCAC, and mechanism of operation. In this regard,
art was not only the business of the artists, but also the business of the players in
the governance regime of JCCAC. At the meeting, many artists expressed their
concern about the cultural development, for example, an artist recalls a moment of
embarrassment when he had to describe JCCAC:

When the journalists asked me, ‘what is JCCAC to you?’ I failed to
answer. It is not a shopping mall, nor is it a community centre. I am
willing to pay the rental which would soon be increased by 400 dollars[…]
The toilets are really clean and the security guards did great work! But I
could not see a future here.

The statement succinctly captures the crux of the dilemma of JCCAC, which
proves to be shiny on its surface with high-quality supporting facilities, but
soulless underneath. This echoes Lui’s (2008) comment on the West Kowloon
Cultural District project (1998-2006) that without real cultural content a planned
cultural project would be merely “an empty shell.” For the artists, without a clear
vision for future’s development of JCCAC, a substantial cultural environment
could not be achieved.

The composition of the tenants could perhaps speak to the current
circumstances of JCCAC, which resembles an assorted dish consisting of art
graduates, artists, art organizations pursuing a wide array of cultural forms, from
painting, sculpture, glass art, to animation, dance, drama, design and community
arts. An established Hong Kong artist based in Fo Tan had referred to Shek Kip
Mei’s JCCAC as one of the worst-case scenarios where “even those people who
do not work as artist could get in” (R20). In response to the notion of direction,
one member of the Governing Board admitted that JCCAC did not have a well-defined orientation: “The last 3 to 4 years has been the exploration phrase, the centre is groping its way: should it orient toward community art, fine art, elite artist, or a form that more people could participate in?” The management emphasised that JCCAC positions itself as both an “artist village” offering space for artistic creation and creative talents, and also as an “arts centre,” promoting creative arts and culture to the general public and engaging the public through arts activities. The dual mission of JCCAC suggests that it serves as an art production base comprising working studios, and a platform for exchange at varied levels, including the commercial, educational and community levels. Yet, for the artists, JCCAC was in danger of becoming nondescript without having a very clear roadmap driving the huge machinery of creativity.

Such mixed orientations of JCCAC and the inclusion of a wide array of creativity have exacerbated tensions between JCCAC’s intended beneficiaries, generating contradictions between artists who pursue art as a career, and those who use art to promote their organizations’ agenda. This could be highlighted in two among all types of space situated within JCCAC: artist-run space and community arts space. For the management, renters need not share the same objective to stay in the same place. By juxtaposing art and community-driven creativity, and by offering spaces for setting up artist studios and for community organizations to push forward social integration, JCCAC has attempted to appeal to a broader audience and posit itself as a public art hub. Some contemporary artists thought that the “doing” of art by community groups has made art less professional and elitist, eroding the real production of art by artists and the identity of artists, as one artist comments:
I think the Centre is a bit more about doing community art. […] Some groups are doing community [art]. Just continue doing it. But is this close to [artistic] creation? And could this keep the artists? I think it would be better [for the Centre] to continue as a [artistic] production area….Doing solely community [art] is “low-level”—maybe I shouldn’t call it “low-level,” but it satisfies the community first. So it makes people think that whether a painting is good or not doesn’t matter anymore. (R16)

When JCCAC has become more concerned about attracting visitors by all kinds of public shows, some artists felt that the JCCAC was getting more and more like a community centre, which was considered as a “bad point” by some artists (R21). As a contemporary artist puts, “Edgy artists don’t go to my openings. Now, at here [JCCAC] I have no identity, [I’m] just a tenant…I’m just one of the artists of the village.”

In the nascent phrase of JCCAC shortly after it was opened at the end of September 2008, the local scene began to emerge and artists had better relationships as they made new social contacts and consciously wanted to maintain a sense of art community. Drinking red wine, chatting and collaboration had become part of their social lives at JCCAC. At that time, one artist came back to JCCAC almost every day to mingle with his new friends, as he recalls:

At the beginning we made friends and coming back to here was fun and we met different new friends. Because, after being in an industry for a long time, there was a period of just working. Coming to here, you got new sparks. Sometimes I was scolded by my wife: “You always said you went there to work but you did nothing!” I was preoccupied by chatting; it was too much fun. There were some new people. At the beginning, we organised [an activity called] “Gathering Together and Do Something,” and stuck [the posters] at the entrance of the lift lobbies….the management did not deal with it, they were too busy doing hardware stuffs (R18).

Today, such scenario has become rare as many artists did not come back to JCCAC very often and spent more time outside. The decline in initiating collaboration and social interaction between the artists, as compared to the initial

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12 Private conversation, December 16, 2011.
stage, has to do with the social relations within the artist community. The manager of a tea house at JCCAC accounted how the atmosphere at JCCAC had changed over the past few years:

The people flow is now more stable. But oppositely, the Centre is less lively. In the past one year, the Centre is not as lively as before. Why? Perhaps it’s because of the neighbour relationship. The neighbour relationship in the past was better. They had more contact, but now they had less. They [artists] spend less time staying here than before. They have to go out to work so that they have money to pay the rent. Why the atmosphere was better in the past? Because in the past, there was a group of artists sometimes gathered together. But now this is gone. (R24)

While JCCAC functions as an artist village, ironically, the official document responding to the tenants’ requests did not lay down any plans to improve interactions or mutual support among the artists—the main feature of an artist village—that was in decline when compared to its earlier times in 2008. But perhaps most detrimentally, tumultuous hostility as evidenced by every piece of protest publicity around JCCAC reveals the social relationships among the tenants in a noticeable way.

b. Artist Relations and Politics

The exterior white walls facing the JCCAC’s courtyard along the corridor had become a staging ground for tenants’ protests. Named “Bleeding” by design, a banner with two big word Chinese words, Kongyi 抗議 [Protest] in the middle was hanged on the walls outside a studio as part of what the protester called a “mixed media installation exhibition” (Figure 3.4.). The “bleeding” work, more accurately, resulted from a conflict in which the protester whose studio was constantly disturbed by the noise from its above unit, rented by Hong Kong Art School as classrooms. While justifying this action under the name of art, the
“bleeding” banner signifies a sense of self-pity that artwork could still be
produced despite awaiting a solution desperately from the management of JCCAC.

![Protest Banner on Walls, the 7th Floor of Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre.](image)

**Figure 3.4.** Protest Banner on Walls, the 7th Floor of Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. Photo taken by author, November 5, 2011.

In a letter to the top management, the protester who runs the art studio teaching
painting skills directed the outrage against the operation of JCCAC and the noise
makers:

I have spent money to renovate the studio so as to avoid disturbing other
units in silence area. But why do the upstairs unit used for teaching
activities not control its noise problem? Is the centre having a double
standard? […]The HK Art School, which rented a few spaces on several
floors under the name of organization, has become a big tenant: does the
centre sacrifice the benefits of the small tenants to satisfy its “big
customer”?

The action taken by the tenant artist reflects the disappointment when artists must
resort to public display to defend their rights in the artist village. But the
controversy over how to deal with the discontent of some tenants had also become
an issue in the art community.

The proposal of rental increase had not only spawned significant opposition but also resulted in cleavages within the artist community. After the announcement of rental increase, some artist-activists were planning to “play tricks” on the management. They came up with strategies to defend their interests through collecting signature from tenants who opposed rental hike, placing protest writings and publicity around JCCAC, making complaints to governmental departments, and writing petition letters (one of which I had helped proofread) to the Governing Board. But a large majority of the tenants were silent. Some of these artists boycotted the actions taken by a concern group, Shek Kip Mei Arts Union, which was set up by artists to monitor the management. Some artists, many of whom are young and less established artists, had sought to draw a line between themselves and the Union, and demanded the Union to explain a mass email criticising the management under the name of “a group of JCCAC artists” but without identifying whom they were exactly. Skirmishes among tenants by then had been staged not only on the ground, but also over on-line conversation. The contention that arose out of artists’ diverse response toward the management of JCCAC exemplifies the unevenness of the artists’ experience with JCCAC. This also suggests the relationship among the artists is contingent on how effective the management’s tactics are in resolving conflicts.

In this regard, JCCAC is a contentious space in Hong Kong that demonstrates the conflicts between artists and state’s agents over the role of the places where artists work. In the struggle to uphold their right to shaping those places, the artists as a group have strived to define their own individual and professional identity as artists, rather than as elusive space users. When it comes
to the management of a public art hub, the forces of regulation readily create tensions which artists have to confront on a daily basis.

IV. Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of contention surrounding artists’ work studios in Hong Kong. The case of Oil Street highlights the eruption of artists’ struggle against the threats brought by the regulators of public premises that push them to relocate. The chapter has also explored the contentious politics of Hong Kong’s cultural space, particularly focusing on the disputes inside JCCAC through a series of episode which artists protested against rental increase and displayed intolerance for the management which excluded their concerns. In this connection, cultural space in Hong Kong is a terrain wherein artists find tremendous institutional inefficacy that constrains their efforts to sustain artistic production.

This chapter considers JCCAC as a microcosm of the conflicting approaches of the state’s agent and the artists to cultural space. The spatial conflicts that arise in JCCAC demonstrate that the contradictions and conflicts between the management and the artists are manifested in the simultaneous regulatory actions of the management and the creative activities carried out by the artists who are distrustful of regulations. As a regulated cultural space, JCCAC has oriented toward management rather than creative process, and this continually entrenched the contradictions between the artists and the management’s regulation forces. One result of this is the “malling” of artist village. I will elaborate this outcome in Chapter Five.
Chapter 4

Taipei City:

Community and Art as Instruments of Urban Revitalization

—The Case of Treasure Hill Village

In Chapter Three, I examined the case of a contradictory cultural space in Hong Kong that illustrates the contentious relationship between the management and the artists in spatial manifestation. Focusing on Taipei City, this chapter demonstrates how cultural space manifests the civic orientation of cultural governance at a local community level. It starts by looking at the position of Taipei City as the key cultural centre in north Taiwan that is further consolidated by the role of the municipal government in moulding state-owned cultural spaces in Taipei City.

In making available state-owned spaces for the use of artist studios, public municipal officials have come to increase the concentration of artistic production in Taipei City. This active promotion of public engagement in small-scale or alternative artistic production at locales around the city suggests the central interest of the municipal officials in using cultural resources as a form of public goods, emphasizing the social functions of art that the artists have to take on. The stake that the public officials have in pushing public participation in arts is best exemplified in the case of Treasure Hill Village. By tracing how public officials and local social activists transformed Treasure Hill Village from an illegal settlement to a listed public historical site, I examine the practice of civic engagement in arts as the basis for arts-led revitalization in Treasure Hill Village,
wherein the public officials have come to use artists to promote the public meanings of cultural space and local community development.

The cultural planning of state-owned space by municipal officials indicates the facilitative relationship between the state and the artists that are built on the basis of mutual stake in developing cultural production. Such convergence allows the government to use artists as a tool for promoting cultural goals and for the purpose of community revitalization.

I. Background of Treasure Hill Village

Unlike other artist clusters in Taiwan, Treasure Hill Village was formerly an illegal squatter that was on the verge of demolition before it was preserved as a historical landscape with its original residents still living in situ. Today’s Treasure Hill Village is a product of urban cultural strategies and civic engagement in cultural planning. Over time, this long-forgotten community became regenerated as the state and various social actors rediscovered its historic, cultural and scenic values, especially by the establishment of an artist village within Treasure Hill since 2010.

From a settlement of mainly old veterans to a new cultural district consisting of original residents and resident artists, the rebirth of Treasure Hill Village as a public space represents an experimental policy measure of how art and community’s living could be integrated and promoted in tandem in serve of cultural goals. The preservation and planning of Treasure Hill Village is a manifestation of Taipei City’s cultural policy which has been driven by active implementation. In the context of cultural planning, the opening of Treasure Hill Village in 2010 as a project of revitalization has shown the facilitative role of the
officials at local level to foster the meaning of public culture for state-owned space.

How the government approaches the management of Treasure Hill Village is illustrative of the public character that has institutionalized in the mode of governance of Treasure Hill Village. Though the municipal government has a leading role in promoting local culture of Taipei, it has worked with a non-profit Taipei Culture Foundation set up by the municipal government and some social groups in 1985 to regulate Treasure Hill Village through the foundation’s professional team named “Department of Artist-in-Residence,” which also has run the other two state-owned artist villages—Taipei Artist Village and Grass Mountain Arts Village—since the year 2001 and 2008 respectively.

With a mandate to promote Taipei’s cultural activities that offer public accessibility and to promote sustainable artistic and cultural development in Taipei (Taipei Art Plus 2008), the primary task of Taipei Culture Foundation is to enhance social participation in the arts of Treasure Hill on behalf of the municipal government. In 2007, the Taipei Cultural Foundation was restructured and put under the aegis of the Taipei municipal government by the Department of Cultural Affairs (Taipei City Government 2009). The boards of directors and supervisors as well as the chairman of Taipei Cultural Foundation are all appointed by the Taipei municipal government, after the Department of Cultural Affairs of Taipei City undertook revisions of the foundation’s charter in March 2007. Framed in this structure, the operation of the foundation comes under the supervision of the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Taipei City Council (Taipei City Government 2009), and as such, the foundation has an integrated administrative relationship with the Taipei municipal government.
The revitalization of Treasure Hill Village represents a product of local cultural planning strongly sponsored by the state. The public character of the foundation can be seen from not only its structural position but also its major source of funding. The foundation is funded mainly by the Taipei municipal government, and the private sector, serving as a platform which integrates and channels public and private resources for cultural development and engagement in Taipei City.\(^{13}\) Because of the centralization of funding, many cultural spaces in Taipei City are grouped under the foundation’s management. Treasure Hill Village is one of the Taipei’s cultural and historical sites managed by the Taipei Culture Foundation, which also manages venues such as Red House, Taipei Cinema Park, Taipei Museum of Contemporary Art, and Songshan Cultural and Creative Park.\(^{14}\)

Within this realm of the public sector, the cultural governance of Treasure Hill Village reflects the central role of the municipal government in promoting the production and the administration of cultural spaces in Taipei City. Treasure Hill as a designated public site represents an additional form of cultural space that can serve the civic orientation of cultural policy by elevating public engagement in arts in Taipei City. By channeling alternative cultural production to Treasure Hill Village, the municipal government has diversified the landscape of art clusters in Taipei City vis-a-vis its suburb areas in New Taipei City.

\(^{13}\) The other income that supports Treasure Hill Village’s operation comes mainly from the monthly rents the original residents pay and the future profit from the youth hostel.

\(^{14}\) The foundation also oversees the city’s major arts festivals and cultural centres, and has established the Taipei Film Commission and the Taipei Culture Industries Commission in order to foster the city’s film production, and promote cultural industries and nurture talents respectively.
II. Landscape of Art spaces in Taipei Metropolitan Area

Artistic producers in Taiwan have long concentrated mainly in Taipei Metropolitan Area, which includes both Taipei City and the New Taipei City (formerly known as Taipei County). Whereas Taipei City has become home to many important cultural spaces for public viewship, participation and consumption, New Taipei City, the area surrounding Taipei City, has remained a key base for artists’ studio clusters (Council of Cultural Affairs 2004a).

In the late 1980s, the switch of the government’s cultural policy from opposing to promoting cosmopolitanism, which means the state welcomed not only local but also foreign ideas while allowing culture to be more plural in nature and less subjected to government regulation, has allowed of the explosion of cultural activity in Taiwan (Winkler 1994:35). In particular, the freer social environment following the lifting of Martial Law in July 1987 has led to the proliferation of artist organizations and their hubs in Taipei City, where alternative art venues become significant exhibition venues set up by the artists who took to the examples of their Western counterparts. IT Park (Yi-tong Gongyuan) established by the photographer Liu Ching-tang in 1988 was one of the most important alternative art spaces in Taipei City. In that period, the belief of these spaces in cultural pluralism challenged the commercial gallery system and the “non-exclusive identification of the art world with northern Taiwan/Taipei” (Gao et al. 1998). Such visions of the revived cultural sector have meant that alternative cultural production had come into play in the shaping of the art landscape in Taipei Metropolitan area.
a. Living on the Edge: New Taipei City

Many artistic production clusters are found in the less accessible area of Taipei region. Because of cheaper rents and larger space, artists have tended to live and set up their own studios in New Taipei City, as one artist living in New Taipei City notes, “Artists might not have much money to live in downtown. So they all go to Taipei County…Most of them live there, and also, many live near Taipei National University of the Arts [in New Taipei City]” (R3). By the late 1980s, the saturation in the economic core of Taipei City and the ensuing negative environmental effects of over-population caused a shift of economic and residential activities to the neighbouring New Taipei City, while out-migration from Taipei City led to a drop of 10,000 population in Taipei City per year (Chou 2005). New Taipei City has become increasingly inhabited in the early 1990s. At that time, economic boom began to create a new landscape of artists’ impetus, moving outwards the edges of Taipei City and towards riverside and greenbelts.

When compared to Taipei municipality, alternative work-live spaces sprouted up in New Taipei City put themselves on the real edge of the city and its mainstream culture. Bamboo Curtain Studio, a studio found by a group of ceramic artists in 1995 in Zhuwei, one of the Tamsui Townships in New Taipei City, marked the first page of transformation of derelict building as studio-art space by non-governmental sector in Taipei Metropolitan Area. Margaret Shiu, one of the founders of the Studio, has described the living in the revitalized farmhouse that brings artists closer to some extraordinary experience with the nature:

Much has happened here that are not just the usual performances and exhibitions but residencies….We all struggled here and absorbed all the elements that nature could give, including the lively stray dogs and cats, the amazingly diverse fauna, organic garden produce, sting bugs, and the hidden cobras to scare the wits out of us each time. (Shiu et al. 2008: 107)
By yielding to rural conditions, many artists from Taiwan and around the world participated in artist-run residency programme had assumed to a communal mode of village lifestyle in New Taipei City that ties art and nature together, representing a new mode of artist cluster fringing the urban culture. The more urbanized townships within New Taipei City, Tamsui and Bali, have become less marginal to literary artists, visual artists and performance artists as the metro line connected Tamsui to Taipei City started to open to service in 1997, making the harbour-side town accessible in just minutes. The surrounding scenery of rivers and mountains has attracted visual artists to live in Tamsui. According to a report, as of 2007, Tamsui has a total of 197 artists with a majority of visual artists (Huang 2007). Tamsui river basin is also home to many artistic directors of performance groups. Among some of the well-known groups, Cloud Gate dance group had its rehearsal room once located in Bali and has currently based in Tamsui. Liuli Gong Fang, a Taiwan’s Glass Art brand, found its studio in 1987 in Tamsui as well.

Young artists have also discovered other places in Tamsui for their use. In 2004, some disused factory buildings in the run-down industrial area of Tamsui were rented out by the owners for artist’s use at cheap rates. In explaining artists’ choice of these remote locations, one artist succinctly notes: “The key thing is that it is cheap. For artists, the only thing matters is that they have a place to go, and it is cheap enough that they could pay for it. That’s all” (R10).

b. Epicenter of Arts: Taipei Municipality

Despite the low rents and the distinctive lifestyle in living in those hidden areas with kilometers away from Taipei City’s centre, many artists prefer being
close to Taipei’s downtown for it offers a “more creative environment” and chances for artists “to approach like-minded people” (R10). Especially after the municipal government’s Department of Cultural Affairs was established in 1999, artists have been attracted to Taipei City due to the lures of urban cultural life, and opportunities in Taipei City that expanded alongside with the state’s sponsorships for artists and art projects, and the position of Taipei City as the cultural hub of Taiwan. Amidst the concentrated effort in the municipal cultural planning, in 2004, Taipei City had the highest concentration of artists of 447 (36.4%) while the New Taipei City had 262 (21.4%) of the total amount of 1227 artists in Taiwan (Council of Cultural Affairs 2004a).

In Taipei City, artists have started to look for idled buildings as their next creative ground. For example, a private school, which was forced to close because of low birth rates and difficulty to absorb new students, has been “invaded” by a group of artists to turn the classroom space into a studio cluster called “18 rooms” since 2008. These artists have attempted to persuade the government to change the landuse of the school for their permanent use. Artists have continued to look to Taipei City largely due to its development of local and global art network that has reinforced its role as the marketplace and centre for arts. Behind the image of a capitalist, modernized Taipei City that has become more distinct in the 2000s when the landmark skyscraper Taipei 101 erected in the City’s Eastern District and altered the Taipei’s skyline since 2004, alternative culture had been further tapping into the City’s underground space.

The VT Art Salon, an alternative gallery transformed from a basement by eight Taiwanese artists in 2006, has now become an indicator for the currents in contemporary art scene. The proximity of alternative art galleries to Taipei City’s
downtown spelled out the attempt of established artists to pioneer more channels to art marketplace in the mid-2000s. In hope of connecting to the market and creating social networking of related artistic sorts, they combined the art gallery with a lounge bar during the first year of their operation. Today, VT Art Salon is a pure gallery which has become a platform for cultural sector and a social venue where commercial and overseas connections could be made. Behind this non-mainstream art space that supports experimental and young artists, its operation highly relies on the City government’s sponsorship and other forms of patronage from the arms of the central government. A founding member of the gallery, Su Hui-Yu, a contemporary artist specialized in video art indicated that although Taipei’s “art society is very small,” the sphere of arts orbits around Taipei City. As he notes, Taipei City is always a preferable location where transport is convenient enough for people to come to alternative art spaces:

It is hard for Taipei to follow New York, where you could create a new community when you go to a new place. In Taipei, it seems that we all follow our living habits—Eastern District, or Daan District….We are like a group outside Eastern District, which is convenient. If the gallery is located in Beitou, or somewhere in New Taipei City, it would be too far. The mobility of Taipei people is like that. They go to city centre to view arts.

