

# Critical Spatial Practices in China

/Socially-Engaged Art/ Architecture  
/Urbanism

**9 Pre-recorded Lectures** ca. 20min each

**3 Panel Discussions** 40min discussion  
20min Q&A

**4 December 2020 Friday**  
9:00 - 11:30 (CET)

**9:00 - 10:00 (CET) / 16:00 - 17:00 (CST)**

Introduction

**Panel 1 Social practice art and design: navigating within its conditions, power and politics.**

Guests: Dr. Zoënie Liwen Deng (Scholar), Dr. Yanki Lee (Design

Researcher, Social Innovator), Dr. Meiqin Wang (Scholar)

Moderator: Virginia Lui (Social Designer)

**10:30 - 11:30 (CET) / 17:30 - 18:30 (CST)**

**Panel 2 Navigating daily challenges in community-based practices: narratives from front-line practitioners.**

Guests: Jialin Yang (Micro Yuan'er), Jingyuan Huang (Artist, Writer),

Yuan Zheng (27 Yuan'er)

Moderator: Aki Lee (Social Designer)

**5 December 2020 Saturday**  
10:00-11:30 (CET)

**10:00 - 11:00 (CET) / 17:00 - 18:00 (CST)**

**Panel 3 Rethinking Aesthetics: understanding temporality and immateriality.**

Guests: DEMO Studio (Magazine, Collectives), Jenny Chou (ATLAS

studio), Qiuling Wu (Upbeing, Action Villager)

Moderator: Aki Lee & DEMO Studio

**11:00 - 11:30 (CET) / 18:00 - 18:30 (CST)**

30min **Closure**

Location: Zoom ID 455 161 7763

Lecture Access: Vimeo (Social Design Studio Vienna)

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7827303>

Language: English

**Central European Time**

**China Standard Time**

*This lecture series examines critical spatial practices in China — exploring its critical and transformative potential as a practice on the interface of socially-engaged art, architecture and urbanism. It focuses on practitioners and researchers working within top-down processes and artistic strategies that employ public participation as a condition to empower civil society towards spatial change.*

*Critical spatial practices, termed by Jane Rendall, will be contextualised through a Chinese lens. Instead of redefining the term concretely, we will explore the complex dynamics at stake: social, political, cultural and ethical. We will examine the ethics of situated practices and the problematics of design neocolonialism — addressing issues of privilege, implicit biases and power as practitioners in their day-to-day work. Within Chinese state-driven urban regeneration, the navigation of the challenges of working within top-down frameworks becomes a given. A deeper investigation into the tactics developed by practitioners will provide insights into current ways of working. Furthermore, we will investigate the temporal and immaterial aesthetics of spatial practices that lean towards dialogical, situated and process-oriented rather than object-based outcomes.*

This talk series is curated by Virginia Lui and Aki Lee, support by the Social Design Studio at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, with an extra space support from Institute for Provocation.

Social  
Design

di:angewandte  
Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien  
University of Applied Arts Vienna



DEMO

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Moderator: Virginia Lui (Social Designer)

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## Moderators:

**Virginia Lui MA. B. Arch (Artist, Social Designer)**

[www.virginalui.com](http://www.virginalui.com)

Virginia Lui is an Australian artist, designer and researcher. She holds a Bachelor in Architecture and a Master in Social Design. Her PhD research focuses on critical spatial practices in Chinese urban regeneration — identifying the potential of public participation in the democratisation of spatial production. Her practice probes into urban environments through various performative, texts and audio/visual means, exploring opportunities for ruptures and activation. She is a member of Mai Ling, an association as well as an artist collective, contextualising and fostering contemporary Asian art and culture with a focus on FLINT\*.

**Aki Lee MA. (Artist, Social Designer)**

[www.aki.format.com](http://www.aki.format.com)

Graduated from the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Aki Lee received her master degree of Social Design in 2018. During the past five years, she has initiated and curated projects dealing with urban regeneration, social engagement and knowledge transformation: Game of Collective Suffering (Times Museum Guangzhou, 2020), Jiezhuan Lane Lab.(Guangzhou, 2019), Nanshan Art Festival-Design Weekend at Value Factory (Shenzhen, 2019), Unlayering Centers-Platz Fuer Originale (Floridsdorf, Vienna 2018) and so on. Among this, she believes that alternative modes of learning can be triggered by open access during public actions and encountering, therefore, facilitate a space, engaged with Socius and knowledge.

## Space Support (Beijing):

**Institute for Provocation**

[www.iprovok.org](http://www.iprovok.org)

Institute for Provocation (IFP) is a Beijing based independent art organization and project space founded in 2010. Combining the study of theory and artistic practice, IFP aims to combine cross-disciplinary knowledge and stimulate cultural exchange and production in a collective approach. IFP organizes and advocates various kinds of activities, including artist residency, research project, discussion, exhibition making, workshop, publication, etc. on the basis of considering the dynamics of the relationship of independent art space with society.

#### Panel Guests:

##### Dr. Zoénie Liwen Deng (Scholar)

Zoénie Liwen DENG is an art writer, poet, curator, and PhD graduated from Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam. Her PhD dissertation is entitled “Be Water, My Friend: The Non-Oppositional Criticalities of Contemporary Socially Engaged Art in Urbanising China”. Her research and artistic interests include social practices, activism, feminism, anarchism, New Associationist Movement, otherwise ways of living, non-western perspectives, and the post-colonial.

