

Guia Fortress (before 1999).



Guia Fortress (1999).



Macao's Culture of Time and Space

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'The sound of jackhammers chipping away at the rocks on the street below is a reminder that change is constant—Macao has always been rebuilding. If there were no jackhammers in the 18th century, even then they were tearing down the buildings of the previous decades and putting up new ones in their places. In cities like Macao, time, especially architectural time, never stands still. Cities are, in many ways, very fragile constructions, ephemeral creations that endure only through a process of perpetual change.... Modern machines make changes more rapidly—and more ruthlessly—now, and in one sense, that is all that is different about the process of change for Macao. ... the past itself was endangered. ... Will the past become a nostalgic illusion conjured only in the memory by occasional, isolated and lifeless fragments and glimpses of what once was?... For several days afterwards, I felt an oppressive sense of loss—the loss of the old Macao that seemed to be disappearing everywhere before my eyes' (Porter 1996: 191-3).

The destruction of places is not an unknown narrative. Entire cities, neighbourhoods and buildings have been destroyed by earthquakes, typhoons, fire, war and invasion, and all these moments of deletion have contributed to the re-making of places. Spatial change

created by modern instances of erasure may be more subtle in nature but is no less destructive.

A new spatial order is being imposed on Macao in the last few years. As a result old places are disappearing and new ones are being formed. The MSAR's current economic landscape is enforcing a radical erasure of the past physical structure which in turn is producing a vast impact in people's experience and memories: causing feelings of rupture and loss (Morais 2009). This accelerated spatial replacement is an uneven process that inevitably produces social tensions, conflicts and public protest; it often ignores local contexts and participation which simply gives rise to urban disasters. The worst examples of disruption are being experienced outside the historical centre but even its most significant heritage sites are experiencing a disturbing impact from the increasing decline of Macao's urban environment.

Traumatic spatial changes can affect social patterns ruthlessly, and in the case of Macao the spatial setting is directly linked to an important socio-cultural role. Thus the change of one will cause the transformation of the other. In fact abrupt spatial jumps may induce social revolutions as the patterns of collective activity may simply disappear along with the prior spatial order (Lynch 1972: 217). Governance's current economic trends, the lack of a regulative planning system and the limitations of heritage policies are strongly endangering the city's socio-cultural background. Cultures, as society, are largely mirrors of the physical environment and radical change without knowing 'where you are going' is simply too unsafe and will threaten long-term cultural survival, regardless of how pleasant or realistic these new actions may seem in the short-run (Lynch 1972: 215-23). Macao is clearly a place that is becoming sharply divided between its urban heritage and a new landscape of consumption and devastation.

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The premium environment for human development is 'one in which there are both new stimuli and familiar reassurances, simultaneously the chance to explore and the ability to return' (Lynch 1972: 204). The future is parallel to the past, therefore communication between old and new places must be created. Understanding and defining the extent of historical continuity is vital in order to establish a coherent vision among Macao's rising urban development and its urban heritage. Moreover it is fundamental to reflect how truthfully this 'sense of history' is being spatially produced and articulated with modern life in order to avoid any artificial constructs (resembling simulacra). The city has a unique urban history that merited a World Heritage status for its historical centre hence, Macao urgently needs to find a balance among its patterns of *continuity* and *difference* in the city design.

This idea of historical continuity also relates to a common ground between several urban theorists. Space is a form of communication, a form of language, and as any form of language it 'is not a static, outside mega structure ... It changes both in form and content

through its dynamic use by its speakers and through its changing relationship with the real world of facts and events' (Madanipour 2003: 15). However, there is a danger of World Heritage cities becoming obsessed with history, and its citizens with their past memories: *I remember...* but we also forget. If man was unable to forget, that is being entirely historical, he would be unable to live in a creative and dynamic manner: 'the unhistorical and the historical are equally necessary to the health of an individual, a community and a system of culture' (Nietzsche 1984: 8).

In brief, I will explore Macao's culture of time and space discussing three main sources: the peninsula's spatial structure, Jonathan Porter's narrative in his book *Macao: The Imaginary City* and present citizens' individual narratives. This critical review will draw on the work of two main theorists: Kevin Lynch in his book *What Time is This Place?* which argues about the importance of spatial representation of time, and Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of the 'excess of history' and the 'hypertrophy of the historical sense of time'. It will point at the effects of accelerated urbanization and

St. Paul's Ruins (2009).



St. Michael's Cemetery (2009).



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the limitations of heritage policies, arguing how the spatial 'sense of history' can be both a fundamental and atrophic element in allowing the future to unfold: 'we must know the right time to forget as well as the right time to remember' (Nietzsche 1874: 8). I argue that this 'sense of history' is being simultaneously erased and artificially constructed in the spatial structure and preventing Macao from redefining itself through a 'creative forgetting'. To conclude Macao's excessive attachment to history is a *desperate call* (reaction) facing the progressive erosion of the entire urban fabric and radically imposed change.