From locating the alternative gallery to a place that conditioned itself to the leisure habitus of urbanites, artists could better secure potential audience and gain attention from commercial dealers who picked up emerging artists. This situation reflects what Richard Lloyd (2006) has argued: “A critical mass is necessary to support the production of culture for which there is as yet little popular demand or monetary support. It amounts to a bohemian bargain, and it helps us to understand why artistic sorts across genres continue to value urban propinquity” (153).
More alternative art space has spawned in Taipei City as corporate arts philanthropy in Taiwan has increasingly become a funding source for the arts community. Urban Core Art District, a project of a non-profit foundation for the arts established by a real estate developer JUT Land Development Group, demonstrates how the private sector has come to use arts as a remedy for run-down urban area. The Urban Core project, which was launched in 2010, turned whole blocks of idled apartments awaiting redevelopment into temporary base for art professionals. The apartment spaces located at a prime location of Taipei City were let out to an architect group and several visual and performing art groups on a two-year basis for studio usage, exhibitions, and other cultural events. Art groups were not required to pay any rent except their utility and renovation expenses. Through this experimental project, the first of its kind in Taipei City, the charity arm of the real estate developer may improve its company’s image by introducing arts activities into the idled space that had been dwelled by social underclass including beggars. Artists and their activities, in the case of Urban Core, are not only used as a means to revitalize the blocks. One artist recalls how they engaged the local community near the spaces of art groups at Urban Core:

It’s like helping the noodles stalls to design their menu, and asking the shops in the area if they needed any help from us. Then we could cooperate with them. This is not saying that everything we do have to relate to the arts groups. This one is considered as an art project, linking the community. It is like a big group of people, sweeping and cleaning the streets with brooms. (R9)

In so doing, the non-profit foundation could ensure “management effectiveness and social effects would be maximized” (R7). Like Treasure Hill, where the artists were required to hold art shows and activities that offer contribution to the society, Urban Core invited only the art groups that were considered as more useful for facilitating interaction with neighbourhoods (R7). Despite the temporality of
project, the art groups, however, gained accessibility to cross-disciplinary exchange and contact. In Urban Core Art District, the beneficiaries included the Open Contemporary Art Center, an arts collective consisting of graduates from the National Taiwan University of Arts. Its relocation from the university based in New Taipei City allowed wider exposure of the artists to the public when the exhibitions attracted flows of people into this “highly concentrated” art base (R9).

From artist-run galleries to corporate-sponsored work spaces of art groups, Taipei City’s prominence as the cultural hub of Taiwan is consolidated by the variety of cultural spaces that has made it possible for more artists to take a chance in the municipality. As compared to New Taipei City, for many artists, Taipei City is more capable of offering a vibrant milieu conducive to developing a dense network with the public and with the art circle.

c. Planning Cultural Space in Taipei Municipality

Within the course of the arts development in Taiwan after the lifting of martial law, the Taiwanese government has been the key patron. Even though policies toward art can shift unpredictably with the alteration of administration, many artists have depended on government for cash support to sustain their art practice and benefited from the cultural policies.

At the national level, cultural space has been used as a means to integrate local culture into cultural industries that serves economic targets. Huashan Creative Park (thereafter “Huashan”) is one of the examples of historic premises owned by the central government that has been revitalized as the centre for developing and stimulating cultural industries. Tracing the transformation and restructuring of Huashan suggests how original functions and configuration of
state-owned space changed when the central government’s officials endeavored to employ historic built environment in Taipei City to articulate the national economic agenda.

The name of Huashan started to spread across the art community in 1997, when artists discovered serendipitously and occupied illegally the idled industrial space of Taipei Winery (the former Huashan creative park) owned by the central government. By the efforts of the local artists, the high-ceiling winery was turned into a multi-purpose art space. The cultural sector later successfully pressed the government to preserve the industrial structures of Huashan and to appropriate them as legal cultural venues. This led to the inauguration of “Huashan Art District,” which was then used as a creative field for individuals and groups. One artist, who had been a scene-maker at Huashan, recalls, “At the earlier stage, Huashan was quite punk. Nobody was taking charge of it. So we could climb the walls to get in and hold a show. Nobody charged us rents” (R3).

Like Treasure Hill Village, where the non-profit sector played a central role for the village’s preservation, Huashan’s successful preservation has been a combined contribution from social actors, including historians, artists, cultural workers, cultural organizations, planners, architects, and environmentalists. From 1998 to 2004, Huashan Art District was a reputable cultural site for visual art, performing arts, design, avant-garde and cross-disciplinary arts in Taipei. Two Taiwanese fashion designers, who have set up their own local label and held their fashion shows in Huashan at that time, described Huashan Art District as having a “touch of underground” and a “sense of decadence” that matched well with innovative activities (R15a and R15b).
In 2007, Huashan was transformed into a commercialized complex and creative park for display, performances and entertainment under a public-private partnership that emerged as part of the national masterplan for cultural economy. Today, the image of Huashan as an approachable and creative centre in Taipei has built on its history of subculture that has continued to make Huashan a key place for the development of local cultural industries. As one artist comments, “Now it is more commercialized. Maybe this is the disadvantage. But this is a place where most people would be willing to go to” (R3).

In a more or less similar way, both Treasure Hill Village and Huashan have experienced preservation movements, after which these two places have been shaped largely by the state’s policy decisions on cultural planning. While Huashan exemplifies the primary interest of the central government in developing cultural industries by embracing the mass market and shaking off the non-mainstream image of Huashan, Treasure Hill Village manifests the local interest of the municipal government in preserving local community and its history as public goods. Unlike its national counterpart, the municipal government has reshaped Treasure Hill, a state-owned cultural space, as a double-edged solution, serving both the needs of artists and the cultural aims of the government.

The supportive attitude of the government in pursuing planning that facilitates artistic production has rendered the Department of Cultural Affairs to take up the role to fill the gap of the lack of artist studio space in Taipei City by the mid-2000s. Artists had a huge demand for cheap studio space in Taipei City, as one artist, who also acts as an honorary director of the Association for the Visual Arts in Taiwan (AVAT), notes, “When the Taipei City government released a studio space opened for application, over sixty applicants competed for
it” (R10). She pointed out that the current situation of not having enough cheap studio space in Taipei City has meant “the demand has exceeded supply.” At the local level, the progressive development of cultural venues and facilities ranged from alternative art galleries and spaces for performances and exhibitions has not been matched with similar strength of studio space produced by the cultural sector. In view of the shortage of cheap space, artists have kept requesting the government to make available abandoned governments’ spaces for artist use in Taipei City. The amount of studio space has subsequently increased under active government facilitation when, as early as in 2006, the Department of Cultural Affairs started to search for the resources of various City government departments, marshaling them to compile a list of idled and dilapidated state-owned premises that could be renovated into artists’ studios. This initiative, named “Art Incubation Network,” offers free-of-charge spaces for arts groups in Taipei City to alleviate their high rent’s burden, which might have forced them out from Taipei, or even to mainland China. In planning artist studios in Taipei City, the former commissioner of Department of Cultural Affairs, Liao Hsien-Hao, pointed out the central concepts that have driven his initiative:

Artists have to be far away from commercial behaviors. And your monthly rentals have to be zero. Then artists could do anything inside the places, provided that they don’t destroy anything. They could draw whatever they want. So, the places are relatively not influenced by petty-bourgeois. And, to certain extent, they have to play a role of cultural centre. (R1)

This remark suggests the City government’s facilitative relationship with artists, underscoring the importance of minimum commercial consideration in the planning of art studios, and the few restrictions placed over the everyday use of the studio space. In 2011, for example, the government renovated an elementary school into 12 dance studios for small-scale dance troupes in need of cheap lofts.
In using each of the studio spaces, artists are required by the government to organize activities, e.g. workshops, performances, as a way to “interact with the urban community and redound on the society” (R1). For the government, artists “could not just take it [the studio space] and do nothing [for the community].” (R1)

The availability of those state-owned studio spaces to the art groups is conditioned by the cultural impacts that the arts groups bring into play at different corners of Taipei City.

In a way, artists have been regarded by the government as a useful agent for scattering the seeds of arts around the local community. How art spaces in this “Arts Incubation Network” could function as a machine for public engagement in arts parallels the similar role of Treasure Hill’s artist village as a community-based production site, steering toward a pathway of social participation. State-owned studio space, for the officials, inherently necessitated a more socially-outward orientation. As the former commissioner of Department of Cultural Affairs notes:

I myself treat it [community] importantly. In countries overseas, this kind of space—we should not be saying this as something “given” to—but rather “occupied” by the artists themselves, or “rented” by themselves…..When we give them the space, of course, we hope they can take up some social responsibility. Ours is free-of-charge space given to them, but the space of those artists overseas is not […]. Those are the places they found by themselves; they have the right to do what they want to do, or what they don’t want to do. This is natural. In our case, however, the government intervened, and offered the space. Of course we want to maximise the cultural influence of this place. (R1)

In the case of Treasure Hill, government’s intervention in producing and shaping public cultural spaces represents the preferable functions of the space wherein the state administers and promotes culture. By bringing arts into community and general public, the government expands the opportunities for public engagement with arts in an intentional way.
The mutual benefits of pushing forward cultural space have created a linkage between the artists’ dependence on the governmental support, and the state’s demand for substantial city development in terms of culture and local industry. In Taipei City, relying on the government’s assistance is a compromising attitude and a flexible action for artists to connect their works to a wider audience and potential market.

III. Artist Village as Civic Space

Treasure Hill’s transformation from a wholly residential squatter to a new cultural destination consisting of artists’ production sites and the homes of original residents follows a development that has shaped it into civic space. Set against its recent history in preservation and social movements, Treasure Hill can be identified as civic space, that is, socially inclusive space in which government and the commercial interests are kept at arm’s distance (Douglass et al. 2008), while sharing similarities with “free space” (King and Hustedde 1993; Evans and Boyte 1986). As King and Hustedde suggest:

A free space occurs in a setting in which people can meet for public talk and contribute to solve public problem. It is characterized by several major components: a sense of shared bonds, a comfortable physical, social and cultural setting, a social network, engaging debate and dialogues, a participatory environment, and a potential for forming larger public networks and vision. If a free space exists, citizen can learn group identity, self-respect, public skills, and values of cooperation. (King and Hustedde 1993: 2; emphasis mine)

But at the same time, Treasure Hill as a form of civic space has meant that it is also a contested space that is open to the different claims made by a wide array of sectors in the society (Douglass et al. 2008). Both the processes of contestation and social inclusion have come to define Treasure Hill’s civic space over the course of its development. Tracing how Treasure Hill has become a public
historical site with functions in artistic production can demonstrate the important role of civic activities in bringing about socio-spatial changes in Treasure Hill through arts-led revitalization.

a. From Illegal Settlement to Public Historical Site

The evolvement of Treasure Hill from an illegal squatter into a historical site with art offerings has its roots in the artistic experiments pushed forward by the municipal government and a social group following the preservation movement in the late 1990s. When the City government undertook urban renewal plan to designate Treasure Hill as a park in 1980, the peaceful village life of Treasure Hill was put on the verge of extinction. And later in 1993, when eviction notices were put on doors announcing that the illegal squatter area would be demolished, it became clear that Treasure Hill faced an official threat. After nearly five decades since it was settled by the soldiers of the Nationalist Party from China, Treasure Hill became the limelight for activists when the government started to clear off some illegal structures in 1997.

How did Treasure Hill’s residents save themselves from eviction? Indeed, it was the work of social actors that has opened up an alternative way for the public officials to embrace an urban preservation plan instead of expulsion of illegal community. A non-profit organization, OURs (the Organization of Urban Re-s), which was set up in 1992 and composed of student activists and academics from the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, National Taiwan University, played the key role for the successful preservation of the squatter at Treasure Hill. Under the threat of “green bulldozer” (Huang 1997)\(^\text{15}\), activists protested and

\(^\text{15}\) “Green bulldozer” (Huang 1997) refers to the forces of government’s urban projects on converting urban lands, especially squatters, into public parks during the 1990s in Taipei City.
started waves of debates on issues of squatter demolition, resettlement, and preservation. Their objective was to enable the village’s residents to continue living in their own places and thereby to keep the interpersonal networks of the residents and the character of Treasure Hill. While some residents began to work with volunteer-activists to claim their right to Treasure Hill, OURs lobbied against the conversion plan of the Treasure Hill into a public park and proposed to the government to designate Treasure Hill as a historic site under the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act. This led the City government to start considering a plan revision. In August 2001, the City government transferred the duty for Treasure Hill’s future planning from the Department of Park and Recreation to Department of Cultural Affairs, which became charge with a mission to preserve the cultural and historic values of Treasure Hill.

At that time, the government had no intention to use art as a means to revitalize the village. Though Treasure Hill has been romanticized as a hillside village potentially suitable for artistic activities, it has never been identified with art until the experiments for a variety of art activities were conducted in the village in the 2000s. “Art” was first introduced into Treasure Hill Village through a series of mobilization by OURs (the Organization of Urban Re-s). In 2002, the Treasure Hill New Discovery Film Festival became part of the Taipei International Arts Festival that placed Treasure Hill on the art map of Taipei City for the first time in history (Kang 2005). During 2003 to 2004, OURs launched the Global Artivists Participation Project (GAPP), through which foreign artists were invited as artists-in-residency for two months, raising Treasure Hill’s publicity and public support. The project demonstrated the creative power of a combination of local community and art, highlighting that the resident artists are
also “activists,” who are “active, integrated into the community, and are passionate about using art to change their environment and getting non-artists involved” (Chang 2006). This idea of “artivism” promotes the combination of art and activism to bring about socio-spatial change, and challenges art for not being functional (Kang 2005).

The notion of non-functionality of art at Treasure Hill has remained as the flip side of the instrumentality of art for public’s use. From 2003 to 2004, artists applied their skills to serve Treasure Hill’s residents and opened up ways to engage the public with arts. For example, OURs has brought a Finnish artist Marco Casagrande in 2003 to promote using art to ameliorate the local landscape, where the artist helped to clear up land to build a garden for vegetable growing and to build a wooden stairway to make it easier for residents who lived uphill to get to and from their homes. Another resident-artist, Photographer Yeh Wei-li recorded the history of the village through images in 2004, by turning his “Treasure Hill Tea and Photo Studio” into a semi-public space for drinking tea, chatting and shooting visitors’ portraits for free. These art-related activities demonstrated to the City government that Treasure Hill’s artistic potentials could be the key to the problem of illegal settlement, enabling the government to commission OURs to undertake the planning and rezoning of Treasure Hill.

It became apparent that arts have become a way out for the struggling marginalized village to resurface on the city’s map, especially after Taipei Historical Buildings Review Committee had approved that Treasure Hill was to be preserved as the first historical settlement under the administration of the Department of Cultural Affairs by 2004. This change has legitimized the squatters’ “residency” on the public land and demonstrated that OURs has influenced state’s
actions in preserving Treasure Hill’s community by promoting impetus through multiple tactics and strategies (Ho 2008: 61). In the case of Treasure Hill, OURs has successfully persuaded the public officials that preserving Treasure Hill Village would not weaken the public meaning of Treasure Hill’s original land use as park through all the publicity campaigns that emphasized the artistic values of the village. Treasure Hill, as the managing director of OURs commented, “has nominally latched onto ‘art’ as a means to preserve itself” (Chang 2006).

The initial plan to use art as an instrument to preserve Treasure Hill was proposed by the Department of Cultural Affairs. The central aim of the Treasure Hill project does not lie in providing space for artists, but rather in leveraging art for promoting the public meanings of the place. As the Department’s former Commissioner, who was in charge of the cultural planning of Treasure Hill from 2003 to 2006, succinctly indicates: “In fact, Taiwan did not mean to do all these things for the artists at the beginning. It only did so to preserve this place. Preservation—[relates to] how you would turn it into a place with public meanings” (R1). In The Cultures of Cities, Sharon Zukin notes that (1995) “visual strategies such as historic preservation can be politicised and used as tools of community development” (278). Using art to preserve the cultural landscape of Treasure Hill, on the one hand, corresponds to the city’s promotion of local culture to enrich urban life. On the other hand, preservation strategies that recognize the social values of the community can help the municipal government that has led by KMT since 1999 to appeal to its constituencies, and at the same times, provide the government with a tool to restore civility in resolving the urban problem of illegal settlement. As the municipal government and central government were under the control of different political parties at that time, the municipal government could
propose and develop its own city-based policies that did not necessarily follow the policies of the central government. For the municipal government, preserving the culture of the local residents at Treasure Hill, besides its importance in the socio-economic setting, has a political value in that preservation wins the support of local community, especially when the central government that belonged to DPP had planned to convert squatters into parks.

The willingness of the government to preserve the local community of Treasure Hill reflects the importance of community, particularly the neighbourhood network, in constituting the essence of this urban revitalization project. Considering the cultural heritage of Treasure Hill, the former Cultural Affairs Department’s Commissioner notes:

In fact, the most important thing inside it [Treasure Hill Village] is the network of the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood is the most important cultural heritage of this place….So if renovation work has to be done, people need to move away [to places outside the village], then afterward, these people might not come back. Or, some of them just grow old and die away. Some of them were already 70-80 years old, most people were of this age. So this part needs consideration. (R1)

Preservation of the village has necessitated renovation including fixing the houses of residents and underground public utilities in order to bring the illegal structures into line with Taipei’s building codes. In doing so, the Department of Cultural Affairs allowed those original residents who wanted to continue living in Treasure Hill to relocate to ad-hoc transitional housing within the village or to other self-chosen rental units. To accomplish this, the government reimbursed them before they came home as tenants after the two-year renovation project was complete. Keeping the residents, especially the elderly, inside the village during the renovation, for the government, helped to maintain the cohesion of the neighbourhood that otherwise would have crumbled once they were disbanded. This process through which the preservation plan of Treasure Hill’s community
was carried out demonstrates the attempt of the government to preserve both the tangible (the physical structures), and the intangible of the historic site (the social network of a community).

Leveraging culture and arts to revitalize the old community of Treasure Hill raised the skepticism of the preservationist group OURs, whose primary aim was to help the residents to obtain the right to living at Treasure Hill legally. For the success of the preservation of Treasure Hill, there necessitated, to some extent, the adjustment of OURs’ interests in order to align with the state’s agendas. In spite of the success of Global Artivists Participation Plan (GAPP), the plan of revitalizing part of Treasure Hill as artist village was not on the original agenda of OURs, as its core member Kang Min-jay recalls: “In the beginning, we didn’t want to take part in developing an artist village here. We thought it was fake. But the Bureau of Cultural Affairs mandated that there be one and it became a matter of ‘Well, if we don’t do it, someone else will.’ OURs at least had established roots in the community” (Momphard 2003).

During the planning stage for rezoning Treasure Hill, the members of OURs made compromise and changed from being unsupportive to supportive of the idea of establishing an artist village within Treasure Hill. The lived space of the old settlement, under the leadership and field research of OURs, started to unfold a new vision of an artist-activist (also known as “artivists,” a term used by the members of OURs) compound that would preserve the existing fabric of the original community and realize the regeneration concept of “symbiosis” to incorporate original resident’s units, communal living, artivists-in-residency and an international youth hostel. In the project of Treasure Hill, the name of the game is to generate “symbiosis” in a long term, meaning that getting the
underprivileged residents, resident artists, and other users of the planned space to come to respect and live next to one another.

This plan, however, created tensions between those espoused the idealism of a spontaneously-formed art village and the state’s instrumentalism of a planned urban cultural project. While OURs has developed collaborative practices with the government, some other artivists protested against the concept of a planned artist village. These artivists, while participated in the experimental operation of “Youth Hostel” organized by OURs, took the opportunities to criticize the policy of a planned artist village and protest against government’s intervention in Treasure Hill’s future development. Through setting up a group called “Treasure Hill Commune,” they advocated treating “populace’s culture (living) as art,” and criticized the government for ignoring the rights of the original residents to their land by introducing an artist village into Treasure Hill.

Before Treasure Hill’s renovation work started in late 2006 to accommodate new offerings in accordance to the new plan, at that time, some of the exterior walls of the house buildings become the drawing board where the artivists wrote doodles that knocked the responsible department and lamented at the fate of the village. On one of these walls, an artist wrote a caustic question and suggested an answer: “Is Treasure Hill a green hill or a rubbish hill? Lies. The Department of Cultural Affairs of Taipei City = corruption” (Figure 4.1.). The comment reflects the feeling of deception among the artivists and their dissatisfaction with the government’s cultural planning, which these artivists perceived as more beneficial to the “elite class,” and considered as not desirable for Treasure Hill’s future development.
While the activists opposed to the government’s intervention, the government demurred at the instigation of activists, who occupied and attempted to tear down houses in the village that interrupted the cultural planning and delayed renovation work. As the protests continued, the endeavors of the activists and the ground on which their rationales were based, nonetheless, remained weak. As the government had the legal claim to the land of Treasure Hill, the right to the governance empowered the municipal government to finally resort to nearly 200 police officers to force the activists and some other residents who were unwilling to vacate their houses out from the area in January 2007 (Mo 2007).

![Figure 4.1. Writings on the Walls of a studio, Treasure Hill Village. Photo taken by author, August 6, 2011.](image)

This dispute over Treasure Hill’s historic preservation and the state’s intervention into the cultural planning suggests the general perception of how difficult it is for culture to be both a democratic public good and an elite resource (Zukin 1995:270). Although the activists believed that the government would
attempt to introduce gentrifying class into the village, the government used its state authority to fulfill its goals for cultural planning through social inclusion that maintains a balance between the needs of the preserved community and the priorities of the government’s discourse in maximizing public interests, public usage and meanings for Treasure Hill. The contradiction between the activists and the government that is manifested in this episode of conflict epitomizes the inherent discord in urban cultural planning, as the former Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs comments: “….this kind of conflict lasts forever, that is, between planning and arts, there must be such a conflict” (R1).

In the case of Treasure Hill Village, its civic space had built sentiments and social relationships as a propensity for collective action, leading to social movement against the actions of government in remaking the village into a new place. The legacies of this movement exemplified by the sensitive writing on the walls, however, were preserved intentionally by the Department of Cultural Affairs during the renovation work, rather than considered as eyesores and wiped off. This has led one manager of the artist village to advise a foreign resident artist in summer 2011 not to paint on the walls with those doodles outside his residency because, as she explained, “the graffiti on the wall tells the history of the village.”16 The doodles, which witnessed the history of conflicts over the village as a means for protest, have remained to be seen today as a form of heritage, enhancing the aura of authenticity of the place, and exemplifying the process of how a marginal village was shaped by the bottom-up preservation and social movements. At present, part of Treasure Hill has become an artist village which has accommodated a mix of local and global artists. Examining the forces that

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drew artists into Treasure Hill Village can help understand that the state has offered useful space for artists who, in their personal pursuit, have involved themselves in the inextricable fusion of art and public cultural space.

a. Coming to Treasure Hill

The emergence of Treasure Hill’s artist village has allowed a place where local artists could stay and work and show their next new projects. More importantly, Treasure Hill alleviates the shortage of space for artistic production of artists and art groups in Taipei City. Following the other two artist villages initiated by Taipei City Government, Treasure Hill represents another way in which the municipal government diversified residency options for both local and foreign artists. In field interviews and conversations, I learned that artists who lived outside Taipei City regarded coming to Treasure Hill as a means to develop their careers in Taipei and get publicity for their works. Other Taipei-based artists or art groups came to Treasure Hill for the opportunities it could offer in collaboration with different parties and exchange, whereas rental is less crucial to their decision.