##### Dr. Yanki Lee (Design Researcher, Social Innovator)

[www.yankilee.com](http://www.yankilee.com)

Design researcher, educator and cofounder of Enable Foundation, Dr. Lee received her MA. in Architecture from the Royal College of Art (RCA) and a PhD in design participation from Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She was awarded Fellow of the Royal College of Art and UK-China Fellowship of Excellence for her works in cross disciplinarity and transculturality. Since 2017, Enable Foundation, a social design collective and education charity receive major funding from HKSAR Government’s Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (SIE) Fund to pioneer innovative cross-generational and transdisciplinary programmes through design researches and actions.

##### Dr. Meiqin Wang (Scholar)

[www.csun.edu/~mwang](http://www.csun.edu/~mwang)

Dr. Meiqin Wang specializes in modern and contemporary Chinese art and teaches Asian art history courses. Her dissertation and published materials focus on the recent developments of contemporary art from China and their social, political, economic, and institutional implications in the context of commercialization, urbanization and globalization of the Chinese world. Her research interests also include contemporary art of the Asian world and international exhibitions. Her teaching covers historical and contemporary arts from Asia and her courses emphasize the cultural and political context of artistic production.

##### Jingyuan Huang (Artist, Writer)

Jingyuan Huang is a China-based artist and writer. Working closely with Chinese citizens who usually are not professional writers, she has co-produced several books of their memoirs, reflections, debates, and statements. Her publications, installations, and films embody her method of ‘using art and documentary approaches to create self-made citizenship’ in a period of political setback. They add up to a unique profile of a major dynamic between the Party and the people in Chinese society today: while the Party maintains power by surrendering the dream of a communist future to capitalism in the present, the people are asked to exchange socialism for a chance at becoming rich right now.

##### Jialin Yang (Artist, Former Director of Micro Yuan’er)

Jialin is an artist and facilitator of socially engaged art. She focuses on peripheral communities’ visibility, representation, and position in the process of China’s urban regeneration and urbanization; she works with the domestic migrant community in the city as well as border-town ethnic minorities. Her workshops and events create social situations that encourage collective participation for the sharing of knowledge, re-authoring of narratives, and the making of history. For her work at Micro Yuan’er Non-profit Children’s Library and Art Center, Jialin received an incubator grant from the Sany Foundation for the program that she initiated and a letter of commendation from Aga Khan Award Steering Committee as part of the project team.

##### Yuan Zheng (Faciliator of 27 Yuan'er)

‘Laohaoshi’ is an art project co-created by Beijing ONE (27 Yuan'er) and the art group ‘吃的 (Eat) Really Want’ that focuses on the daily lives of the elderly that live in Hutong areas. Their onsite research led them to a series of co-created artistic outputs, including an ‘Very Good’ shop that sells items for the elderly such as hats, wigs, oversized women’s underwear and more. Their regular parties, namely ‘Sugar Pockets Party’ and ‘Today’s Coffee’, have brought the elderly residents and the people from 27 Yard together.

##### DEMO Studio (Magazine, Collectives)

[www.demostudio.cn](http://www.demostudio.cn)

DEMO is a biannual pan-design review journal, which focuses on local based pan-design critics/ workshops with a global vision. The journal’s content covers in-depth interviews with top design talents and industry insiders, field research in various forms on unique topics, and above all, findings of DEMO as a design research workshop over the period of half a year. By observing Chinese design from both local and international perspectives, investigating the features of design in different contexts of history, pop culture and our everyday life; DEMO tries to spark open discussions of design in China and its value.

##### Jenny Chou (Cofounder of ATLAS)

[www.studio-atlas.com](http://www.studio-atlas.com)

[www.thedaliproject.com](http://www.thedaliproject.com)

Born in Taipei (1981), Jenny Chou earned her Architecture degree at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2004, and her master’s degree in Urban Design at Columbia University in 2008. She Co-founded ATLAS in 2015 in Beijing China. Prior to ATLAS she worked with Taiwanese architect Hsieh Ying-chun on a rural China development project. The studio has shown work both in China and internationally, including at the 2018 Venice Biennale of Architecture, the 2016 International Architecture Biennale in Rotterdam. The Dali project is a community development project that ATLAS initiated with the Global Heritage fund in 2016. Since then, the project has developed a woman textile co-op -a community center and a guest house- aiming to support heritage education and creating local economic opportunities at the same time.

##### Qiuling Wu (Founder of Upbeing, Cofounder of Action Villager)

[www.upbeing.com](http://www.upbeing.com)

[www.actionvillager.com](http://www.actionvillager.com)

Qiu Ling Wu has been working on various eco-ecommunity projects and in alternative education for eight years. She is founder of Upbeing — a service provider for personalised sustainable education. They facilitate projects for those who are interested in social issues through online and offline learning with the focus on three main pillars; personal growth, ecological community building, and service to the earth. Upbeing creates trackable personal growth maps for individual participants to turn ideas into action. Action Village, a sub-project of Upbeing, is a collaborative, project-based learning platform used to inspire people towards social projects and provide a network for like-minded people and organisations to meet. It contains open-source resources, impact growth maps and other useful toolkits.



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