One artist who applied to come to Treasure Hill was Chen Zheng-hang, the vocalist of his indie rock band, Zenkwun, formed in 2006. The band was admitted to one of the “micro-loft” studios, which are small rooms tailored for local artists at lower rent (around 3000 to 4000 NTD) as compared to the market rates. He described Treasure Hill as a well-planned place that he personally likes because of his fine art background in high school. But the primary reason for him to come to Treasure Hill in 2010 was the lack of a small studio and office for his band to operate in Taipei City. The rock band, which blends western rock music with
traditional Chinese music elements of instruments like Suona (horn) or Erhu (fiddle), has signed a contract with a small record label company based in Taoyuen County that publishes mainly Hakka music. As Chen indicates he is not a “Taipei ren” (Taipei people), his band needs a base where contact among the band members and other interaction with the outside could be made. With a residency at Treasure Hill, Chen believed his band would have more publicity and better prospect: “Bands, of course, prefer to develop their careers in here [Taipei City]” (R8). Not only is Treasure Hill close to the performance venues such as live houses that are vital to indie musicians like Chen, who is the frequent participant of these venues, Treasure Hill itself offers open space, e.g. the lawn, for performance. For Chen, the band’s new base in Treasure Hill was a short-term solution for his band, which is open to uncertain opportunities. As he notes, “artists might have different plans during different periods.” Compared to the availability of opportunities in Taipei City, low rentals of the studio remained as what Chen called an “inducement” and made less impact on the band.

Another artist who was drawn to Treasure Hill was Nick Gang. He was academically-trained in mathematics but was passionately fond of a wide array of art forms. After his friend’s reminder of the opportunity offered by Treasure Hill’s artist village, he took the chance and applied for a “micro-loft” studio in 2010 that brought him to Treasure Hill. His freelance jobs as video producer and translator help support his artistic pursuit and interests in installation art, sculpture, painting, photography and others. As a novice in fine art, Gang regarded having his first studio at Treasure Hill Village as a recognition of his newfound artist identity. He recalls:
On the day of the so-called official opening [of the artist village], my son said to me, “Congratulations, dad.” I asked, “Congratulations on what?” He said, “You are now an artist, because you live and have a studio there.” I told this story because—it is true though—it is like a name, whatever an identity. I’ve absorbed so many things in the past; I was like a silkworm, and I’ve just started to spin from that day onward….When I said “I am an artist”: there’s like a watershed—I am already an artist. I could create and legitimately create. (R4)

Being an artist at the village, Gang could contact other resident artists and engage in meaningful exchange and collaboration. And with the available space that he lacked in the past, his ideas for art projects that have been brewing for five to six years could be realized. The artist village also allows him to collaborate with other artists on new projects, for example, he describes how he could participate in a performance art production in which he could experiment in some design of body movements. For an amateur-turned-artist like Gang, getting a studio at Treasure Hill gave him a space for production and the realization of his artistic impulses, and “something which money could not measure” (R4).

Likewise, having a work-live unit at Treasure Hill in 2011 was Raying Wang, a fine art graduate from the master programme of National Changhua University of Education in 2010. Coming to Taipei’s Treasure Hill from Tainan (south Taiwan), for Wang, was to get more exposure to varied members of the art community: “It’s, perhaps, because of the environment, you can meet different people here, and the village will promote your work.” The idea of living in Treasure Hill appeals to her as she thought it would be more urban, although she described that the landscape of Treasure Hill was “unnatural” in its proximity to a lawn and a river. Unlike Chen and Gang, she was admitted as an artist-in-residency at the village, meaning that her living cost there was close to zero under sponsorship by the government. She worked as an art teacher at school before but now she focused on pursuing art as her full-time careers. Her choice to remain in
the art field is to continue her pursuit in art, which requires her to invest her earnings or sponsorships into the production processes.

What have shown in these artists’ stories are two main pull factors behind their decision on going to Treasure Hill. Some artists are motivated to apply for a studio at Treasure Hill primarily for practical use, while many of them are also drawn to Treasure Hill by the accessibility to publicity and social network useful for their production and careers in Taipei. Their accounts suggest Treasure Hill serves as one of the doors which is now opened by the municipal government for the artists, offering a numbers of advantages that most artists, from both inside or outside Taipei, could hope for.

b. Positioning and Tension between Community and Art

Today’s Treasure Hill is zoned into three areas including “Treasure Hill Homeland,” “Treasure Hill Artist Village” and “International Youth Hostel,” based on the proposal of OURs that has been incorporated into the final plan endorsed by the Department of Cultural Affairs. This plan evolved under the efforts of both the Department of Cultural Affairs and OURs has changed the spatial organization and make-up of Treasure Hill. By 2010 when Treasure Hill Village was ready for its opening, artists’ work and live units become the heart of Treasure Hill in terms of numbers: the original residents account for only 21 households while resident artists make up about 26 (14 residency units and 12 micro-lofts units). The studios are available for artists-in-residence of three to six months, while the micro-lofts provide artists generally a renewable tenancy on a year basis. Treasure Hill Village is, indeed, the product of joint efforts by the
Department of Cultural Affairs and OURs that contributed to the realization of an urban experiment, testifying an integration of art and local community.

The combination of a historic settlement and artist residency makes Treasure Hill a unique art cluster in the City of Taipei. Unlike other government-initiated studio spaces in Taipei, Treasure Hill’s artist village does not offer empty studio space identified by the government for resident artists to create on their own. Instead, the government requires that artists create their art works based on their living at Treasure Hill and learn to interact with its residents. The interaction with the local residents constitutes the major raw material for artistic production. Art works created during residency “must have relations with community service” and that “art works per se should have the meanings of social service” in general (R1). The three state-initiated artist villages operated by Arts in Residency Taipei (AIR Taipei) under the Taipei Cultural Foundation—Grass Mountain Artist Village, Taipei Artist Village and Treasure Hill Artist Village—have different emphasis on the role of artists that hinge on the specific socio-geographical environment of each artist village. The artist village on Grass Mountain, which is far from urban area, allows artists to focus only on their production, whereas Taipei Artist Village on Beiping East Road in downtown Taipei City allows a strong interaction between the artists and the society outside the artist village. Unlike these two artist villages, Treasure Hill needs artists to communicate with and to engage the village’s residents in arts activities.

Like the other two state-initiated artist villages, Treasure Hill Village is positioned as what its official statement has emphasized—a “village” but not a “museum.” What made it different from the other two artist villages is the dynamics between the artists and the original neighbourhood within the village.
The concept of “village” is succinctly defined by Arts in Residency Taipei, the administration team of Treasure Hill:

A village is a community of people living and working together all calling the same place HOME. All three villages within AIR Taipei contain artist studios for living and working, support administration, performance venues and exhibition spaces. Rather than collecting and displaying objects AIR Taipei believes that ‘Work in Progress’ is a truly humane and engaging vision. (Arts in Residency Taipei 2010b)

Unlike a museum, which is a platform for show-and-tell, a village is a place to live and is defined by the characteristics of a village life. The original residents and the on-going art community that centers around the artist-in-residence project together cultivated “a village lifestyle encouraging participation for all segments of the community” (Arts in Residency Taipei 2010b). The idea of promoting Treasure Hill Village as a cultural landscape has implied a real proliferation of public shows and activities targeted at not only the village’s neighbourhood, but also the general public that involves shaping and framing the public space of Treasure Hill for public participation and social interaction. The management of Treasure Hill Village has actively exploited local resources to promote Treasure Hill Village through cultural strategies that emphasize the historic and aesthetic values of the village, including offering members of the public guided tours. A trip to Treasure Hill Village promised not only the historical (e.g. the bomb shelter built by Japanese government that can be traced back to Second World War), but also the cinematic (e.g. the film sets of a Taiwanese movie *Four Hands*¹⁷). From the historical traces to the brick-built kitchen stove of the film sets that remain in situ, Treasure Hill evokes a sense of history and nostalgia through authenticity, leading the tourists and local people to retrieve the forgotten past.

¹⁷ This film talks about the story of a father and a son separated for 60 years across the Taiwan Strait due to the civil war in China that forced the Nationalist Party to retreat to Taiwan in 1949.
The village as a public space has brought threatening and unknowable visitors to the residents. Wedding photo taking, photography class field trips, tours led by travel agencies, and outdoor film and music video shooting during open and non-open hours in Treasure Hill also posed challenges to the operation team. For example, episodes of insecurity and urban anxiety had caused residents to demand less public intrusion into their surroundings, as one resident recalls: “The other day I saw a lot of police’s cars along the river, and it was said that there was a person who got drunk. I hope the village could be a bit simpler.”18 Such uneasiness ensued from the day when the village is opened to the public entailed greater regulation of human activities, especially the group activities, taking place at Treasure Hill.

The ambivalent position of Treasure Hill Village as a historical site consisting of both private spaces of residents and public space for visitors—“a preposterous state” as commented by a staff of the operation office19—necessitates a set of rules to control people flow based on security concerns. One rule requires every visitor to sign in before entering the village, for example.20 Negotiation over physical security is a significant factor in framing the public space of Treasure Hill Village. The public nature of Treasure Hill Village, sometimes, also caused nuisance for those artists who need privacy during their production stage. Even at the public space in the village, some artists could feel their zone being invaded by tourists. In one afternoon at a gallery in the village, I have observed the reaction of a foreign resident artist to touristic behaviors. When the artist was adding spot lights to the walls of the gallery where he was in a pre-show buzz, two tourists

20 In Treasure Hill, urban fear has placed the private space of residents’ homes on a high priority. Explicit rules of the village for visitors are posted at the entrance and enforced by security guards.
came in through the open door without notice. As the floor had been just painted, the door was left open for air ventilation. Having observed that the gallery had nothing except a bucket of paint, a set of tools and a ladder, the tourists quickly stepped out and left. When they left, the annoyed artist grumbled: “These tourists have no respect for artists’ privacy.”

Though apparently the spatial organization of the village was changed with the advent of art, yet, Treasure Hill is perceived by some artists as a place without “intensive” drive towards artistic production (R10). As a resident artist comments: “If it’s art-oriented, I think perhaps the whole milieu would be different. The exhibition room, the space, and the design perhaps would be different….There would be lots of art shows….Whatever, it would not be idled, for long. Now, the galleries are only used when there are presentations. Normally they are not used.” (R4). Unlike most museums or galleries which are usually opened from morning till night time, the opening hours of the two galleries of Treasure Hill artist village on weekdays are particularly short (only opens from 3 P.M. to 6 P.M. on weekdays). By engaging the local residents into part of artistic production and promoting arts to the public, Treasure Hill Village has been planned in such a way that gears to three groups of users: the artists, the residents’ community and the tourists. This is evident in the simultaneous orientations of Treasure Hill, as an artist pointed out: “Is this an art-oriented development? Or because there are other residents living here, and so, I have to look after this social development, and community development? […] Another fact is…it is a bit like a tourist spot. Or tourism-oriented or mixed? I think they [the management] are still trying out….For example, during the village’s opening…many people came. They were

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21 Private conversation, July 8, 2011.
building the reputation of this place, and then they wait and see. So it seems they haven’t grasped that distinctiveness yet” (R4).

The comment reflects the skepticism, on the side of artists, of the current development direction of Treasure Hill and the experimentation of a mixed-use urban village driven by a public agenda that may water down the defining features of Treasure Hill. This points to the multiple facets of Treasure Hill Village as a public cultural space in which art and culture is produced, experienced and consumed, representing Treasure Hill Village has embraced both perspectives of looking inward to the village’s community and looking outward to the general public. For many artists, the unconventional Treasure Hill which caters to diverse groups of users during its present phrase has also required the artists to compromise in the process of production of art, accepting Treasure Hill as a form of public resources of which art is only a part of the configuration.

IV. Summary

In the earlier accounts of the status of Taipei in Northern Taiwan’s art landscape, this chapter shows that the state has facilitated the development of cultural production space in Taipei in terms of provision of space and monetary sponsorships. Taipei’s cultural space has reflected a high degree of facilitative relationship between artists and the government. In the eyes of the officials, the revitalization of state-owned space for artistic production has not only solved the problem of lack of cheap space in the capital city, but also underlined the social obligations that artists have to fulfill through engaging the public in the activities they organized. This philosophy around governing state-owned cultural space has
pertained to the revitalization of Treasure Hill from an unlawful settlement to a new official cultural production field in 2010.

The historical and planning context of Treasure Hill presented in this chapter illustrates the transformation of Treasure Hill into civic space as the activists’ interests in sustaining local community residency right and the state’s interest in promoting public engagement in cultural and arts activities converge. In restoring the local neighbourhood landscape as cultural heritage, the state has sought to employ artistic activities to propel a revitalization project that aims to preserve not only the physical space of Treasure Hill, but also to preserve the original residents and their social ties in tandem. The social movements and the artist-activists’ experimental art programme that took place in the past have offered Treasure Hill immense experience in civic actions and cultural production. This civic orientation is operationalized by artists who have proved to be instrumental to the state in legitimating a revitalization of Treasure Hill that concentrates on civic engagement in culture and arts. A consequence of this is the cultural “thickening” process of Treasure Hill. I will further illustrate this process in Chapter Five.
Chapter 5

Hong Kong versus Taipei:
Comparing Socio-spatial Outcomes

Chapter Three and Four examined the two cases of state-owned cultural space and how the negotiations and contending interests of state agents, private sector and other social actors shaped the spaces and produced socio-spatial changes on the ground. The two chapters have also indicated the differences in the configurations and historical context between Hong Kong’s JCCAC and Taipei’s Treasure Hill. Although both Hong Kong and Taipei have used artists and their activities as tools to revitalize old premises as new urban cultural spaces, significant differences exist in the management-artist relationship and the mode of governance over artist spaces. Before proceeding to examine the outcomes of socio-spatial development, I recapitulate and compare the similarities and differences between the two cases.

I. Similarities and Differences of Public Cultural Spaces

Major differences exist in the relationship between the management and the artists in the two cities. In terms of its cultural policy, Taipei has focused on employing art and its makers to maximise the socio-cultural impacts of its own cultural space by promoting civic engagement in cultural activities in an intentional way. The facilitative and cooperative relationship between the management and the artists is framed within civic space, and is built on give and take on both sides. The management, as the state agent, provides the space for the
artists, who in turn serve the community through their skills and resources. Hong Kong has similar motives to use art as one way to promote social interests in arts, but displays no significant emphasis on the notion of civic engagement. The cultural production space in Hong Kong has faced greater regulatory forces and pressure from commercialism than in Taipei, and thus the cultural space is often contentious and resulted in much more conflicts between the artists and the management.

Both the cultural spaces of Hong Kong and Taipei encompass mixed functions that target three main groups of space users: artists, local community and other space users such as tourists. Yet, Taipei’s Treasure Hill regards artists as cultural producers translating lived experience on site, resulting in a stronger sense of purpose in the artist community. Hong Kong’s JCCAC does not cohere the cultural actors into a clear sense of purpose around their arts-related works or activities as its equivalent in Taipei, resulting in greater contradictions among the community of cultural production in the case of Hong Kong.

In terms of the mode of governance, both cultural spaces do not directly come under the jurisdiction of the state’s departments. But notable differences occur in the extent to which each government plays a role in shaping the space. In Taipei’s case, the government has played an active role in the cultural governance of the space situated within the state’s institutional structure, and has been the major source of funding for its cultural space. Yet, in the case of Hong Kong’s JCCAC, the government maintains a distant position from its cultural governance and leaves the cultural space relying on itself in the aspect of finance. The non-profit statutory bodies play an important role in the governance of JCCAC. This
has meant the cultural space in Hong Kong has a lower degree of public character and receives much less patronage from the state as compared to Taipei.

In the following two sections, I examine how these defining differences in the management-artist relationship and the different make-up of the cultural space have shaped the spaces and produced distinctive characteristics in the cultural spaces of Hong Kong and Taipei. The make-up of the spaces has made impacts on the triangular relationships between the artists, management of the cultural space and the local community that in turn have changed the dynamics of the two spaces, shaping the two artist neighbourhoods into what they are today. In the next section of this chapter, I focus on the case of Hong Kong, followed by the case of Taipei.

II. Hong Kong: The “Malling” of Artist Village

The contention that has taken place at JCCAC can be partly attributed to its “malling” process as well as artists’ diverse attitudes toward such process. In his discussion of “malling of Hong Kong,” Lui (2001) has indicated how the permeation of shopping malls into different corners of Hong Kong since the 1970s has produced a mall culture shaping the consumption experience of Hong Kong’s people. He argues that this has fostered the culture of consumption, which has become the Hong Kong “way of life” till this day, and he shows how such developments have brought about a new form of public space and urban culture, for example, the appearance of cafes opened up spaces for young intellectuals to exchange ideas in the late 1960s. This section explores the outcomes of the

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22 How the configuration of the cultural space has changed the meaning of art produced and displayed in JCCAC and Treasure Hill will be discussed in Chapter Six.
process in which Hong Kong’s JCCAC, the regulated space positioned by the management as both a creative arts centre and an artist village, has orientated more toward management than facilitating creative processes. One result of this is the “malling” of JCCAC’s artist village, a process through which shopping-mall culture and consumption has increasingly become a noticeable feature of JCCAC but has opened up a new form of public space for alternative culture to grow.

Though JCCAC as an arts centre accommodates a wide array of arts-led activities launched by its tenants, such as artists creating artworks and cultural organizations promoting their arts-related activities and outreach community arts programmes, it also incorporates considerable leisure and consumption elements, as well as regulations to manage the tenants. By exerting control (i.e. rules and regulations) over its tenants, the management tightly regulates the tenants in terms of what they may or may not do, in particular the latter included the behaviours judged and defined by the management to be disruptive and disordered, thus entailing interventions and actions of cleaning up. Such character of JCCAC is manifested in the contrary spatial practices between the management and the artists. It starts with a case of tidying up artists’ displays by the management in common space and unveils the intentions behind its regulatory actions. The warnings given by the management to the tenant artists to remove objects including art displays before JCCAC’s arts festival suggests the management has focused on regulation work rather than strategies that are conducive to artistic production. I examine the case of art displays placed in the common space of JCCAC as an example of incompatible spatial practices between artists and the management that entails negotiation over the rights to public space.
Driven by regulatory forces, JCCAC has geared toward offering consumption experience and favoured spaces of consumption. This development is noticeable by looking at the sets of activities in which the management and tenants have organised and have (not) participated in. I highlight that JCCAC consists of both contemporary artists and community arts organizations that produce two significantly different types of artistic experience in JCCAC, pointing to the potential contradictions and divergent interests between these two groups of tenants. The practice of JCCAC in attracting visitors through regulating public space as well as providing consumption and artistic experience had gradually subject itself into the role of malls, favouring retailing, recreational and (semi-) commercial activities. Despite the rigid regulations, JCCAC has opened up spaces for artistic experimentation and new forms of public spaces for public users coming from its surrounding neighbourhood or from other locales.

a. Tidying Up Art

JCCAC’s bulky building occupies a hillside corner surrounded by numerous public housing estates in Shek Kip Mei. This former factory estate was a vertical standalone building built in 1977 during the colonial period for local cottage industries. Today, the husk of the renovated building vaguely reminiscent of its industrial past; its clean interior offers a contrast for the iron-made traces left behind. Old industrial machines, once produced at the cottage communes served as a tribute to the manufacturing industries of Hong Kong, were placed tidily as a permanent display along the corridors of JCCAC, where pieces of former factory unit signage are preserved on walls. These industrial structures give the place a sense of authentic character that evoke its history and create the “experience of
origins” against the homogenization of urban spaces (Zukin 2010). In the past, these industrial spaces were considered “dirt” that the British colonial government would tend to exclude and devalue according to its preservation policy (Abbas 1997).

“The Centre is too clean—because this is an arts centre [it should not be too clean]. It is much cleaner than before,” claimed the Chinese Tea House’s manager in early 2012, as she was sitting at a table in the Tea House, a commercial outlet located inside JCCAC near its main entrance (R23). The comment came when she was thinking of the changes she observed over the years since the tea house moved in. In fact, not only artists, shop managers had also noticed the importance of the centre’s “gritty charms” and its association with an innovative milieu, something visitors who enjoy the affections of artists respond to (Lloyd and Clark 2001). It has already become a norm that artists’ production sites should be a bit untidy, to the extent that not everything has to look clean and neat. But a paradox occurs when the sites are subject to rigid regulations which sanitize places. In its preparation for the arts festival, the management of JCCAC demonstrated its disposition toward rearranging and tidying up disorderedly physical spaces. The ways in which the arts festival was organised illustrated the contradiction and distrust between the artists and the management. As exemplified by the following case of MOST’s exhibits, the everyday practices of artists were subordinated to the regulations set by JCCAC that entailed negotiation over the artists’ rights to the public space of JCCAC and definition of art.

On 25 November 2011, a week before the commencement of the arts festival launched by JCCAC, the management office notified all tenant artists to clear any of their clutter and protest banners placed in public space of JCCAC,
allowing only furniture and artwork to remain in the public space during the festival period. Having cleaned up the clutter, a few days later, MOST received an email note from the management office that the decorative display of the Chinese ink slab stone (*mo yan*), which was originally approved by the management to remain in its location near the lift lobby on the 7th floor (Figure 5.1.), was now considered as a form of “obstruction” in accordance to the tenancy agreement. The ink slab stone, which is used for making ink slab—one of four Chinese traditional “treasures” of calligraphy—is one of the art collections of MOST.

![Figure 5.1. The Chinese Ink Slab Stone placed at Lift Lobby, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. Photo taken by author December 4, 2011.](image)

To make the case even worse, further conflicts arose as the management office required MOST to remove a TV set placed just outside the entrance of the art space, even though it was intended for video screening during art show. To rationalise the claim, an administrator cited clause 2(m) of the tenancy agreement:
[Tenant artists] are obliged ‘not to do or permit or suffer to be done any act or thing which may be or become a nuisance or annoyance to the Landlord or to the Tenants or occupiers of other premises in the said building or in any adjoining or neighbouring building, or otherwise exceed the noise level permitted under the relevant legislation.’

Without recognising the exhibition purpose of the video content, the management had reduced the video showing, which is used to be a common tool for art show, into a form of potential nuisance. For Andrew, the director of MOST, the way his art collection and artwork were handled by the related staff of JCCAC was “totally insulting.” In comparing the practices of JCCAC to the Factory 798 art district in Beijing, he believed that JCCAC imposed more regulations on artists, as he indicates: “The management company there [Factory 798] just collects the rentals, and tenants could do whatever they want.”

After writing a note to the Executive Director of JCCAC questioning the rationale of the chopping and changing spatial practice of the administrators, MOST was allowed to place the ink slab stone and the TV set in the public area in the end. It became apparent that the explicit reason for the forced removal of items placed in the public areas was to pass an inspection to be carried out by the Fire Services Department, and that of protest banners was to uphold the amiable image of JCCAC in front of the public. The action was criticised by the tenants as a way to “fabricate peace.” According to one staff member of the JCCAC’s operation office, the skirmish could be attributed to the practice of the venue management, whose work style and mind-set had identified with that of the Estates Office of Hong Kong Baptist University.

As this case illustrates, what rights the space users have and how art is

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23 Private conversation, November 30, 2011.
24 Private conversation, December 4, 2011.
defined have become a contest between the administrators who errs on the safe and conservative side under a bureaucratic system, and the artists who strives for and defends artistic expression and freedom when jeopardised by the regulations imposed on them. As Zukin and Braslow (2011:139) have pointed out, “artists are distrustful of regulation. At the extreme, in order to perform their ‘difference’ they may want to be in an unrecognized limbo in space and time that enables them to remain ‘edgy’.” This case of spatial conflicts exemplifies the incompatibility between the regulation practices of the venue management team and the artists’ practices of “de-regulation” inherent in their dispositions. Indeed, the official publicity of the arts festival, including programme guides and light box advertisements all used the image of “pebbles” as the promotion concepts to symbolise the arts community at Shek Kip Mei. Whereas the Cantonese word Shek actually means “stones,” in this sense, the ink slab stone certainly echoes the theme; and perhaps, most ironically signifies the unity of the artist community, only after a series of negotiation.

b. Creating Consumption Experience

The promotion of the consumption experience in JCCAC has created uneasiness within the circle of artists who identified with high art, especially when contradictions are manifested in how JCCAC was designed to present diverse leisure experiences. Playing host to events selling non-art commodities, and offering spaces providing a mix of education and entertainment and other public activities, JCCAC increasingly took on a leisure role that sells the idea of JCCAC as a place to engage people in enjoyment. These entertainment elements become a routine of JCCAC as the management and renters repeatedly maintain
such activities. In this process, JCCAC has accommodated the functions of a “mall,” conflicting with its role as both a production base for alternative culture and as an agent for culture, exhibiting and showing arts.

Selling the Do-it-Yourself: Handicrafts Fair

The Handicrafts Fair organised by JCCAC is an example of how JCCAC’s management has put more emphasis on the popular form of creative production with greater viability in offering shopping experience and attracting visitors and consumers. A Handicraft Fair normally offers over 30 pitches launched by both tenant artists and non-artists from outside JCCAC. Like the tenant artists, non-artists including “do-it-yourself” creative workers and owners of local design-related brands outside JCCAC could participate in the Fair, selling hand-made accessories and products (ranged from, for example, ear rings, bracelets, bags, stationary to ukuleles). The preponderance of young visitors generated by the Handicrafts Fair has made the Fair a trump card for JCCAC and its most popular event to date. The Fair, on one hand, has brought the public closer to the arts community, allowing the management to promote its artistic outreach agenda. But on the other hand, it created controversy over the partial role of JCCAC as an artist village. Though the Fair was a crowd-pleaser, many tenant artists were well-aware of the need to avoid their artist identity being overshadowed by this event.

By distinguishing between works of art and “non-art,” an artist, Esther Ma, indicates that the policy of JCCAC had leaned more on commercial interest as “visitors drawn to the center are here to shop, not for arts” (Chan 2012). This kind of perspective of art suggests that visual artists, who consciously create boundaries between “art” and “entertainment” (shopping), have followed the
distinction between “high” and “popular” culture that has been institutionalized in society by urban elites and cultural institutions to classify art; and that such boundaries have emerged out of the ways in which the artists categorized themselves as the producers of arts (DiMaggio 1982).

While artists hoped to profit from the event, some of them exhibited a reluctance to associate themselves or their works with the Handicraft Fair because they found it was vain and inappropriate, as a young artist explains:

Because that one requires money [fee]—500 HKD. And we have this [studio] space; so why would we need to bring these things down [to the Fair]? And that doesn’t seem to suit us. It is…how to put it—ours are also handcrafts, but the direction of the Fair does not really suit us…Ours are prone to art—they are really art pieces. But theirs are more like usable stuffs. When people see [our art works], they may feel weird. So we don’t feel right and we don’t bother to go to the Fair and join it. (R17)

The Handicraft Fair, which is more design-oriented and close to the popular demands of the public in nature, was comparatively undesirable for independent contemporary artists, albeit its ability in drawing more diverse crowd. The way the artists chose to distance themselves from the Handicrafts Fair is a means to maintain their status quo with an “indie” tag and to uphold their identity as artists, not craft-makers.

**Selling in the Artist’s Studio: Open Studio**

JCCAC as a space for both artistic and shopping experience becomes evident during the Open Studio event as part of the arts festival’s programme of JCCAC in December 2011. Annie and Debe’s studio was one of the hotspots for many young visitors during the event. In contrast to the plain look in normal workdays, Annie and Debe gave the studio a touch of boutique twist by adding
more decorations and goods. The goods in store ranged from hand-made cloth bags, some of which were made by the artists’ friends, to gifts like little cards priced at 5 HKD, small wooden seats and a capsule toy machine—all placed along the corridor outside the studio, featuring glassworks and several paintings (Figure 5.2.).

![Figure 5.2. Outside an Artist’s Studio during Open Studio Event, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. Photo taken by author December 4, 2011.](image)

Although the profit earned from the sale is very limited, the open studio event serves to help the artists recoup a little of their expenses through selling handicrafts, or other products, as Annie indicates: “If there is an arts festival and a higher flow of people in that month, the sale will help cover half of the rental fee [.....].” At Annie’s studio, glassworks created during practice at around 100 HKD per piece were displayed on shelves for selling and those with “concepts” were reserved for exhibition purpose. Annie sells paintings at her studio, but she didn’t
set a price for the works; instead, she awaited people to “ask for the price” because buying paintings, for her, was “less common in Hong Kong” (R17).

While some of the artists just simply launched a small art show at their studios for visitors, Annie took the opportunities to make her studio a more profitable one by selling handmade commodities, which are similar to those goods sold at the Handicrafts Fair. The case of Annie and Debe demonstrates the open attitude of the young artists toward taking advantage of the flow of visitors during public events. The event of Open Studio, however, reveals the antinomies that arise from artists’ resistance to joining non-art fair and their willingness to profit from non-art goods, which help support their often penniless artistic pursuit.

**Experience of Edutainment: Art Jamming Studio**

As a public space, JCCAC needs artists who are willing to hold regular activities for the general public in order to make the place alive. Getting a rentable space successfully at JCCAC has meant that artists have to organize some exhibitions or educational activities (e.g. teaching students to launch art shows or holding workshops). On the other hand, while other commercial activities such as dinning outlets keep people coming in and out of JCCAC, some artists have to launch interest classes to make money. Considering these leisure elements alongside the production elements, JCCAC as a cultural place organises social processes wherein people could experience art as if pleasure-seekers, emphasising their lifestyle concerns that model the dynamics of JCCAC.

With “art jamming” becomes proliferated in recent years in Hong Kong as a form of impromptu creative activity that people are curious to engage in, tenant
artists had also capitalised on this fad with the use of their space and expertise. An example is a tenant artist who works as graphic designer and runs an art jamming course at a 300-sq. ft. studio space. Yet, organizing art jamming course was not his primary aim. As he recalls:

This is funny; I did not want to do it at the very beginning. At first, my partner and I just wanted to paint at here. But you are not painting everyday and every weeks! So at some moments, we were thinking: why don’t we spare it for other people who want to come here for fun? Then gradually we thought of whether we could also ask others to come and try. Then bit by bit, we began to post the posters and found that there were people who actually joined the classes. (R20)

This tenant artist had offered his students more than a place, a palette and a set of tools to paint. Indeed, he taught them how to paint—this is a practice different from most of the art jamming workshops. Sometimes he also held painting classes, under his students’ requests, or art jamming events packaged through publicity gimmick (e.g. art-jamming classes for the singles or couples) to “attract people to come here and have fun.” The painting sessions were held at night-time on weekdays, so that people could come after work. In his classes, the students were mainly from around 20 to 40 years old. “These people might just want to try—because this is a trend—so they try. Some loved painting before but now they don’t paint. So when they have chances to come across painting, they would try” (R20). Another reason why people joined his classes related to the types of “paint” provided. “The feeling of using acrylic is very different from water color paint. So this might give them a new feeling,” the artist told. While urban entertainment and arts education becomes part of the work of tenant artists, art jamming involves people outside the art community into small-scale cultural production and social interactions, offering consumption of experience and shaping the studio into a place for what John Hannigan (1998) called
“edutainment,” a combination of educational and cultural activities in a form of entertainment.

As these examples of consumption experience suggest, in JCCAC, the process of morphing into an integrated complex has produced a skewing of (semi-) commercial space and art space that could be seen in the recreational activities predominated in JCCAC, such as the events offering shopping experience and studio spaces providing education classes. This development also indicates that renters whose spaces are used for (semi-) commercial activities often have upper hands when compared to those running non-commercial-oriented spaces in JCCAC as the management of JCCAC looks to bring a regular programming for more leisure activities with (semi-) commercial components.

c.  **Diversifying the Artistic Experience**

In Hong Kong’s JCCAC, the lack of an overall orientation towards specific arts has allowed not only a melange of art forms but also the co-existence of spaces devoted to art which is socially categorized by urban elites as high art, and art which is made by the general public categorized as community arts. As a result, artistic experience in JCCAC is defined by mainly two aspects of expression: one is high art, another is community arts, altogether comprising JCCAC as a place for diversified artistic experience. These two contrasting forms of creative interest, however, have produced contradictions in JCCAC.

**Highbrow Artistic Experience: MOST**

MOST, one of the independent and non-commercial art spaces at JCCAC, has oriented more toward offering artistic experience in high art. With a focus on
curating professional art shows, it attracts visitors who mainly come from outside of Shek Kip Mei, and from afar. The art space has become a stop for non-local visitors including mainland China’s officials on a group tour, professionals interested in Hong Kong’s postindustrial development in art and design, magazine editor who is curious about to find out the art space, or documentary filmmaking student who travelled from overseas to investigate Hong Kong artists and their art studios. While the art space hopes to be open to all kinds of audience, it always looks empty in weekdays, especially in early afternoons. Yet, as a site for Hong Kong contemporary art and mini-cultural events, MOST keeps art shows going even on the normal weekdays. Although the spatial activities taken place within MOST have opened up new potential opportunities for artists in enlarging the base of audience or buyers, MOST as an art space which identifies with high art tends to have limited advantage in the setting of JCCAC.

On a Friday afternoon in December 2011, I acted as the only steward at the art space, where the art works of MOST’s duo directors and Hong Kong contemporary artists Andrew Lam and Andy Tam had been already on view and were placed on the sidewalls of the gallery-art space for an opening on that night. The first visitor of the day was a lady in her forties, accompanied by a man of a similar age. They paced about viewing the paintings and the lady stopped in front of one of the art works and praised it. Looked curious, she turned to me and asked me questions like: “How much are the paintings?” “Do the artists use this space as studios?” “Whom do these art works belong to?” “Are the artists the gallery owners?” The man, whose identity as artist was revealed to me by the lady, wanted to know: “Does this place have very few visitors normally?” Acting as a docent, I gave them a golden leaflet printed in Shenzhen and the introduction of
the art show and answered their enquiries one by one. Half an hour later came one major group of visitors of the art space: students and teachers. This time, around 10 secondary students and their teacher entered without identifying which school they come from. While viewing, the teacher kindly reminded her students who study art to take note of the techniques of the paintings. Some of the students took photos of the art exhibits before they left.

Then came the most intriguing visitor of the day: a man in his thirties to forties, dressed in colourful outfits with a silk scarf around his neck. Looked perplexed after scanning the space, he started a conversation by throwing me a series of questions: “What kind of place is JCCAC?” “Do these people sell their works here?” “How much is the monthly rental here?” “What is your role here?” I then sensed that he might be a very well-off man when he uttered to himself “very cheap,” upon seeing one of the paintings of Andrew Lam with a price of 100,000 Euros, which is set out of the artist’s own valuation habit (Figure 5.3.). His purpose of visiting made clearer as he told me he was looking for a studio space because he wanted to paint larger works. He paints at home where his teacher teaches him painting, but he thought it would be more joyful if people who love painting gather together at a place. As I was lowering down the volume of the background sound of the art show, the man told me MOST was the first place in JCCAC he chose to visit, and he thought “JCCAC is quite grassroots and it is not like Central.” Knowing he was researching information to start a studio, I shared with him some basic knowledge of other art clusters in Hong Kong that he apparently lacked and wrote down some key words for him. It turned out that he was more interested in the studio clusters that I talked about than the surrounding art works on display.
In a non-commercial-led setting, art spaces like MOST must be resourceful to keep themselves afloat. The studio is opened to the public even the potential customers or art-viewers do not go to Shek Kip Mei, as the director Andrew Lam indicates: “Some paintings were sold, but not at here; nobody come and see them here. This is an illusion. Normally nobody comes and see.”  

Independent art spaces in Shek Kip Mei opened readily to people such as the members of the art community, local and foreign students, and the taste-conscious class who pursues art and likes to identify with the aesthetics of artists. After all, these art spaces need crowds to keep the scene thriving, to collaborate on an art show, or even to gain monetary support from freelance job opportunities and renting out the art space. Judging by the mix of visitors, JCCAC is gradually transforming into one of the places where both local and non-locals seeking to learn the local art scene and to cultivate an appreciation for Hong Kong contemporary art, often of little

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popular demands.

**Sham Shui Po and Community Arts**

The concentration of artists and arts-related organizations serves cultural and social functions not only by offering visitors experience in high art, but also by cultivating community arts, particularly through public activities. The role of artists as the mediator between art and local residents had been recognised enough by local district councillors that community arts programmes are well subsidised in Shek Kip Mei. One example is the collaboration between JCCAC and the Sham Shui Po District Council in co-presenting the “Sham Shui Po Community Arts Programme 2010,” which took place over four weekends consecutively in November and December at JCCAC. This programme consisted of a series of free-of-charge workshop, artists’ sharing session and performance featuring JCCAC artists. According to JCCAC’s website, the event aimed to foster community cohesion and cultural aura; strengthen the public’s understanding of the community of the JCCAC and tenant artists; and offer the local community a creative platform through which the members of the community can develop their artistic potentials. Participant observation revealed that the centre has tried to spur the visibility and relevancy of the art community to the local public and to increase the propensity of community members to participate in arts activities, by allowing children, young people, middle-age people and old people to experience a taste of art as both art producers and audience. Direct involvement was realised through workshops which resemble after-school arts programmes at community centres, introducing participants, mostly young students, to using special technique (e.g. sun printing) and material (e.g. gypsum cloth) to make small art
work. In this way, community arts become a collaborative creative process that involves professional artists and community members in a collective experience. On the other hand, talks delivered by professional artists helped disseminate knowledge; live-demonstration of art production (e.g. glass art) and performance not only created an occasion that drew people together but also produced spectacles and crowd pleasers, offering free artistic experience. By inviting artists to act as educators and demonstrators, the community arts festival exemplifies the importance of community participation in art-related programmes to local leaders in enhancing community self-image.

The permanent participation of community arts in JCCAC is also evident in the setting up of the “Sham Shui Po Creative Arts Community Resources Centre,” which is located at JCCAC and is funded by Poverty Concern Group of Sham Shui Po District Council. It has been running since 2009 to host exhibitions and other outreach activities to promote community arts that involve local community members and less privileged social groups, including youngsters, new immigrants from mainland China and ethnic minorities, in the creation and interpretation of community arts.

As the nucleus of local community arts, the project is participated by 13 Sham Shui Po-based NGOs. One of its participating NGOs, “Industrial Relations Institute,” a workers’ concern group based in Sham Shui Po, organised an exhibition which featured the community art work of its Female Workers Cooperation, consisting of seven former factory workers in Hong Kong during the arts festival of JCCAC held in December 2011. The whole collection of the community art work, in the form of some simple writings and drawings of palms with scars and calluses, informs the personal stories behind these hard-working
mothers. In the exhibition, I met a new immigrant mother from mainland China, who was acting as docent showing me a community art work named “secret book,” made by a new immigrant mother that tells of the making of her “divine palm” (san zoeng), which mimics a form of fictional move of Chinese kung-fu. As a resident living near Sham Shui Po’s Apliu Street, the docent herself came in touch with the workers cooperation which helped her with job-matching so that she could get a job. The connection of the workers’ cooperation with JCCAC has also sometimes brought other job opportunities to the members. Some of them have worked as part-time helpers for art show openings of some independent art spaces at JCCAC, including MOST’s openings, which I helped to organize in December 2011 and February 2012.

The promotion of community arts programmes is an example of grassroots organizations using JCCAC as a base for their attempt to use the arts as a tool for social inclusion and public expression. In contrast to an art-oriented model of spatial practices, this model of institutional space run by community groups, whose arts programmes geared towards producing public “shows” through using JCCAC as a platform, providing a way for the communities to express themselves. Civic associations with strong neighbourhood ties not only provide a host of social services to their members, but also demonstrate how they lead the locals to understand art to be part of the cooperation’s culture and personal lives, enhancing individual’s ability to be civically engaged that could build social capital. By involving the public in appreciating community arts and in talking to the members of the organizations in the exhibition, JCCAC offers spaces for artistic experience in community arts.
d. Opening Up Public and Experimental Spaces

i. Public Space for the Residents

The establishment of JCCAC within Shek Kip Mei in Sham Shui Po District has created much public space for the neighbouring residents near JCCAC. These residents are not necessarily the patrons for the shops or the art courses, but they comprised some of the space users of JCCAC. In 2011, Sham Shui Po District had a residential population of the second highest proportion of the elderly in Hong Kong (Appendix E, Table A.4.). Such high percentage of old population in Sham Shui Po District created a social profile that geared toward the amenities concern. The existence of JCCAC serves to be a public space as part of the amenities, recreational or educational for the local community, and for the elderly “who never care about what you do” or those want to “have a place to shelter from rain” (R18). Aside from engaging in artistic activities, people ranged from all ages could freely consume the public space of JCCAC through such activities as sitting at its lobby, or wandering around floors, simply because of its open nature. While student tours of primary, secondary school students, and college graduates constituted part of the visitors’ profile of JCCAC, small children living nearby also added specific colour to the milieu of JCCAC by turning the artist studios as their own playground, as one tenant artist recalled:

At times, some children from housing estates come here to play…These children are very small, they sometimes make troubles. They peep [at my studio] to see if anything they could play with, and then take something to play with and leave. We called them “Flash mob”. We are so scared by them [laughed]. In each time they come, they would play for a long time at here—so this is quite troublesome….Say they come at 5 and play till 7 or 8 o’clock. And there’s like a bunch of children—more than 10 children—wearing casual clothes, and sandals….they look like they are just off their homes (R17).

The mixed-use JCCAC, as suggested, has allowed the public to have highly
unrestricted access to the public space in which amenities and activities are available for any users or visitors to enjoy. Because of such inclusion, social diversity becomes part of the spatial language of JCCAC. In this sense, the present position of JCCAC, which embraces all members of the public, broadened each citizen “the right to the city” (Lefebvre 1968).

Changes taken place in Shek Kip Mei, on the other hand, reflected the interest of the state in attracting tourists and young adults to JCCAC’s surrounding neighbourhoods. Especially after the establishment of JCCAC in 2008, the government planned to exploit more heritage buildings as cultural resources to revitalize Shek Kip Mei into one new cultural destination in Hong Kong. To add another cultural advantage to Shek Kip Mei, in 2010, the campus of Savannah College of Art and Design from the U.S. landed on the former North Kowloon Magistracy, which is a historic Magistrate’s Court building built in 1960s, within ten-minute walking distance from JCCAC. This school is expected to contribute to the area aspirants in every form of art, design and new media, and at the same time, help diversify the local social profile within Sham Shiu Po District. According to the 2011 census, Sham Shiu Po’s average percentage of residents aged 15 or above with undergraduate degree was one of the seven lowest districts among all districts in Hong Kong (Appendix E, Table A.3.). In this regard, the emergence of an international art college has created a presence of educated young adults in local demography that helps shorten the social distance in terms of cultural disposition, which separates the artists often of high educational attainments from Shek Kip Mei’s neighbourhood.

In addition, a historical building complex called “Mei Ho House,” which stands one street behind JCCAC had begun to be revitalized as a youth hostel
(Appendix D). Mei Ho House was among the first batch of public housing in Hong Kong built in 1954 as resettlement blocks for migrants lived in squatters after a fire disaster. In 2009, the government decided to revitalize Mei Ho House into a youth hostel to be run by Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association as “City Hostel”, with an attached museum on public housing history. The introduction of JCCAC, followed by an international art and design school and the Youth Hostel, is implicated in Shek Kip Mei’s redevelopment from a former industrial neighbourhood of disinvestment into a site of cultural production and a tourist spot in future.

Beginning as a place for creative producers, Shek Kip Mei has been further moulded into a destination for both cultural consumers and tourists, and for those who think it is important to identify with the lifestyle and tastes of artists. As these processes illustrate, public officials have attempted to create new place-identity for Shek Kip Mei through cultural strategies, adding economic values to the place to regenerate the urban neighbourhoods (Harvey 2001b; Zukin 1989).

ii. Micro-Space as Training Ground

In the “malling” process of JCCAC, public space has also been opened up for experimental use by cultural producers. The appearance of common space at JCCAC offers a training ground for aspired artists, or young people who want to experience artistic production. This is evident in the case of Hoi Chiu that tells how theatre artists could make use of the common space to engage young people as participants in local scene.

26 In view of its significance in Hong Kong’s public housing development, the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) accorded historic building (Grade 1) status to Mei Ho House in 2005. 27 The construction work of the hostel was still in progress when the author conducted the study.
In particular during the nascent phrase of JCCAC, the lack of facilities for performing artists contributed to the creative use of public space as their stage at JCCAC, to which the public and newcomers might feel that they could belong, thus shortening the distance between themselves and the art activities. When the black box theatre of JCCAC was not yet open, Hoi Chiu and other artists had grouped themselves to organize a monthly performance show called, “Wooden Men’s monthly business,” which was free of charge and opened to the public. Artists set up the stage and formed a scene where young people and artists across different genres could perform. Hoi Chiu tells of the work he and his fellows did to make use of the public space in JCCAC:

I felt that this place had so many spaces for experimentation. Why didn’t we use the public space and organize some free-of-charge activities for the neighbours? This was organized by us, not by the centre. I was very angry. They didn’t support even the stage. I paid for the stage by myself. We called it the ‘White Box Theatre’. Once every month we distributed leaflets […] This was after 10 months at here. It is called ‘Wooden Men’s monthly business.’ [We] asked some young people to help. I gave them 10 minutes to perform. It’s like a talent show. This lasted for 15 months.[…] I was not doing this for money, because I think coming to arts centre is to try new things, to create new things and to do something to nurture young people. (R18)

As this demonstrates, tenant artists utilised public space at JCCAC to produce new scene by the sweat of their brows and by giving chances to the new blood. He recalls the case of two young men who participated in the monthly performance. His satisfied tone illustrates how these ad-hoc performances have successfully led some talented students to advance their skills that have made them the next generation of creative professionals:

An artist who has taught them [the two young men] brought them here for a visit. They told me they were very interested in the things like [making] masks, and asked me whether I could teach them. I said, ‘I don't. But you could help me to act in the play I directed when it is on.’ It is like free teaching…they really had zero performing experience. After a few years,
one of them took part in three to four of my shows, and at the same time, he is a full-time actor of the Chung Ying Theatre company. I think this is an effect. Another found his way and studied in the art school, and made a film that earned him an award...[all] because of this space. (R18)

Creative production is a form of collaboration; while some teenagers found their way into JCCAC as space users, these young student visitors become a pool of potential volunteer labour that artists like Hoi Chiu could exploit and rely on. The small-scale theatre production of Hoi Chiu’s studio makes use of what is on the spot, nurturing young talents at little, or even no labour costs. He actively involves youngsters, art students (e.g. students from Hong Kong Art and Performing Academy) and their friends in his “production line” by giving them a real taste of artistic work. When I was visiting his studio of around 300 sq. ft., there were 5 to 6 young people making the props that his upcoming theatre needed. Through snowballing, Hoi Chiu have recruited a group of young people who might or might not have formal art training. As he reflects on the past how he came across the young people or art aspirants: “While I was painting something, I saw some students passing by. I grabbed them to help me paint, but they really enjoyed [the work]. I thought: they were just sightseeing, why they could really get the work done? Then a girl who studied art contacted me afterwards. She has become my sworn daughter and comes to do artwork at times [...]. I like to ‘pick up’ people like this. [...] Sometimes I had some production fees and I would treat them meals. We were happy—nurturing their sense of responsibility.” Now his studio space is used as the production base where student volunteers produce art works for his theatre, chat and even stay the night inside the studio.

The public accessibility of the experimental space at JCCAC has also opened up more opportunities for artists, as the members of the public could come directly to JCCAC to knock the door and meet the artists. Like many artists in
Shek Kip Mei, Hoi Chiu, who focuses on puppetry and sand painting, exhibits orientation toward art forms that are considered to be obscure and less likely to be valorised by the market, rather than toward those who intended to find a mass audience. But Hoi Chiu’s case has broken the “rules.” In 2010, Hoi Chiu’s art works and expertise caught the attention of a music video director who then came to his studio and invited him to make art for a new music video of a pop-song, performed by the Canto-pop singer Eason Chan. JCCAC allowed Hoi Chiu to get in touch with the public, in particular with cultural producers who bring his work outside his art circle to a wider audience through popular mass media. Using JCCAC as his base, Hoi Chiu had expanded his art of sand painting to mass-culture outlets. For him, JCCAC is a personally meaningful place, as he indicates: “So the outcome is that more people get to know sand painting, and at the same time, get to know me. So, at the level of general public—actually I have been in the circle of arts for many years—but not many people know me in another circle. This is like a stone thrown into the sea and the limpers spread out. And my reputation started to grow. So, I have never given up on this place, nor found this place very disappointing.” In the music video, Eason Chan, dressed in white, lying in the middle of a wide white screen of projected animated images rendered by Hoi Chiu, who was applying sand to a surface over a light box and drawing lines and figures in the sand with his hands in real time as the music played. His sand painting has also featured on the trailer of a prime-time television drama which started to air on the Cantonese Channel of Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), a major producer of Hong Kong mainstream commercial TV programmes, in May 2012. In Hoi Chiu’s case, his less common cultural pursuit has drawn the attention of both music video and TV drama producers, who looked for special elements
which could enhance the visual imagery of pop songs and melodrama that reach much larger audience.

Nevertheless, sand painting, ironically, had never been his primary aim of setting up a studio, neither was it the form of art that made the director to contact Hoi Chiu. Originally Hoi Chiu made puppets and masks, but that the space of his unit was too small for him to even “cut a plate”. He then switched to focus on sand painting which requires less space. But for now, sand painting has become a synonym of Hoi Chiu as he continues his creation across different genres of visual and performing arts, though his sand animation performance achieved greater recognition. The intersection between the sand animation and mass media, as demonstrated in Hoi Chiu’s case, was mediated and facilitated by the presence of the public art hub JCCAC. Through cross fertilization of obscure artistic pursuits with the popular cultural forms, artists of JCCAC, as exemplified in the case of Hoi Chiu, have acted as an alternative ground useful to the interests of mainstream culture industry (Lloyd 2006:168).
III. Taipei: The “Thickening” of Artist Village

The most important task of the Department of Cultural Affairs is to thicken the humanistic thickness of Taipei, by locating the already existing old buildings, uncovering and polishing the memory deep in the spirit and let it shine. There would be no new construction, but all refurbishment of dusty old buildings.


In Chapter Four, I have discussed the decade-long process in which social actors and the state had collaborated in defining Treasure Hill as a place in which people could civically engage on the basis of public interest. The civic space of Treasure Hill has allowed strong tradition of interaction among local actors, including the co-presence of the original inhabitants and cultural producers from within and outside Taiwan, through their social process of living near each other. One significant outcome of this orientation toward civic interaction is the “thickening” of cultural space.

How has the work of the management, artists and local social actors constantly added to Treasure Hill the cultural and institutional “thickness” (Amin and Thrift 1995)? In other words, how did they facilitate a set of milieu conditions that “create synergy and a collective sense of identity and purpose” within the place for promoting culture (Bassett, Griffiths and Smith 2002:173)? This section considers today’s Treasure Hill and its configuration as a manifestation of the state’s experimental policy in transforming the illegal settlement of Treasure Hill into a place with public meanings. To probe into the key elements of the idea of “thickness” including milieu, interaction and institution, first, I focus on how the milieu within and surrounding the artist village of Treasure Hill favours cultural
production. In transforming Treasure Hill from an illegal squatter into a new historical site for public’s use, the state has focused on the regeneration of the environment and atmosphere of Treasure Hill by leveraging artistic synergies that are created and supported by the resident artists and cultural institutions near Treasure Hill. Paying attention to the artist-community relationship, I examine how the work of Alan Eglinton, a resident artist in Treasure Hill in 2011, serves the civic discourse on the interaction with the local community in the artistic production process. The case of Alan Eglinton suggests artists’ collective sense of purpose, one of the key elements of “thickness,” that is defined by the state to interweave the local culture of Treasure Hill and artistic production, in which the significant role of art—as a product of lived experience and a means for social inclusion—is highlighted to bring out the cultural impacts of Treasure Hill Village.

Through participant observations, I also examine the active role of the management in establishing rapport with the original residents of Treasure Hill through public activities that aims to ameliorate the inherent discontents among these residents and promotes the village’s culture. This strategy to encourage residents’ participation suggests the interests of the management in the rediscovery of vernacular culture and fostering higher level of interaction within local community. By designating spaces for civic dialogues and participation, the management also enhanced public engagement in arts in the types of spaces at Treasure Hill that are defined by participatory experience. These spaces play a role in fostering interaction among the artist community and align with the official purpose of Treasure Hill. The shaping and reshaping of Treasure Hill’s social, cultural and institutional forms by the management and social actors suggests that forces are in action to add “thickness” to Treasure Hill.
a. Creating the Milieu of Urban Bohemia

For a taste of bohemian life, stroll Treasure Hill


The cultural planning of Treasure Hill reflects the interest of the state agents in taking advantage of the local resources and historic values for artist-led revitalization that deepens the artistic milieu and promotes local cultural development.

Treasure Hill is a site which is in-between the urban and the village’s setting that offers a multifold of city experience defined by two distinct aspects: tranquil village life and bustling city life. The components of Treasure Hill—including the natural landscape of the village with alleys and staircases traversing the hillslope; the lifestyle of urban farming by the original inhabitants; and the resident artists who live and produce work on the site—have been played up to promote the ideal image of an urban village, where urbanites could get away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Like JCCAC’s artist village, which was created within a low-rent neighbourhood in urban locale, Treasure Hill Village was planned by the municipal government to include artist studios within the disadvantaged community. Treasure Hill’s model of articulate community, which is characterized by urban presence of artists and cultural diversity—some of the bohemian traditions in Paris at the end of 19th century (Lloyd 2006)—underscores the ideals of artists as living like bohemian, the conscious adherents to the practices of “art for art’s sake” and an unconventional lifestyle of “turning life itself into a work of art” (Seigel 1986). The uniqueness of Treasure Hill’s location and the social disadvantaged groups that have settled in it have recreated Treasure Hill as an

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embodiment of bohemian ideals, maintaining the distinction of the artists from the mainstream commercial society and the middle class.

The exotic lifestyle of artists at Treasure Hill has been a product of the artists-in-residence programme that has brought a global inflow of creative workers into the village, diversifying the local social profile. Intentional identification with the foreign origin of artist village is highlighted in the official webpage of Treasure Hill, promoting Treasure Hill as “a tribal-like organic scene” with a “European rural village feel” that transcribes visual imagery into an appealing lifestyle accessible to the general public.

Within Treasure Hill, the resident artists make use of the public space, most often just outside their apartments, to mingle with their counterparts. At times, they gather and sit out of doors on the stairs and socialize over beer and alcohol. Staircases become a place for sharing experience on their latest projects or other topics, and for engaging in exchanges of “third-place” style (Oldenburg 1999), which is usually spontaneous. The brief duration of the stay of resident artists (each of them holds 3 to 6 month residency) has also created interactions among the artists who needed to establish social connections for daily and work lives in Treasure Hill Village. A creative worker at Treasure Hill Village has described the transient dynamics of artists: “I think the artist village is quite special in the sense that artists keep coming and leaving. At here I’ve come across a lot of artist farewells. We constantly say ‘bye bye’ to the artists. This place is supposed to make people come and go and run into each other” (R11). In this way, public space within Treasure Hill has served as social venues or third places for artists who are constantly on the move.
Although Treasure Hill Village is at a corner of urban district near mountains and river, the flowing of innovative energies into Treasure Hill Village also comes from spaces such as streetscapes. The combination of urban diversity of city streets and a natural environment connected with Treasure Hill Village makes the village resourceful for inspiration and artistic activities. In Walter Benjamin’s (1999) concept of flâneur, Benjamin explored the relationship between the creative temperament and the observations of urban strollers through flâneur, a figure of urban diverse experience. One artist, perceives the action of walking from home on the streets to his studio at Treasure Hill as a sensory experience useful to his creative process:

…..after getting out of home, I see these streets, parks, schools, cars, people. And then,[I] cross the bridge, to the underground tunnel. Walk on the bike road, and there is this river on that side—Xindian River. So there are many different types of scenery, bringing me diverse experience. This is a great point. The space is not just physical….Working at the studio makes me walk a bit. And on the pathways, I could see something, giving me some inputs. This is very ideal, I think. (R4)

For the artist, the pedestrian life highlighted the transition from urban life to the village life of Treasure Hill near the waterfront and the pasture. The connection of the Treasure Hill to the downtown area—the Gongguan area within “Wen-Luo-Ding” neighbourhood consisting of various higher education institutions and leisure offerings in Daan District—has created diverse experience for artists living in Treasure Hill Village. On one hand, Treasure Hill Village has the advantage of a thriving cultural scene and mostly young and highly educated population nearby, as college students and teaching staff make up a large portion of the demographics of Daan District, making Daan District the most educated district in Taipei City as compared to other districts (Appendix E, Table A.1.).
the other hand, Treasure Hill’s milieu of an artist district has contributed to the humanistic and liberal image of Gongguan area, where a concentration of cafes, independent bookstores and music live houses can be found almost ubiquitously. These places, in turn, become third places where artists hang out, exchange knowledge and have a community life.

The alternative ethos of Gongguan has also become an ideal place for small cafes of distinctive character to sprout up, serving the entertainment needs of the artists. Under the facilitation of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Gongguan area has now been home to several live houses (e.g. “The Wall” and “The Riverside”) that have overcome the constraints (e.g. in land use) for operation, breeding underground music catering to young people. In this regard, the state considers the revitalization of Treasure Hill Village as an alternative cultural site that could “coalesce” into these indie music-related activities and festivals by offering open space for experimental music performances (R1).

With the transformation of part of Treasure Hill Village into an artist village under the government’s cultural planning, the interplay between the exotic, cultural and historical milieu of Treasure Hill Village has enhanced the cultural diversity of Gongguan area and created favourable conditions for the local development of Treasure Hill. This configuration of Treasure Hill area contributed to the cultural thickness of Treasure Hill and laid a foundation on which an art neighbourhood can grow.

28 Hidden in alleyways and lanes, and widely considered as the unique streetscape of Taipei city, independent bookstores lived on in Gongguan, which is regarded as one of the places in Taiwan and in the Chinese-speaking world having a very high density of independent bookstores.
b. Artists as Narrators

Trespassing those windows were chiseled by themselves
to pick up the tattered parts of life. They
always bang, mend and assemble
Greek of Time, whirlpool of space

Trespassing, one after another silent room
Walking through, on after another rough-shaped balcony
Ah! This rain-leaking life, this eternal battle

—Yannick Daubey and Wan-Shuen Tsai, “Sunny grey,”
Treasure, 2011. Taipei City, Department of Cultural Affairs.

The responsibility of resident artists to relate their creative process to the local community of Treasure Hill Village requires everyday lived experience to play an important role in artistic production at Treasure Hill Village. As the resident artists try to record what they have experienced, the surroundings of Treasure Hill are often rendered into texts and images. In 2011, sound and visual artists turned the traces of their wandering around Treasure Hill into audio, visual, and textual forms that were then compiled as a book titled “Treasure,” commissioned by the Department of Cultural Affairs, re-presenting the human and natural scenes imprinted on the landscapes.

Living next door to the residents in Treasure Hill Village has offered an “alternative” way in which artists could gain a better understanding of what an aging neighbourhood of Treasure Hill is going through. Although Treasure Hill consists of original residents of all ages (from children to young people, the middle aged and the elderly people), the senior residents are a big group. I was told by artists and other arts administrators that many artists had had special encounters with an elderly veteran, who has lived in Treasure Hill for around 40 years, and has repeatedly been inhospitable toward the foreign resident artists in
ways such as shouting at them. Such experience with the elderly man, has led an artist to describe his village life as a “drama in Treasure Hill,” and “excitement.”

As artists and the original inhabitants are neighbours in close vicinity, the sense of co-existence has broken down some, if not all, barriers between them, allowing interactions and dialogues from which artists could draw ideas to represent the village life in their creative projects, albeit their short term of stay in Treasure Hill Village. The work of a British photography artist, Alan Eglinton, who took a five-month residency at the village, illustrates how an artist could serve as storyteller in recording the social history and restoring a sense of history of Treasure Hill, by rediscovering the bits and pieces of Treasure Hill Village. In Spring 2011, he started to publish a bilingual free newspaper called “The Treasure Times” on the permanent dwellers and artist community as part of his art project. Alan told neither the full, or official history of the village, instead he told the personal stories of the residents to evoke imaginations. In his attempt to document the dialectic between the fictional “future” of the community and the residents’ present and past lives in each of the two-page newspaper, small pieces of daily lives and memories of the residents were incorporated to become part of his art project (Figure 5.4.).

Accompanied by photographs, Alan’s newspaper tells the history of the dwellers, who served as his interviewees. One of the stories he has covered is about a veteran resident, Mr. Hu, (also known as “Hu Pepe”), who was 86 years-old and had engaged in artists’ projects constantly. In one issue of the newspaper, Alan retold Mr. Hu’s story of his three missing wardrobes:

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29 Private conversation, August 3, 2011. This painter recalled the elderly man once woke him up at 6 A.M. in the morning by shouting at him outside his residency and knocking on his windows fervently, as the elderly man was trying to put his hands through the windows of his residency.
He said that some person took them [wardrobes] away during the renovation of his house, a few years ago. He said he can vividly remember this person’s face and that he wants to find him to get his wardrobes back. One of the wardrobes had his army certificate in it and one of them belonged to his wife. Therefore, Mr. Hu’s clothes and belongings are piled up on sideboards or are packed into suitcases [...]. Mr. Hu has blocked the bottom of two of his inside doors with a row of stones and pieces of wood, to keep “the big mice” out. “Will you get a cat in the future?” “Maybe I will get a dog. A protective dog. But then again, the dog won’t be happy because I won’t be able to walk it very often. Maybe it’s not such a good idea after all.” (Eglinton 2011a)

By talking causally to the old dwellers and looking into their daily practices, artists like Alan taking a residency at artist village live as if they are true village neighbours and build understanding of the community and personal relationships with their neighbours.

Figure 5.4. Alan Eglinton, *The Treasure Times*, April 2011. Source: Alan Eglinton’s Personal Web page.
Alan has also developed some ways to help other original dwellers in little ways. An example is putting a donation box outside his studio, as reported in an issue of the newspaper, to help collect dollars to buy food for the wandering cats which have been fed by two dwellers, Mr. and Mrs. Yang, who have lived in Treasure Hill since 1974 and have recycled beer cans to buy food for these cats hanging around their house. The half-reporting of the dialogues between the artist and the residents sometimes is mixed with personal feelings of the artist. As reflected in a piece of writing, talking to an original resident has led the artist to discard his perceptions toward the original residents over the notion about their “house”:

Kui has lived in Treasure Hill for thirteen years. Her house was built quite a while back by her husband’s father. She lives with her three daughters. I asked her: “If you had a lot of money, what changes would you make on the house?” “I won’t change anything at all because the house belonged to my family,” she answered. I was hoping she would say: “I would build a swimming pool with jacuzzi, I’d have another two floors added to the house, I’d want the house to have its own private underground parking lot, I’d want a patio with Greek nude statues…

(Eglinton 2011b)

In this case, Alan’s work demonstrates how artists connect the stories of the original residents with their art projects through everyday interactions. Using newspapers as an artful form of medium and publicity, the images and stories about Treasure Hill Village could be disseminated outside the village to venues like art galleries, museums and news kiosks. Not only Treasure Hill’s community but also the wider public could get a glimpse of the village life. By presenting to the public the images of the residents’ lives, the artist offers his own sentiments through an insider’s view, while transforming the images into the aesthetic code of alternative urban village’s lifestyle.
c. From Secret Garden to Public Village: Involving the Residents

The village would not be that special if no original residents are living at there (R1).

The transformation of Treasure Hill Village has not only undergone the process of organizational and physical change in relocation, preservation and renovation, but has also necessitated the process of residents’ acceptance in handing over their “fate” to the public bodies. Treasure Hill was officially open to the public on October 2, 2010, making it the art centre of the Gongguan area in Taipei City. As Treasure Hill Village has been transformed into an urban experiment based on the goal of a “symbiosis of art and community,” residents have to find ways to integrate into the cultural masterplan. But the response of villagers, who have remained living at the “new” Treasure Hill, was mixed in general at the beginning. The changing identity of the residents from “home owners,” despite illegal, to tenants of the public premises, nonetheless, triggered some discontents among the neighbourhood residents. These residents have become sceptical about the ways in which the government treated them. According to a manager of the village’s management team, the original residents were not very satisfied with the present condition of their houses. Even their houses were renovated by the state, the result and the quality was “not very good” and it “might be even worse than the original condition” because of the lowest-price tendering practices of the municipal government.\footnote{Private conversation, July 13, 2011.} This has meant that the renovation work was procured, and the contractors and the sub-contractors were selected by the government, on the basis of lowest price. Residents are also
required to pay the government monthly rentals (ranged from around 2000 to 3000 NTD) calculated according to the surface area of the apartment.

This current situation of the village has led the management to actively come up with ways to improve its relationship with the original residents through organizing social activities for the residents that are at the same time open to the public to promote the culture of Treasure Hill Village. During the fall of 2011, examples of efforts put in by the management included publicizing the food culture of the village in the forms of workshop and public “picnic.”

On the other hand, the management was interested in promoting Treasure Hill’s way of life by building a digital archive of residents’ old photographs and launching an exhibition of the photographs. By sharing the images and the food of Treasure Hill through such events and initiatives, the management attempted to evoke the everyday life and to articulate the history of Treasure Hill’s inhabitants, and at the same time, to draw the public’s attention to the village’s lifestyle. These maneuvers, which entailed collaborative venture with the original inhabitants, however, uncovered the inherent tension between the management and the inhabitants that is manifested in several meetings held between the management and the original residents.

On 21 July 2011, a meeting between the artist village’s manager and a few representatives of Treasure Hill’s civic organization, named “Association of Treasure Hill’s Cultural Village,” was held at the home of the association’s leader at Treasure Hill. The association was established in 2004 by the residents themselves and has formed neighbourhood ties to reflect the views of residents the

31 The “picnic” activity involved the residents in using the vegetables grown in the garden of Treasure Hill as ingredients to make simple, family dishes and potluck, continuing the “Bringing one dish” tradition of Treasure Hill’s residents.
village regarding the development in Treasure Hill. At times, the home of the leader has acted as a “town hall,” where discussions on shared concerns are conducted in Treasure Hill Village, exemplifying that “boundaries between public and private spaces are often unclear in the tightly knit village” (Chang 2006). In the meeting on issues related to the collaborative activities, rational discussions quickly turned into an echo chamber of distress as the manager of the village operation team attempted to make a point of the proposed activities. Lacking any legal claims to their houses, residents expressed a loss of freedom and security while trying to protect their dignity by refraining from too easily responding to the initiatives and requests of Treasure Hill Village’s management team. In the meeting, the leader of the association indicated the main reason for the uneasiness of the residents: “There are so many restrictions….The lands used to belong to us before….Now, whenever there are activities [launched by the artist village], almost all of them [the residents] leave the village.” Even the local non-profit group, Tsuei Ma Ma Foundation of Housing and Community Service, which has helped actively to facilitate the communication between the Department of Cultural Affairs and the residents, was described by the leader as one “speaking for the Department” rather than upholding the opinions of the residents.

In another meeting, many residents whom I heard and talked to expressed a touchy attitude toward the manager’s request of collecting residents’ old photos for the exhibition. Their reluctance to participate in the initiative suggests their lack of interest in collaborating with the management and the undercurrent of distrust on the side of the original residents, who are skeptical of their relationship with the management of the village. In collecting the photos, I paid a visit to the home of the leader of “Association of Treasure Hill’s Cultural Village” in July
2011. At her spacious, high ceiling home where she grew up, she told me she was “quite disappointed” by the fact that the residents are “not treated well” by the government even though they “had responded to the government’s requests before.”\(^{32}\) By showing me her photos, she recounted that originally her house included a big garden and the fences were all covered with flowers until the Cultural Affairs Department came and “destroyed” them. She insisted that she would only offer the management photographs until the other villagers become willing to do so.

In particular in the case of photograph collection, the reluctance of the village’s residents has forced the management to turn to a resident theatre group at the artist village, which had experience in art collaboration with local community. As the intervention of the art group had worked to enable the management to take the photo exhibition forward, the case proved that artists are a useful mediator when it comes to engaging the community into collective action, playing a role into bridging the gap between the management and the original residents. For the management, engaging the residents into its community projects that aim to promote the culture and social history of Treasure Hill and to foster the social interaction of the village’s community has not always been straightforward.

**d. Creating Participatory Places**

Treasure Hill seeks low-key, small-scale cultural production that identifies Treasure Hill as a place for public dialogues and civic interactions. The priority on such place-based community cohesion and the ideal of living in an authentic locale has meant that only minimum commercial elements are introduced into

Treasure Hill. Although Treasure Hill helps to support the tourism by setting aside spaces for consumption, including a cafe, an eatery, a studio space run by a creative worker that sells handicraft works and a space operated by a design team that sells designer stationaries, travel guide books and artists’ publications, the management of Treasure Hill has tended not to orient toward commercial mobilization of non-mainstream tastes.

**Treasure Trading Cafe: A Planned Social Venue**

The cafe of Treasure Hill, named “Treasure Trading Cafe,” was at first initiated and sponsored by the Arts in Residency Taipei to serve as the “information centre” of Treasure Hill for artists and people who are interested in arts. At the beginning, the service provider of the cafe was offered a start-up fee to set up the facilities and cover the costs of operation, meaning that the cafe needed not care about whether they earned profits or not. As the management of the village indicates: “In the past, it doesn’t matter even they sold only a cup of coffee of NTD 50 a day, but now they couldn’t. They have to think of some ways [to earn money.] They have to pay rents.”33 Now, although the cafe could not rely on public money for operation anymore and has struggled to maintain the business a profitable one, the mangers of the cafe whom I heard had adhered to a principle of the artist village: “Getting too commercial is not encouraged at here.” Their primary interest has lied in making a place for people to make new social contacts, to hang out, and to participate in cultural happenings. For these renters, being in Treasure Hill has meant being on the edge of the city’s culture. As the renters understand their cafe as an alternative species different from their mainstream

33 Private conversation, August 19, 2011.
counterparts, they developed their own unique way of practices, including playing the role as cultural performance venue, allowing the cafe to remain alternative while satisfying the role as a public space for participatory actions.

**Tadpole Point: An Alternative Eatery**

Another dilapidated space which has been revitalized as small-scale cultural business is the two-storey dining place called “Tadpole point.” This place could manifest how alternative cultural business oriented toward social interaction and participation has aligned with the management’s promotion of a distinctive local culture and a civic atmosphere of Treasure Hill Village. The space was opened by two young graphic designers who had been admitted to a “micro-loft” space at Treasure Hill’s artist village to run their own dream eatery. The eatery explicitly contributed to the alternative aura of Treasure Hill, for it was not catered solely to dining purposes, nor was it positioned as a common restaurant. It was intended to be a “shared living room” and a place for information exchange among the visitors and artists. The eatery’s owners, whose aesthetic medium is design, contributed to more than just the carpentry of the interior design. They designed the furniture and ornamented the walls by their own collection of art and illustrations.34 The attic of the eatery, a big space with sofa, tables, and books, also makes a cultural venue for occasional mini music performance and monthly movie showing.

The unconventional milieu has hinged on not just the sole maneuvers of the owners but also the collaborative efforts with the original residents and artists of the village. Residents partake in making the eatery their home through their

34 The adornments and the displays show connections to the role of the eatery as a hangout place for people who have developed an affinity for culture, for example, art books of Japanese painter Nara Yoshitomo and Hong Kong illustrator Chi Hoi are some of the owners’ collections.
participation as chefs and helpers, offering free labours to the eatery. And sometimes, even the young children living in the village give the owners a hand. In turn, the eatery’s owners use the produce from the organic farm in the village as ingredients to make dishes and host the traditional village activities such as “one family one dish,” organized by the management team of Treasure Hill Village to promote the culture of the village and to maintain neighbourhood relationship. Artists are also invited to Tadpole point to act as special chefs and make “artist’s set dinner” as a monthly event, helping to diversify the available food items of the eatery by contributing their own dishes for sale. The orientation of the eatery toward building the relationship among the community members in Treasure Hill village could be traced back to their ideal of an eatery depicted in the Japanese TV series and comics, Late Night’s Eatery (“Shinya Shokudo”), illustrating a small eatery where its clientele tells interesting life stories and its standard menu consists of just a few choices (R6b). As such, maintaining a sense of neighbourhood with Treasure Hill’s residents remains core to Tadpole point.

Despite its association with Treasure Hill as a tourist spot, Tadpole point remained less a commercial success because it lacked a stable flow of customers during weekdays and many of them who entered the eatery only “paced around, took photographs and left” (R6a). It relies on weekends’ consumption by clienteles like college students and families for income. Though Treasure Hill’s workers, e.g. security guards, artists and their friends, form the critical mass, few among the village community frequent the eatery regularly. Residents normally do not go to the eatery, as one of the owners indicates, “they have their own ways of consumption practices” (R6a). For one of the resident artists, who seldom go
there, comments: “I found it quite expensive, it’s sweet…but it isn’t a place to eat properly.”

Nevertheless, Tadpole Point made visible the potential of a cultural, and gastronomical social space in which the urban experience with food and culture can arise from the owners’ willed marginalization from mainstream consumer culture. In its attempt to collaborate with the local community and artists, this little eatery also highlights the ability to articulate the concept of social participation in delivering the aesthetics of food. The ethos as well as the spatial practices of the eatery’s owners heighten and respond to an urban desire for a common experience of authentic ambiance. From the cafe to the small eatery, Treasure Hill’s management has displayed an interest in expanding spaces where professionals could run a third place that engages the local community of Treasure Hill Village in social contacts and participation, and at the same time, enhances the village’s image as an alternative cultural zone.

City Yeast: Civic Engagement with Creativity

The management of Treasure Hill Village has actively promoted civic participation in cultural creativity by identifying creative groups who have the similar interests. Advocating public engagement in collective activities related to urban living has been evident in a creative space called “City Yeast,” which is an initiative set up by a small-sized design company in Taipei City in 2006 to promote creative living in urban space and make the city more interesting. As a design team, they were invited by the management of Treasure Hill Village to take a two-year residency after they had done a public art project called “Yellow

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35 Private conversation, August 15, 2011.
Chairs,” which showcased a “new form of street furniture” in 2010 at Treasure Hill Village under the invitation by the management (R11).

One of the creative workers of City Yeast, a young designer, whose master’s thesis explores urban participation in public art and design in Taiwan, described how the activities of City Yeast that aim to raise people’s awareness about collective action in urban places have attracted the attention of the management of artist village:

The reason why the artist village asked us to come here is perhaps they had noticed one of our projects carried out in 2009. It is also called “Yellow chairs.” We called upon people through online media—there were around 300 Taiwan’s participants. Some of them were students from design disciplines; some were designers; even some were just members of the public….some of them were children and primary school students. They brought their work, their [self-designed] chairs painted in yellow….and then they participated in an action called “Flash.”[…] We tried to make people concerned about urban actions through this activity. The artist village might have seen this plan and asked us to stay during its opening. The concept of the plan could be sustained (R11).

Through mobilizing people to participate in creative actions, City Yeast’s interest aligns with the objective of Treasure Hill’s artist village in engaging people in artistic production and integrating art into part of people’s lives. With its collaborative relationship with the artists of Treasure Hill Village, City Yeast also acts as a medium through which Treasure Hill’s artists, whose art work have intervened urban environment (e.g. sound art and performance art), could voice their opinions on urban culture and discuss how art can create a better environment. An example was a public forum on “how to make Taipei a more comfortable place to live in,” co-organised by City Yeast and Taipei City’s Urban Redevelopment Office in 2011. In other initiatives such as drawing activities, City Yeast combines the creativity of the participants from the general public and that of Treasure Hill’s artists into celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Republic of China (ROC), Taiwan, by asking them to draw
“National ‘Fruit’ Flags,” as a creative way to pay tribute to Taiwan as an island country (where abundant fruit is produced) in 2011. From all its activities, City Yeast’s role has linked creative professionals with the public to explore urban participation in creative living. In cultivating the concept of participatory urban actions, City Yeast as a creative base has added a dynamic dimension to Treasure Hill Village through organizing design-oriented activities that are open to public engagement.

IV. A Summary of Comparison between the Socio-spatial Outcomes of Hong Kong and Taipei

This chapter has discussed the socio-spatial outcomes of the two cultural spaces in Hong Kong and Taipei respectively. The differences in the make-up and orientations of the spaces that changed the dynamics are largely responsible for the divergent paths in the cultural space between Hong Kong and Taipei over the course of their transformation.

Taipei’s Treasure Hill has a greater degree of collective orientation as compared to Hong Kong’s JCCAC. The management of Treasure Hill has a perceptible orientation toward the local community, in particular focusing on the neighbourhood relationship and ties among the original residents that constituted the cultural and historic values of the settlement. Although the residents have reservations in developing relationship with the management, the management has taken initiatives to construct a sense of identity among the residents through inclusion strategies. This orientation toward local community has defined the artist-management relationship. In engaging the local residents, artists and other
cultural workers have high level of instrumentality to the management as they are the tools for promoting public participation in arts and rediscovering local culture that in turn could fulfil the role of Treasure Hill as a public cultural space. Having required by the management, there existed clear purpose and duty on the side of the artists to engage the residents in creative process and to use the lived experience with the residents as part of their art production. Artists and the local community at large co-exist on the basis of mutual respect, and artists maintain relationship with the residents through daily and artistic activities. The work of resident artist Alan Eglinton highlights the significance of artists as the locale’s inhabitants and promoters of local culture.

Treasure Hill has fewer commercial elements than Hong Kong’s JCCAC. Creative spaces which primarily focus on offering interaction venues and participatory experience reflect the role of the management and the owners of the spaces in engaging people in cultural activities. This mutual sense of enhancing civic engagement around art projects has resulted in less contention between the management and the artists, and allowed higher degree of collective mobilization as compared to Hong Kong. Together with the milieu supported by the configuration of the locale, Treasure Hill has undergone a “thickening” process of culture, fuelled by a common cause fusing arts with the everyday life of social actors on the ground.

Compared to Taipei, the management of Hong Kong’s JCCAC has an orientation toward accommodating a greater degree of consumption and leisure elements. This focus has given bigger advantages to spaces featuring (semi-) commercial activities, and entailed contentious relationship between the management and the artists who have less advantage under this orientation. These
dynamics, together, produced higher level of incoherence within the artist community. In addition, Hong Kong’s JCCAC has significantly higher level of regulation under bureaucratic arrangements. The battle between the management and the artists in defining their spatial practices and conception of art, as exemplified by the case of tidying up art displays, demonstrated that Hong Kong’s cultural space has much greater contention as compared to its equivalent in Taipei.

The complex mix of different types of artists, art groups and non-profit organizations has further complicated the situation in the case of Hong Kong. JCCAC has greater degree of disparity in the targets and purpose among the tenants pursuing different causes. The juxtaposition of two aspects of artistic experience that is available in JCCAC—high art and community arts—demonstrated the inconsistent goals among the tenants. Hence, there hardly existed a sense of common purpose around the development of cultural space. The multiple divergences in JCCAC, one between artist and management, and another within the tenants themselves, point to the lack of an overall orientation for cultural development. The skewed dependence of the management on commercial and leisure elements has gradually led JCCAC into the “malling” process, leaving out groups of tenants who do not identify with this development.

Yet, in the case of Hong Kong, the emergence of JCCAC opened up opportunities for neighbouring residents to access to public space and for grassroots organizations to engage in civic activities and develop a sense of identity in the local community. And on some occasions, as in the case of Hoi Chiu, the opening up of free spaces allowed artists to experiment their projects, to involve people in the process of artistic production, and to cross-fertilize the mainstream culture.
Although the two places have followed different development trajectories, they also share quite a bit in common as well. Not only do JCCAC and Treasure Hill offer visitors spaces for consumption, both of them are contentious spaces but in different ways. While JCCAC creates fractures within the art community and between artists and management, the Treasure Hill example shows that the local residents have more reservations about cooperating with the management and the government while artists and the management are more cooperative. Chapter Six discusses the relationship between the art works and the cultural spaces within which the meaning of art has been shaped.
Chapter 6

Comparing the Meaning of Art

In this chapter, I focus on how cultural production and the resultant meaning of art, as a form of outcome shaped by the dynamics of the cultural space, have helped to renew place-identities and contributed to place-making. The differences between the state-owned cultural production sites in Hong Kong and Taipei, in terms of the composition of artists and their sense of purpose around their art work, have indicated points of divergence that affect the nature and meaning of the artistic production and displays. In Taipei’s Treasure Hill, the artist village as a platform for inter-cultural exchange consists of both local and foreign resident artists, and some local cultural workers who rented units as studios. These local and foreign actors—lacking a common cultural identity between them—are linked by the shared experience with the local community through working and/or living in the village, and by the common interests in interacting or engaging the local community into various activities. Their art works, with an orientation that is premised on the official discourse of public participation and social inclusion, reinforce place-making through mobilizing the local community to take part in cultural activities that help to develop social capital and to reinvigorate the community identity.

In contrast, Hong Kong’s JCCAC has no artist residency programme at present and is comprised mostly of local artists from Hong Kong. These contemporary artists are linked by the shared Hong Kong identity. Though their production approach to art works differs, some of their art works have indicated
connections with artists’ local identity, which constitutes one important element that differentiates the meaning of art of Hong Kong’s JCCAC from its equivalent in Taipei. Unlike Taipei’s Treasure Hill, the creative process through which art is produced or exhibited by professional artists at Hong Kong’s JCCAC has no significant relations with its surrounding neighbourhoods, except certain artists who are involved in community arts. In the case of Hong Kong, the availability of art facilities and ample exhibition space at cheap rental has expanded the visibility of unsalable or experimental art works in Hong Kong. In this way, JCCAC functions as one of the cultural venues in Hong Kong, offering spaces for public display of art by Hong Kong artists. The artistic production of local artists, together with other creative production that takes place at JCCAC, contributes to the sense of place-identity of JCCAC.

I. Construction of Place-identities and Artistic Production

a. Independent Art Space of JCCAC: Art and Hong Kong Identity

Their art has addressed less directly the political dynamics of the post-1997 era than the experiential realities of incremental and unpredictable societal change. This art often makes use of vernacular materials—including materials whose history is practically vanquished by still-hurting urban development in Hong Kong—and, as installation and performance art, is not long-lived beyond the social documentation of photography and video that records it. (Cartier 2008b: 266-7)

With the emergence of JCCAC in 2008, JCCAC has since catered to contemporary art shows with the availability of venue and affordable rental for facilities like gallery, contributing to the production of art exhibits deemed as experimental and having less instrumental values to market. As curator and critic, Oscar Ho (1997), has pointed out, “art making became an urban guerrilla warfare;
artist would make art wherever there was an opportunity and venue.” Thus, JCCAC has offered a point for the troops of independent artists to launch art shows and display art works of a wide array of themes. Although art works are diversified in meanings as a result of a complex mix of actors in the cultural sector at JCCAC, independent art spaces anchored at JCCAC which cater to contemporary art of Hong Kong appear to have shown a legible theme related to Hong Kong issues. In 1997, art critic Chang Tsong-zung (1997) argued that Hong Kong art works represents deep personal sensibilities and that “opaqueness is the primary colour.” After a decade’s time, Hong Kong’s art shows curated by independent art spaces which serve as a curatorial platform for local artists, demonstrate that local art works have now been gradually moving from a dominantly personal perspective before 1997 toward interpreting a stronger sense of “Hong Kong-ness” during post-handover period. By promoting cultural activities that are related to the local society of Hong Kong and the identity of Hong Kong people, JCCAC offers an opportunity for artists to bridge their art work with the local community that gives meaning to JCCAC as a public venue for arts appreciation.

One recent art show curated by MOST, “Intersection: A Multimedia Project,” held in early February 2012 at the Gallery of JCCAC illustrates how JCCAC’s place-identity is strengthened by accommodating local art works that are concerned with Hong Kong identity. The exhibit-event featured two sets of art work including photography, literature, music, painting, furniture, electronic media, sound effects and light installation, based on the theme derived from the concept of Dui dao (“Intersection”), the title of the novella published in 1972, by renowned local literary writer Liu Yichang.
This group show demonstrated that local Hong Kong independent artists had found ways to collaborate with famous artists in the cultural field, even though the intent often lies in artistic compatibility rather than tendency to associate fame. Unlike previous art shows curated by MOST, this group show displayed the work of seven local artists, some of whom are well-established figures in Hong Kong, including Liu Yichang, known as “The Father of Hong Kong Literature,” and Tats Lau, a widely-known Hong Kong musician-actor and band member of an avant-garde local band Tat-ming Pair, which achieved success in the Cantonese music scene since the 1980s. With a focus on local cultural history, the show represented an attempt of independent artists to get more exposure among a wider audience by taking advantage of the open nature of JCCAC and by daring the danger of being accused as publicising the event at the expense of famous cultural icons.

Translated from the noun *Tête-bêche*, the novella *Dui dao* has become a concept useful to local artists and cultural producers. Most notably used by Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar-wai, the concept infiltrated into the story background of his film *In the Mood for Love* which adapted the original text of the novella directly. Like Wong Kar-wai, local photographer artist Thomas Lin, who presented two sets of work at the show, adapted Liu’s literary concepts. For his serial works, “Tête-bêche, Era,” he juxtaposed a text and a photograph in the form of a book page in each work, whereas the page with torn edges symbolizes “the lost and regained” (Figure 6.1.).
The text is quoted from Liu Yichang’s novel of 1962, *The Drunkard,* famous for Liu’s stream-of-consciousness writing style most notably acclaimed as a pioneering work of the time. His photography documents the social scenery in Hong Kong in an upside-down position, creating an abstract imagery for the viewers. According to Thomas Lin’s description, the project combined “the retrospect and the pioneer” to explore “the contingency of individual memory and the history.” In another work, “Tête-bêche, Liu Yichang,” Thomas Lin created a black and white portrait of and a tribute to Liu Yichang (Figure 6.2.). To imitate the head-to-tail pair of Tête-bêche stamps, Thomas used a half-frame camera, which was popular during the 1970s; and he alternately changed the camera orientation for each exposure during a consecutive shooting. That made some head-to-tail pairs of images in one normal frame of negative.

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36 This idea of “up-side down” corresponds to the meaning of a French noun, *Tête-bêche,* a synonym for a head-to-tail pair of stamp, a philatelic term used in Liu Yichang’s novella, *Dui Dao.*
Figure 6.2. Thomas Lin, Tête-bêche, Liu Yichang, 2011. Gallery, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. Photo taken by author February 3, 2012.

Installation art, aside from photography, has also defined the theme of the art show. George Ho, a sound artist received art training in Canada, found Tats Lau on a collaboration of a sound interactive installation, “Where Memories Go—Tino the Elephant” (Figure 6.3.). For the installation, George Ho created a sculpture of an elephant head of 10 meter long, 2 meter wide and tall, assembled with 200 pieces of plank divided by computerized cutter. The iron frame in which the plank-made head was put represents a caisson, symbolising the elephant’s ability to rise to its feet again from sedimentation. Sound sensors and speaker system, which created interaction with viewers, are hid into the trunk of the elephant. The artist applied the image of the elephant “Tino,” an elephant kept in the disappeared Lai Chi Kok Amusement Park of Hong Kong (1958-1989), to his project. Combined with Musician Tats Lau’s sound effects mixed of human
conversation and musical instrument/synthesizer performance, the art work allows viewers to hear the sounds by putting their hands under the trunk. The imagery of elephant “Tino” that stems from a piece of the artist’s own childhood memory attempts to represent the broader memory shared by the artist’s generation which is not known to most of the post-90s generations in Hong Kong. In re-representing the figure of “Tino,” George Ho’s art work deals with the theme of faulted layers in collective memory, and questions the definition of collective memory behind which the meanings and values belong to an era.

Figure 6.3. George Ho, Where Memories Go—Tino the Elephant, 2011. Gallery, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. Photo taken by author February 4, 2012.

These two sets of work highlight the rediscovery of socio-cultural history of colonial and post-colonial Hong Kong that remained considered as part of the make-up of Hong Kong’s cultural identity. Whereas the works feature none of the recognizably “Chinese” iconography, the “Hong Kong-ness” of these works becomes noticeably a core stylistic element incorporated by the local artists.
While individual artists created a dialogue on the notion of memory, they had used the highly accessible JCCAC to set forth their ideas, retrieving the recollection and imprinting the past and the new traces of Hong Kong. This echoes Carolyn Cartier’s (2008b) comment on the essence of Hong Kong contemporary art: “Contemporary and alternative art in Hong Kong has strong local roots and translocal connections and while it reflects cultural politics in the city it lacks substantial international recognition” (245). Through incubating art with significant meanings on local identity and art in often unsalable forms like installation art, JCCAC has become a place that is useful to the local artists who seek to bring their art works closer to the general public, and look for more exposure in the public in order to break away from the marginalised status as Hong Kong artists.

b. Treasure Hill: Art and Social Meanings

In the case of Taipei City, the making of art in Treasure Hill Village is generally a product of shared commitment between the state and the artists to combine the village life and art, reconciling the division between art and life. Art has only been able to grow out of Treasure Hill by the experience of both artists and local residents living together over the past few years. In Treasure Hill, the use value of art work is conflated with social meaning and responsibility. Romantic notions about “art for art’s sake” have tended to be subordinated to more social and practical notions about the functions or the inherent meanings of art to the community of Treasure Hill. An example of this form of art is the street furniture produced by a resident design team at Treasure Hill in 2010, which is mentioned earlier in Chapter Five. Physical utility of such creative work has often
been reductively equated with what Rosalyn Deutsche (1996:65) argued as “a social good” and social benefit in urban redevelopment projects for both artists and public agencies to enhance the accessibility and relevancy of art to the public. Treasure Hill’s cultural producers do not only contribute to the design of useful objects, they combine their own efforts and those of the local people to contribute to the environmental design of locales. On the one hand, art produced at the village is shaped by the community which acts as a place of unique resources of raw materials for creative production. On the other hand, art could be instrumental for community-building in terms of preserving place-identity and maintaining community’s cohesion through activities that rediscover the culture of Treasure Hill. Given the primary requirement of the admitted resident artists to approach their projects based on personal experience with the village and its original residents, art produced by resident artists at Treasure Hill has shown relevancy to the artists’ lived experience at Treasure Hill. As such, artists concentrated on the cultural and social meanings rather than the economic meaning of their production. Through the decade-long practice of community collaboration and promotion of community involvement in art, original inhabitants of Treasure Hill Village have become handy material for artistic production and have played a part in constituting the creative outcome.

This shortened distance between art and the local community can be exemplified by the fact that many of the original residents have taken part in reifying the abstract concepts of resident artists, whose projects are often socially inspired. Land art is overtly a manifestation of such resident-based collaborative art. Attempting to renew urban farming culture of Treasure Hill’s community that had been on the verge of disappearance after the preservation movement at
Treasure Hill in the late 1990s, an Italian artist, Carlotta Brunette, brought together land art with unused natural resources in Treasure Hill to create a garden with the efforts of one veteran grower Mr. Hsu in 2010. This art project has enabled the sustainability of sharing farmland for growing activities at Treasure Hill Village. Aesthetic values added to the farmland kept accumulating, for example, when local Taiwanese artist Julie Chou incorporated organic farming into the garden for edible crops in her project named *Hsiang Long Tu Ju* (“Auspicious dragon with a dragon ball”) in 2011. The new garden, which has been transformed from idle soils by the residents and artists, represents and revives the residents’ virtue of thrift in the self-contained community at Treasure Hill, where the residents have practiced cultivating fruits and vegetables to provide for their own needs for a long time (Figure 6.4.).

The application of art to the village’s lands demonstrated in the project underscores the transformative quality of art within the local community. In the artistic production process oriented toward the original dwellers, resident artists have acted as change agents, recreating the forgotten urban village lifestyle and the culture of being rural in the urban Taipei City. Because of simply living next door to artists of diverse backgrounds, original residents of Treasure Hill Village have gradually get used to participating in all kinds of activities over the years. By participating in art projects over the years, the original residents of Treasure Hill have virtually gone through a “baptism” into art that has adjusted themselves to the practices of artists at the village. In considering the development of the local community infusing with the activities of artists, a Taiwanese artist identified points of similarity between Treasure Hill and military bases in Taiwan.
Like the villages which have transformed into new leisure destinations of shops and restaurants that respond to the needs of soldiers, Treasure Hill Village’s original community has also responded to the requests of the artists. As the artist puts: “When artists become the ‘leading character’ of Treasure Hill, the residents in the village have learnt to produce some agency to satisfy the demands” (R4). Along this on-going development of art, Treasure Hill’s residents have become “integrated into the art base and formed a new community” with a public character of art (R4). This shared expectations for collaborative efforts between artists and the residents help to build social efficacy, which in turn benefits the process of place-making in Treasure Hill.

Artists in Treasure Hill Village may offer residents intangible experience with art by asking the residents to participate in art projects. Having involved residents is a video and photography project, named “Making Pictures of the
Dead,” by a Taiwanese artist Nick Gang that captures the image of the living residents of the village, including both original residents and resident artists, side by side with their own pictures of dead (Figure 6.5.). In making the “photos of the dead,” he invited two residents he met to participate in his project. For Gang, the opportunities to collaborate with local residents on art projects have become the most special point about Treasure Hill Village, as he indicates: “So it’s like a chance for me to act like a penetrator, penetrating into their lives, though this is not very deep. But at least the milieu’s different. Whenever I meet some residents, they will become, somehow, my facts—they will be videotaped in my works.”

![Figure 6.5. Nick Gang, Making Pictures of the Dead, Photographic Work. 2011, Treasure Hill Village, Taipei. Photo taken by author, July 2, 2011.](image)

Portrait photographs and pictures of the deceased used to be solemn in Chinese society; his art works present a new approach to the sentiments embodied in such
photos, by piecing together pictures of seriousness as a mirror self-reflecting the past while looking toward the future. The taboo of hanging living people’s pictures of the dead in Chinese society, however, has also meant that Gang’s photography art would unlikely be sought out in the marketplace. Treasure Hill thus offered a place where such “unsalable” works could be exhibited away from the mainstream galleries. In this case, Gang’s photography art also exemplifies how art produced at Treasure Hill Village has created socio-cultural meanings that are often freed from much economic considerations but are relevant to the locale of Treasure Hill throughout the production process.

In Taipei’s Treasure Hill, artistic production and community-based arts that have tended to focus on the involvement of the local residents in cultural production and regeneration of their lifestyle through art are useful in building social capital and social efficacy by strengthening social networks and trustful relationships, facilitating the place-making process. The case of Treasure Hill thus exemplifies the “art-in-the-public-interest model” (Kwon 2004:60) characterised by its goals for community engagement and collaborations, and by the continuity between art and the social life of the neighbourhood where the art works, which “belonged” to the local community, are exhibited and often designed for permanent rather than temporary display. In the case of Hong Kong, JCCAC’s role as an incubator for local cultural production can be exemplified by the group show of contemporary artists that interprets Hong Kong’s cultural identity in a wider context, displaying collaborative efforts of local artists on art projects. Compared to Treasure Hill, JCCAC’s contemporary artists have lower tendency to engage the surrounding neighbourhoods in the process of cultural production, and consequently, art works are often confined to JCCAC’s galleries, and less
II. Representation on the Streets

Moving from the interior of the cultural space to its adjacent surroundings, several examples of public art produced and shown in public space illustrate the efforts of local actors in constructing a local identity for the neighbourhoods. By using examples of the sprayed painting on the gates of a shop, and the work of the district office, the section on Hong Kong considers art as an outcome of social relationships between artists and local residents, and a medium through which district leaders employed for revitalizing old urban landscape. While cultural producers’ acumen contributed to spatial aestheticization informally, they had become leveraged as useful tools in creating adornments in public space and in promoting social agendas of the related sectors in Shek Kip Mei. In Taipei’s case, public art shown around Treasure Hill is a policy realm of the state, pointing to the central role of the state in furtherance of the public art strategies to reshape the city’s image.

a. Hong Kong: Informal and Formal Use of Public Art

Across JCCAC lies a small noodle stall, named “Fat Brother Food stall noodle shop” where people sitting down for noodles and eating off the street. The exterior gates of the noodle stall, which are spray-painted with colourful drawings facing the street, serve as my first entry point into the real art zone of JCCAC. The drawings, though not apparently recognizable, resemble a backdrop of decoration that aligns with the style of an imaginary creative neighbourhood permitted by the owner of the noodle stall. Many dismissed the drawings as common graffiti as in other parts of Hong Kong. But the capitalised words, “WHITE BOX GALLERY,”
written on the exterior of a door of the shop perhaps offer a perceptive hint about the relationship between the drawings and JCCAC few steps away (Figure 6.6.). The existence of the drawings within a local dining space is, indeed, illustrative of the real work of artists based at JCCAC in promoting interaction with the neighbours of their surrounding community.

Sharon Zukin and Laura Braslow (2011) have argued that “the beginning and the ending of the life cycle” of a creative district could be charted in public art. Under the collaboration between the creative workers and the community, this form of art has begun to feature in the visual landscape of Shek Kip Mei after the setting up of JCCAC. Behind the sprayed painting on the gates of the noodle stall tells a story of friendship between artist Hoi Chiu, who always dines at the stall, and the noodle stall owner Fat Brother.

Figure 6.6. Graffiti Work on Wai Chi Street, Shek Kip Mei, Sham Shui Po District, Hong Kong. Source: Wall Art Project.

Hoi Chiu employed artistic skills and engaged in a form of communal living which inadvertently disseminated aesthetics on the streets, elevating the
neighbourhood as a site of creativity. At the coffee shop of JCCAC, he explains the origin of the sprayed art:

Fat Brother said to me, ‘I actually wanted you to help paint my case. I wanted to go traveling but I did not know the price [of case painting]. This is embarrassing.’ I said, ‘It’s easy. You give me the case, and I will get it done in one afternoon. But you have to treat me noodles.’ After that, the neighbour [Fat Brother] was very happy. He feels that art could be—it is not necessarily about money; it is about sharing.’ I told him, ‘you have a gate; my friend makes spray-paintings well. He won’t charge you, just treat him food.’ Really, he allowed [my friend to paint] the whole gate. The room was [painted] all white….then my friend sprayed so well and made it look so beautiful. Fat Brother was very happy and everyone passing by his gates feels the artistic aura. (R18)

Artists like Hoi Chiu extended art into the community and made art sharable with the noodles shop’s owner. Such personal interaction, which is part of the urban authentic experience of the artists even if it is limited, has made way for public art. Other artists also show interest in making public art which they think could create an ambiance of art district. One artist observed that a wall near the centre could be used for “advertising” JCCAC. With a big mural, he believes “the ambiance would be quite different” in Shek Kip Mei (R16).

Together with the creative workers, the district councillors of JCCAC area have started to foster creative ambiance and to increase the visibility of art in public space around JCCAC, promoting a more artistic image of the local district. With the operation of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) since 13 September 2010, Shek Kip Mei saw the beginning of public art displays which involve the participation of SCAD’s students. An example of public art could be seen at a road juncture just outside SCAD, where a traditional, commonly seen outdoor decorative dragon sat on a fenced little garden to celebrate the upcoming Chinese New Year, the Year of Dragon in January 2012. The signpost, placed alongside the dragon invited the passerby to take notice of the background of the
art work, indicated that the dragon lighting was “designed by the students of SCAD.” In this way, the festive lighting professed a relationship between the public space and the school. Through working with Sham Shui Po District Council on designing the lighting ornaments, the students and the teachers of SCAD contributed to the building of the district’s reputation as creative. Despite that the festive art work looks like any other dragon decorations in other districts in Hong Kong, its significance underscores a growing interference into making the area an emerging art district by a new group of creative workers, who take the local community as their dynamic classroom. This example also demonstrates that district councillors have attempted to create a visually stimulating environment by integrating the skills and abilities of the young and professionally trained creative workers into regenerating old public spaces to enliven Shek Kip Mei, and perhaps more importantly, to appeal to the constituency in the area.

In Hong Kong, as these examples demonstrated, while the role of the state seems to remain inactive in using public art to promote cultural milieu or to consciously mark Shek Kip Mei as an art district, artists had shown their abilities in channelling works of creativity into the public space and in creating works which are in dialogue with the surrounding built environment. Although the arts activities based in JCCAC have made impacts on the social fabric of the neighbourhood of Shek Kip Mei, public art around JCCAC has tended to be confined to the initiatives of district councils rather than the policymakers of the government. The case of decorative dragon produced by SCAD’s students of public commission exemplifies the “art-in-public-places model” (Kwon 2004:60), in which art works can be considered “public” primarily because they are open to public access. Although the examples showed that artists and the local district
councils have attempted to make art more relevant to the local community, the production of public art, placed in the locales near JCCAC, is in essence oriented toward the decorative function in public space, and is less directed toward coherent design and spatial integration, rendering art as part of the landscape, or toward engaging community collaborations.

b. Taipei: Cultural Planning of Public Art

Unlike Hong Kong, public art around Treasure Hill is evident of the direct facilitative work of the government in using public art to recreate the milieu of the urban landscape through its own premises and spaces. Walking along the winding trail of Dingzhou Road that leads to Treasure Hill, bright and colourful public artworks painted on the 200-meter long walls along the way is one noticeable mark that signifies the public art introduced by Taipei City’s Department of Cultural Affairs at the fringe of Treasure Hill’s art zone. The illustration that reinterprets the minute practices of urban city life in Gongguan is the work of a former resident Taiwanese artist Yu-You Pan at Treasure Hill Village in 2010, serving as an inaugurating piece of visual art work for public gaze around Treasure Hill.

Like the other art work of Treasure Hill’s resident artists, this public art work, named “A Live City Model” is a product of lived experience of the artist at Treasure Hill and the Taipei City. Using the concept of “toy models,” the artist addresses the notion of cityscape as a process of assembling together the multiple parts played by different generations, social groups and a mix of cultures in a city (Figure 6.7.). In this sense, Treasure Hill, which is planned to create symbiotic relationships between the artists and the original residents, represents a miniature
of such city’s development. The reopening of Treasure Hill to the public in 2010 has allowed the once hidden Treasure Hill’s community to be re-plugged to Taipei City’s cultural network, as reflected in the presence of “A Live City Model” wall painting that gives a sense of connection to the city.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 6.7.** Yu-You Pan, *A Live City Model*. Painting on Walls of Trail leading to Treasure Hill Village, Taipei City. Photo taken by author, July 2, 2011.

The active role of the municipal government in driving public art projects can be noted in its launch of “Taipei Beautiful Series Project” in April 2009 that put “a soft revolution” into action by the government to transform the urban profile of Taipei City through strategies such as facelift and renovation of old public facilities, installation of public art, and beautification of environment (Hsu 2011). An example of this project is Shuiyuan Market, a government-owned
building, straight along the bustling Roosevelt Road near Treasure Hill Village. The colourful kinetic artwork called “Heart of Shuiyuan,” made by an Israeli artist Yaacov Agam that decorated the old walls of the market, has transformed the public building into “the world’s largest public art contrapuntal painting” (Taipei City Government 2010).

In Taipei, the promotion of public art has long been instituted by the government, which started the “Percent for Art” Programme in 1993, following New York in 1983. The programme was governed by a law called “Awards and Assistance on Art and Culture” gazetted by the Council of Cultural Affairs in 1992 that requires at least 1% of the budget for all eligible state-owned premises or space, and state’s construction projects, to be spent on public art works. The regulation also promotes public art by awarding the owners, managers or users of buildings accessible to the public if the public art placed at the buildings costs more than 1% of the building construction cost (Hui et al. 2003b). This has made the government the major source of subsidy for public art. According to a report by Hui et al. (2003b), over 90% of public art work in Taipei City is either funded by the government or through the “Percent for Art” Programme. In contrast to Hong Kong, public art in Taipei City is legislated in public works, implying that the intensity of promoting public art in state-owned spaces is higher than its counterpart.

In moving from the inside of Treasure Hill to the area just outside it, the state has displayed consistent initiatives in driving the public engagement in art through patronage for public art and state-owned cultural space. The city of Taipei has tried to maximise the artistic impacts through public space that is considered as important to the city as a cultural hub in Taiwan and in Asia over the long run.
III. Summary

In this chapter, I have looked at several examples of art works shown inside and outside the cultural production sites in Hong Kong and Taipei to illustrate the meaning behind the production of art in the two cases. The meaning of art implied in these examples manifested the orientation of the contemporary artists of both cities. The case of Hong Kong demonstrated that local artists have identified JCCAC as a new art incubator to display their art works. Art shows like “Intersection” illustrated how art exhibitions launched by some local artists, who have collaborated with well-known cultural icons to interpret personal memory of Hong Kong’s history and issues around collective identity, can foster JCCAC’s identity as an art venue nurturing local art. Unlike the case of Hong Kong, activities of cultural production at Treasure Hill reinforce place-making process through establishing social relationships and shared expectation among the local residents, allowing artistic production to take place with community input. The artists of Treasure Hill have linked their art work to the community of Treasure Hill as artists have much stronger tendency to engage the residents into their art projects as compared to Hong Kong’s JCCAC.

In terms of public art, the case of Hong Kong suggested that while district councillors have started to involve students of an art school around the cultural production site in producing festive decorations for enhancing the image of the district, the spontaneity of artists has also contributed to the existence of public art around the artist neighbourhood through establishing social relationships with the members of local community. Compared to Hong Kong, the case of Taipei has reflected how the visions of the government have imprinted on public art. Public art represents the facilitative role of the government in its patronage for arts, and
symbolises a product resulted from the cultural planning of the government in using art as a form of enhancement for city’s image. Under the support of the municipal government, public art in Taipei has a much stronger presence and is expected to address a broader range of audience as compared to Hong Kong.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

This study has explored the production of cultural space, with a particular focus on artists’ studio spaces, in Hong Kong and Taipei from the late 1990s through the first decade of the 21st century. Examining the cases of Hong Kong’s Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC) and Taipei’s Treasure Hill reveals why artists and historical buildings have received considerable attention from the state, and the alternative ways in which cities have produced cultural spaces at specific locales in recent years. Coming into the mid-2000s, the state has become hands-on in revitalizing historical state premises as mixed-use and non-profit oriented sites of cultural production to regenerate local neighbourhoods and to strengthen the social and cultural fabric. Such impact has been evident in the emergence of artist neighbourhoods in Hong Kong and Taipei, as cases from the previous chapters have shown. These neighbourhoods often involve different interests and processes that go into making art and culture more visible in the urban locales; indeed, behind the state action in steering the making of cultural spaces, spaces produced socially by local actors have become significant to understanding the culture of contemporary cities outside of Hong Kong and Taipei.

In this study, first, I highlighted the relationships within the artist neighbourhoods between artists, the management and other local residents, and second, I discussed how these relationships have constituted place character. The sites of cultural production including Hong Kong’s JCCAC and Taipei’s Treasure...
Hill are exemplary spaces in which to examine the intersection of the arts and place-making, and how these redefined state’s public spaces. Third, this study takes artist neighbourhoods as a starting point for understanding how culture is defined and administered by the state. My empirical research on these cultural production sites with diverse purposes shows how the definition of culture embedded in the policy discourse can be manifested in the orientation of the cultural production sites run by non-profit organizations.

This study is framed by a Lefebvrian approach to production of space. This analytical framework has allowed me to pay attention to space not only as a container of social relations but also a dynamic site where the visions and practices of the political decision-makers and local actors have made impact on the course of the socio-spatial development. It has enabled an analysis of cultural space not only in terms of consumption and capitalist production, but also the reproduction of social dynamics for the realization of place-making efforts. Linkages between the adoption of artist-led urban revitalization strategies and the resultant configuration of socially produced space have shaped the social dynamics of the locales and the relationships between the local actors that changed the place-making process. Differences in these linkages allow for comparison between the spatial practices of Hong Kong’s cultural production site and its equivalent in Taipei. Concentrating on the process of place-making can draw attention to the level of congruency in the spatial practices between the local actors, e.g. management and the artists, and how this affects the degree of cohesion, collective action and sense of purpose within the cultural production sites, while highlighting how artists have been conceived as change agents for local development in Hong Kong and Taipei.
I. Winners and Losers in Production of Cultural Spaces

Admittedly, over the years, the state and the local actors, including the management, the artists, and other social actors have been at stake in molding the development trajectories and in shaping the final cultural space. How the cultural space is defined today in the two cities is intimately connected with the socio-spatial processes through which the interests of the state, the cultural sector, and local community intersect. However, not all of these parties win out in each case. In the case of Hong Kong’s JCCAC, even with its inclusion of a wide range of creative workers, the management has held the whip hand in shaping the character of JCCAC through regular programming, under which producers oriented toward commercial and leisure activities often get larger amount of opportunities than those who do not share such orientation, meaning that the interests of some of the JCCAC’s tenants could not be accommodated as they would have expected.

In the case of Taipei’s Treasure Hill, on the surface, there appears to be a win-win situation, wherein the artists and the state’s agent cooperate closely to regenerate the old village through cultural activities and artistic production, and at the same time, the neighbourhood ties among the original residents are preserved and are necessarily appreciated as a core part of the village. Some residents, nevertheless, feel marginalized in the reconfigured village managed by the state’s agent due to a sense of insecurity and the loss of homeownership. To concentrate only on the artistic collaborations and the interactions between artists and residents obscures the fact that some residents are, at times, sceptical of the management and the government, creating tensions that arts-led revitalization of Treasure Hill remains a highly contentious issue. Despite the fact that the cultural spaces in both cases of Hong Kong and Taipei are not simply a product of one or
two parties, the intended beneficiaries of the urban revitalization projects are not necessarily the winners within such contentious space.

By looking at the relationship between the state and its policy of creative arts as well as its management of arts space and artists who inhabit such spaces, this study has shown how artist neighbourhoods are made under different governance approaches. In the analysis of on-going tensions between government and artists on the one hand, and the government and the local residents on the other hand, this study demonstrates how contentious relationships have defined the making of public cultural spaces in the two locales that may also be observed in other cities. The analysis of such process fraught with tensions and conflicts but entailing the cooperation of artists, cultural producers, management and local residents, as exemplified by both cases of Hong Kong’s JCCAC and Taipei’s Treasure Hill, can be extended to studies on other cities using culture-led urban strategy to shape the character of cities and to identify cities as “creative” in global space. This study, therefore, has provided an example of how cities have preserved and enhanced cultural resources, especially through the regeneration of public spaces, urban neighbourhoods and local cultures, to promote new images of city’s cultures as a means to counter and cope with cultural globalization, a process which often requires the notion of contentious politics to be fed into the lines of research on locales undergoing urban transformation.

While only two case studies on cultural spaces, the cases can serve as an example for research comparing cities’ urban development, cultural strategies and the associated outcomes, as well as for studies exploring other sites of cultural production and various types of creative professionals that make impacts on cities’ culture and economic development. The cases of Hong Kong and Taipei on the
production of artist neighbourhoods thus prepare a way for understanding the state’s intervention in urbanization, and how the players at the micro level are responding to the state action. Placing this study in broader theoretical context, Hong Kong and Taipei become cases which can shed light on the role of state and its policy in regulating art and artists in light of the decisions on investment made by the cities, state and funders in both art spaces and organizations.

II. Place and Artistic Production

This study reveals that Hong Kong’s JCCAC manifests a regulated space shaped by contending interests and conflicts that tends to treat cultural production as contributing to the leisure offerings, while Taipei’s Treasure Hill exemplifies the civic orientation of cultural governance in Taipei that considers art and culture as part of the citizenship and a way of life emerging from local communities. Such findings have raised several questions related to the ideas about the nature of production of art, the kind of places suitable for creative activities and the agency of artists: How do the locations and the embedded relationships within these spaces matter in the production of art? What does it mean to make artist neighbourhoods at certain locations? In seeking to answer the questions raised, the followings address how place can be central to the production of art in specific ways and how social dynamics pose impacts on place character.

a. Physical Environment

One way in which location matters in the production of art can be seen in what is often considered as the primary element in the conception of site for an art work—the physical condition of a specific locale. The analysis of the empirical
data suggests that social and urban physical environment, which could serve as a resource for creative producers, has close relationship with production of art. According to Drake (2003), a locality can be a catalyst for creative process and individualized creativity if it contains particular elements such as “socio-cultural activities and networks” and attributes which can be a resource of “visual raw materials and stimuli” for producers. The case of Hong Kong’s JCCAC shows there are some evidence that the presence of social networks could become place-inspired elements which engender creative activities. For instance, artist Hoi Chiu, who introduced public art into a noodle shop located next to JCCAC, demonstrates how after-work social networking and ideas circulating among the networks help artists to integrate creative works into everyday spaces of people outside the art world in improvisational ways. The public art work sprayed on the shop’s gates reifies the invisible connection between JCCAC and its surrounding community, wherein its embodied social relationships can turn social space into a site for the production of experimental public art. In the case of Hoi Chiu, artist-driven efforts also show how artists’ wider interest in or enthusiasm for the local visual environment (Drake 2003) can infect their neighbourhoods and result in creative works, which in turn contributes to the shaping of authentic places and the physical environment potentially conducive to the growth of individualised creativity as argued by Drake (2003).

b. Live-work Arrangement and Social Interactions with Local Community

Among other aspects of urban sites that can affect artistic production are live-work arrangement and social interactions with the local community. The
analysis of the case of Treasure Hill that emphasises the importance of co-
residence in constituting the meaning of Treasure Hill and its place-making
provides the opportunity to understand how certain places, which allow for work-
live arrangement, fit with the production of community-based art. Such art
practice is closely related to the notion of “site-specific art,” art works that
incorporated context into itself, while sought to challenge the modernist notion
that art is an autonomous entity or an ideological object disavowing social,
economic and political functions (Deutsche 1996:61, 261), and to reveal the ways
in which institutions are in actions to modulate the meanings of art (Kwon
1997:88). Echoing the observations of Kwon (2004) on the permutations of “site-
specific art” in the past three decades, the concept of site in artistic production has
moved away from one physical, tangible location to one that determines and
directs the meanings of art works (Kwon 1997), as can be seen in how, in the case
of Treasure Hill, artists shared geographical proximity with their neighbours, and
registered their willingness to engage the residents of Treasure Hill in the
production of art. The case of Treasure Hill shows how production of art is linked
with live-work spaces located in the village, where artists can use their work
studios converted from village houses for residency use. It is in this context that
artists are presumed to be able to immerse in the local community as if they are
residents rather than complete outsiders, and, at the same time, make art based on
their experience in Treasure Hill. Compared to Hong Kong’s JCCAC, Taipei’s
Treasure Hill, with this arrangement, has a greater degree of collective orientation
that has allowed cultural “thickening” process to take place, and promoted
interaction and milieu favourable for creative production.
The presence of artist’s work-live units in Treasure Hill has to do with the need of the city officials to integrate art into people’s daily life and civic life. Such attention is linked to the progress of democratization and indigenization in the 1990s that was central to the formation of national identity. Taiwan’s cultural space is integral to the national project of “comprehensive community building” since 1994 that emphasized public participation in developing local culture and community identity as a realization of democratic ideal. The notion of “anthropological definition of culture as a way of life” (Lin and Hsing 2009) has endured through the 1990s to the 2000s as “life arts movement” that has expanded civic rights to arts and the integration of arts into people’s everyday life. Since 1994, cultural space has been rooted in civic engagement at community level and then become integrated into part of creative industries by 2002. Thus, the project of Treasure Hill is built on a political aspiration of moving toward the greater “democratization” of art, which encompasses qualities such as pluralist inclusivity and consensus-building espoused by practitioners and supporters of art that can be integrated into people’s lives (Kwon 2004:107).

Given that Treasure Hill is designed to encourage social inclusion and public engagement in art, the management of Treasure Hill has infused a sense of community as their focus is on the neighbourhood relationships and ties among the residents, which are considered as constitutive of the public meaning of Treasure Hill. Within the context of Treasure Hill, to the extent that production of art is community-based, such production can be best emerged from work-live environment in which artists from both Taiwan and overseas can co-live and have chances to approach like-minded people, and to interact with the original inhabitants on a daily basis. The inclusion strategies of the management which
aim to maintain a sense of identity among the residents in the new configuration of Treasure Hill are in need of artists to contribute to the rejuvenation of the local culture of Treasure Hill’s community. The newspaper project of artist Alan Eglinton, for instance, exemplified the active role of resident artists in shortening the distance between original inhabitants and artists by having face-to-face conversation with the neighbours. Although artist-community relationship is short-term and has its limitations in developing further, it is built on social interaction through everyday activities as required by the management. In the case of Treasure Hill, this model of live-work arrangement within a community forged the artists’ role in promoting interactive community collaborations that defines what it means to produce art in Treasure Hill. Art production at Treasure Hill is thus tied to the public meanings of Treasure Hill and the deepening of its civic character.

Location is closely tied to the production of art, in particular to certain types of site-specific aesthetic experimentations which are structured as community collaborations and based on social interactions with community residents. With the cooperation from residents of Treasure Hill, as discussed in Chapter Five, land art artists Carlotta Brunette and Julie Chou turned the land into works of public art and sustainable farmlands feasible for urban farming, a practice directly relevant to some of the original residents in Treasure Hill. Such “assimilative model” of site-specific art, which is geared toward integration into the existing environment of Treasure Hill while producing cohesion and unity with the context (Deutsche 1996), demonstrated a sense of community-awareness.

As Kwon (2004) pointed out in her discussion on a public art project in Chicago in the early 1990s, public art can be defined by the ephemeral processes
of interaction between the local residents and the artists. As in the case of Treasure Hill, works of land art were defined not in terms of material objects, but by collaborative artistic partnerships in which the role of community is promoted and privileged (Kwon 2004:104). The case of Taipei’s Treasure Hill shows how being located next to the residents enables the creative workers to interact with the residents on a daily basis and allows for developing social relationships that give meanings to the context in which works of land art are sited. Such relationships could contribute to and are important to the production of public art, in which artists engaged are able to play the role as a social force while residents participated become active art-makers during the creative process. At the same time, in the case of Treasure Hill, interaction with community residents is important in the production of art under such context as artists seek to empower the residents by involving them as subjects in art projects. Nick Gang’s production of his video and photography work, for example, shows that artists have cooperated with the management to pursue the participatory mode of art practice that engages the local residents and celebrates the everyday experiences of “ordinary” people. This art-site relationship takes on the concept of how art can be a “useful” social tool to engage with its public.

c. **Governmental Approach to Management**

In addition to the interaction with the local community, this study shows that governmental approach to management associated with the site is an important factor explaining how place and its embedded relationships impacts on the production of art, as discussed in Chapter Five. Using comparative method, the study highlighted the differences in the state’s approach between Hong Kong
and Taipei—the stronger regulatory and commercial interest in Hong Kong’s management versus Taipei’s civic engagement approach. In the case of Hong Kong’s JCCAC which is managed by a non-profit company commissioned by the government, orientation toward management rather than facilitating creative processes has led to the “malling” process of JCCAC that offered leisure opportunities and consumption experiences, allowing (semi-) commercial activities to maintain upper hands. This orientation has a bearing on how production of art is centrally defined in management’s struggle to provide the members of the public a variety of activities. In managing the events such as handicraft fairs and open studio event for retailing, JCCAC has encompassed a greater degree of recreational activities to attract visitors as compared to Taipei’s Treasure Hill.

As JCCAC has allowed different actors, say, contemporary artists and community arts organizations, to offer various contrasting artistic experiences in JCCAC, this high level of inclusion has posed threats to the sense of collective purpose around arts and created contradiction between different social actors who employ cultural production to serve divergent personal or organizational goals. At the same time, the management is intertwined with regulatory practices which govern the artist tenants in terms of what they may or may not do in JCCAC and thus entail contentions in JCCAC’s artist community. The conflicts over tidying up art displays by the management demonstrated how the practices have made some artists feel left out by the management. The artists’ protests against JCCAC’s management and its rental increase policy in 2011 suggested how the public cultural space has engendered divergence rather than convergence of interests. As a result, these dynamics conjointly define JCCAC’s in-between role.
as a community centre and a mall favouring retailing, recreational and (semi-) commercial activities, rather than an artist neighbourhood emphasising mutual interest and support in the community, and thus eroding the sense of place. Within this framework, despite that JCCAC has opened up public spaces for artistic experimentation and citizens’ use, production of art is often branded as part of the leisure programme inevitably associated with the management’s interest in turning JCCAC into a place where public can seek diversified cultural experience.

Compared to the case of Hong Kong, the orientation of Treasure Hill toward public engagement in culture is noticeably emphasised by the management of Treasure Hill. Its focus on integrating local community into arts manifests the civic orientation in Taiwan’s cultural policy, and at the same time, steers the direction of production of art in Treasure Hill. Since Treasure Hill is managed by a non-profit organization which is situated within the institutional structure of the municipal government, it has a strong public character which entails, and also explains, the importance of Treasure Hill in promoting a mode of art production that can invite public participation. Like other state-owned artist’s studio spaces across Taipei, management of Treasure Hill is required by the government to create cultural impacts through producing public meanings for its art space. The regeneration of Treasure Hill has demonstrated an experimental revitalization policy of leveraging artist’s everyday practices to reshape the aging neighbourhood into a new cultural space, while allowing the officials to secure legitimacy in preserving Treasure Hill on the basis of promoting arts as a way to strengthen the public meanings and usage of place. This policy and its overarching goal in strengthening the permeation of arts into the life-world of citizens allow the management of Treasure Hill to assume an active role in combining the
synergies of artists to rediscover the local culture of the village and to build rapports with its original residents.

In terms of political implications, Treasure Hill was principally planned by a social activist group, which was commissioned by the City government, to experiment in using art to revitalize the illegal squatter of Treasure Hill composed of the residents disenfranchised of their homeownership since the early 2000s. The attempt of the management to counter the lack of social visibility and political power of the original residents can be seen in the highlighting of the residents in the art projects. Several endeavours of the management, including designating cultural spaces for public dialogues and social interaction within the local community and launching events which encourage participation in production of local culture, show that the management has always pursued a policy that supports the participatory mode of cultural practice. As a result, the production of art in Taipei’s Treasure Hill is closely connected with how the management endeavours to brand the Treasure Hill as a civic space, a collaborative outcome of urban cultural strategies and civic engagement in cultural planning since the early 2000s.

III. Utility of Art and Artist’s Agency

By comparing the cases of Hong Kong and Taipei, the study indicates that the present model of management of cultural space has affected how production of art is defined. The findings from the case of Treasure Hill suggest that the functional utility of art is upheld and recognised by both the government and artists who are willing to collaborate with the community in production of art,
such as land art, which is considered as both instrumental and aesthetic artwork. This ideology confirms what Zolberg (2006) pointed out, “the idea of a domain of art free from material purposes outside of itself remains a seemingly unrealizable ideal, both for artists and for publics more generally” (235). In fact, the struggle of Treasure Hill in using art to save itself from demolition and to remain as a residential place for the original residents over the past decade under the mobilization of social activists also reveals how aesthetic creation can be used in the interest of social groups—and in this case, the interest of the original residents of Treasure Hill Village.

Equally important, art spaces of Treasure Hill countering rather than responding to exclusion tendencies serve political ends of policy-makers, who seek to obtain support from its constituency and to claim public legitimacy for a policy by promoting the notion of art in the interest of public. Both cases of Treasure Hill and Hong Kong show that the governments, as represented by non-profit institutions, seek to expand public cultural spaces that express the capacity of art appreciation and art-making of all people, not just the privileged minority. The strategy of art-led revitalization in the case of Treasure Hill has both cultural and political values in that it helps strengthen the democratic model of cultural governance. Similarly, the case of Hong Kong’s JCCAC indicates how government has used art as well to attempt to revitalize old urban areas and respond to the societal demands for a policy toward better local cultural development. The making of artist villages in both cases corresponds to the cultural plurality approach suggested by Gans (1974), recognizing that arts may exclude as well as include when arts are made to be more accessible and familiar to broader range of people. In the very process of giving meanings to art situated
in local communities, art in both cases is understood not only as experiment but as instrument of social, and sometimes political, importance.

The cases of Hong Kong and Taipei in this study have raised question concerning the meanings behind producing art at specific locales. Earlier chapter has demonstrated how the meaning of art differs in accordance to the interests of actors including the artists, the state, and the agencies responsible for the management of the site of cultural production in both cases. Artistic production around the two hubs of production of culture can provide evidence of how certain models of art are more instrumental to place-making. In Taipei, several models of production of art conjointly shaped the progress of place-making. Art being the constitutive element of the official cultural planning in urban public space through the programme of “Percent for Art” demonstrates the congruency of policy and implementation, and proclaims how art is posited and defined in the public space of Taipei. On top of that, works of land art located within Treasure Hill are integrated into the physical environment, aligning what Kwon (2004) has suggested as “art-as-public spaces model” that emphasizes the functional use of art to the public and produces new meanings for specific locales in which the art works are situated. Equally relevant, Treasure Hill’s orientation toward the approach of “art-in-the-public-interest” (Kwon 2004) necessitates community involvement and, therefore, the building of social relationships and trust between the local community and the artists or cultural producers. The production of such model of art contributes to the viability of place-making. Unlike Taipei’s Treasure Hill, the case of JCCAC has shown no significant tendency toward the production of art deemed as serving the public interests. Despite the efforts of artists based in JCCAC in engaging the local community into cultural activities, artists’ initiatives
have been with introducing art, which has no distinct elements to render them “public,” into public space for decorative use.

Making publically-owned artist neighbourhoods, as this study has discussed, concerns with creating close connections between art and place that lies in part in the agency of artists. While artists might seem to be secondary as the revitalization tools for policy-makers, it is important to address and reassert the individual agency of artists in shaping urban space, urban form and cultural policy. As argued by Markusen (2006), artists as a group celebrate socially progressive and inclusive agendas and a vision of mosaic urban space with smaller artistic spaces supporting each other; they should not be viewed as “individualized dupes” under urban strategy of neo-liberal development (Peck 2005). Forces prompting the involvement of artists into process of revitalization do not necessarily reduce artists into being agents or victims of gentrification. In many cases, artists are progressive in shaping communities that they play active role in the communities where they work, in involving passers-by into creative production, and coaching youths’ performances and community arts events, as exemplified by Hoi Chiu and other artists in the case of JCCAC; and in collaborating with or engaging local residents in art projects, as in the case of Treasure Hill, where artists are encouraged by the City government to foster the engagement of local community in creative activities. While the artist community of JCCAC is not required by the management to have shared interests and commitment in engaging the local community into the production process of culture, some artists are willing to act as key collaborators with arts funders and place-based community organizations in creating and supporting urban arts. Citing Markusen (2006:1937), “artists often explicitly see themselves as a public conscience and as responsible for using their
talent in ways that critique power and inequality and advance community”; they tend to support diversity characterised by the “mosaic vision” of arts and socially inclusive programmes. Addressing such individual agency of artists, hence, adds an important analytic layer to the perception of viewing art as a collective process (Becker 1982) and the emphasis on the production rather than creation of culture given by sociologists.

In my analysis of cultural production sites of Hong Kong and Taipei, I have attempted to elucidate the differences between the socio-spatial changes that have occurred on the ground at neighbourhood level of both cities. The study of the trajectories of the cultural production sites in Hong Kong and Taipei indicates how the cities have defined its relationship with culture and state-owned space. In the process of revitalizing public historical premises into new cultural sites for the setting up of artist’s studios, the two cities have adopted different ways of place-making strategies that have led to specific outcomes. Comparing the two cases demonstrates the interplay of history, political development, policies and model of cultural governance in shaping the orientation of the cultural space. The different make-up of the cultural production sites in Hong Kong and Taipei reinforces the importance of understanding the spatial practices of the local actors and the relationships between these actors, including artists, management and the local community, on shaping the socio-spatial development. In the process of place-making, social dynamics determine how the course of development is unfolded and shaped within the cultural spaces, in which production and reproduction of culture take place, and fundamentally constituted the conditions for making place—a dynamic outcome contingent on the cohesiveness and the sense of collective action and purpose between the social actors.
Appendix A

Design of the Proposed Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre

The Exterior Perspective

The Interior Perspective
The Level 1 Gallery and Courtyard Perspective

Source: Hong Kong Baptist University (2006).
Appendix B

Map of the Overview of Treasure Hill

Source: Arts in Residency Taipei (2010).
Appendix C

Map of Treasure Hill Village (THAV)

Source: Arts in Residency Taipei (2011).
Appendix D

Map of Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC)

Source: Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (2011).
## Appendix E

### Tables

**Table A.1.** Population by Educational Attainment in Taipei, 2010 (population 15 years old or above)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Graduate School</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>End of 2010</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>206737</strong></td>
<td><strong>660321</strong></td>
<td><strong>322440</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songshan</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19227</td>
<td>61559</td>
<td>27069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinyi</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17380</td>
<td>58300</td>
<td>28900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daan</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39199</td>
<td>97917</td>
<td>35932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhongshan</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16847</td>
<td>57779</td>
<td>28039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhongzheng</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16479</td>
<td>42921</td>
<td>18950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Datong</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6391</td>
<td>25275</td>
<td>14511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanhua</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8497</td>
<td>35456</td>
<td>21331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenshan</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23157</td>
<td>65802</td>
<td>33092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nangang</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6645</td>
<td>23868</td>
<td>14010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neihu</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18291</td>
<td>67633</td>
<td>35633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shilin</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18965</td>
<td>67761</td>
<td>34479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beitou</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15659</td>
<td>56050</td>
<td>30494</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Civil Affairs, Reported in the Statistical Yearbook of the Department of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Taipei City Government (2011).

Note: These were the data from the household registration record, which excluded the population of foreign nationals.
Table A.2. Private Flatted Factories - Average Rents and Prices, from 2008 to January 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Rent ($/m² per month) Hong Kong</th>
<th>Rent ($/m² per month) Kowloon</th>
<th>Rent ($/m² per month) New Territories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug*</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept*</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct*</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov*</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec*</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Jan*</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rating and Valuation Department, Hong Kong Government (2012).

* Provisional figures
(Average rents and prices are in respect of upper floor units only.)
Table A.3. Proportion of Population Aged 15 and Over by District Council
District and Educational Attainment (Highest Level Attended), 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Degree course</th>
<th>Upper Secondary/ Sixth Form</th>
<th>Lower Secondary</th>
<th>Primary and below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hong Kong Island</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Western</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wan Chai</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kowloon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yau Tsim Mong</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sham Shui Po</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowloon City</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong Tai Sin</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwun Tong</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Territories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwai Tsing</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsuen Wan</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuen Mun</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuen Long</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai Po</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sha Tin</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sai Kung</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islands</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Government (2012a).
Table A.4. Population Distribution of the Aged 65 and over in Hong Kong, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Characteristics of the Districts</th>
<th>Proportion of Population Aged 65 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>Wong Tai Sin 17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Highest</td>
<td>Sham Shui Po 17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Lowest</td>
<td>Yuen Long 9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Sai Kung 9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Government (2012b).
Appendix F

List of Respondents

Between July 2011 and March 2012, I conducted 25 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with artists, cultural producers, designers and other members of the public and cultural sector. Below is a coded list of respondents organized by the number, gender, and profession of each respondent. The date of each interview and the city where the interview conducted are also provided. Unless otherwise noted, the respondents’ identities have been kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent No. (R#)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Location of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Former Government Official/ Professor</td>
<td>12 July 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>17 July 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>20 July 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>24 July 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>26 July 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6a</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>3 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6b</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>3 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Executive Secretary</td>
<td>4 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>4 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>8 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>12 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>21 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Art Director</td>
<td>24 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>25 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Shop Manager</td>
<td>25 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15a</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Fashion Designer</td>
<td>26 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15b</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Fashion Designer</td>
<td>26 August 2011</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R16</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Artist/ Curator</td>
<td>5 November 2011</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R17</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>16 January 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>17 January 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>20 January 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Designer/ Artist</td>
<td>1 February 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R21</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>2 February 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>2 February 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R23</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>16 February 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Artist/ Cultural Worker</td>
<td>24 March 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cultural Worker</td>
<td>29 March 2012</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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