My intent with this review is to pose concerns and draw questions on facts, in short a critical look. I will open the debate towards the relation between history, time and space, and emphasise the power of spatial representation as a determinant producer of a culture and society. This article is a product of my observation that I submit to the reader's understanding. The search for truth is a collective construction of individual participations; it is a shared knowledge. Therefore my aim is to endorse the reader's critical observation, interaction, and convey the plurality of image's interpretation. The plurality of perspective is what makes culture and art so rich, as the polysemics of space, and Macao is one of its finest examples.

HISTORY, TIME AND SPACE

1. ABOUT HISTORY

'Overproud European of the 19th century, you are mad!

May our estimation of the historical be but an occidental prejudice; as long as we constantly learn to improve our ability to do history for the sake of *life*... History, so far as it serves life, serves an unhistorical power.... History belongs to the living man in three respects: it belongs to him so far as he is active and striving, so far as he preserves and admires, and so far as he suffers and is in need of liberation. To this triplicity of relations correspond three minds of history: so far as they can be distinguished, a *monumental*, an *antiquarian* and a *critical* kind of history' (Nietzsche 1874, 1980: 14, 50).

The concept of history plays a fundamental role in human thought. The relation between historical knowledge and life has always been a topic of research

for European philosophers. Yet this quest for knowledge inevitably involves being integrated in the task of which it is a part. The 19th century discovered history and all subsequent education and research were embedded with it. Ralph Emerson (1836) argued that his age was retrospective

'it builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? ... The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.'

Nineteenth century retrospectiveness is very much alive today. We still want to know, understand, and explain the past; furthermore we require the service of history. And Macao is no exception. The history of the city becomes for a citizen the history of the self as 'he understands the wall, the turreted gate, the ordinance of the town council, the national festival like an illustrated diary of his youth and finds himself, his strength, his diligence, his pleasure, his judgment, his folly and rudeness, in all of them. Here one could live, he says to himself, for here one can live and will be able to live, for we are tough and not to be uprooted over night. And so with this 'We', he looks beyond the ephemeral, curious, individual life and feels like the spirit of the house, the generation, and the city' (Nietzsche 1874, 1980: 19); in a word, his memories. But to privilege memory as an instrument of truth there must be a direct correspondence between the experience and how it is remembered. There is an undeniable relation between history and memory, between the past and the present, and implicit in these debates is the question between the individual and collective dimensions of memory, and the media through which memory is experienced, formed or expressed (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003): in this case space.

Macao's spatial structure reflects the city's historical culture: it is polysemic. Its physical space entails the plurality of expressions of all that have inhabited the city for thousands of years. It can be argued that the urban fabric is Macao's spatial biography, in a sense its

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memories. Can we speak about *spatial memory*? Neither space nor society have a *memory* since these belong entirely to individuals, however it could be argued that places can indeed express values belonging to the individual's experiences of a culture in a particular time and space. *Spatial memory* and issues of individual and collective representations are fundamentally decisive in the urban experience. Individuals create a powerful image while experiencing the city and today China's capitalist modernization of the SARs generates a phenomenon of *loss* largely originated by the erosion of places into spaces (Harvey 2001; Morais 2009).

Moreover it has become obvious that the spread of civilizations and the development of spatial patterns and cultural activity since the earliest times are extremely complicated to evaluate. History, as a producer of accurate accounts of the past, has been one of the grand disciplinary contributors to the understanding of human culture. To what extent is human history constitutive of the human present? Claude Levi-Strauss (1963a:16-7) argued that history is essentially concerned with society 'other' than the one in which we live. Whether this 'otherness' is due to remoteness in time or in space, or even cultural heterogeneity, is of minor importance compared to a basic standpoint: history is in fact a system of representation which changes according to individuals, groups, cultures, and at the very end from my own image as a researcher. But what if history is perverted? According to Nietzsche (1874) history is necessary but as it is practiced is deadly, since an excess or distortion of history can be significantly detrimental to *life*.

Furthermore we all know that history as social reality, never 'forms a coherent whole' being by nature fragmentary and inconsistent (Leach 1954: 4); as for Leach (1954: 5-8) 'every society is a process in time' subject to internal change, either suffering transformation within an existing order or the alteration of its structure, therefore social reality is fluid, fragmentary and incoherent. So are history, space and culture. All are forms of representation subject to change and interpretation; they are the field of codes, symbols and practices in which human beings construct and represent themselves and others, and hence their societies and histories. They are not simply an abstract order of symbols or relations among them, both contain contestable messages, images and actions (Comaroff 1992). It is so taken for granted that each

city (or country) embodies its own distinctive history, culture, and society occupying space 'naturally' without contradictions or conflicts (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 6). History reflects agency, the choices by individuals and groups; and it undoubtedly reflects constraining structures and circumstances. Indeed the past is largely constituted in narratives, always representation, always construction.

Additionally, history has been a little self-conscious about the question of space and its significance in shaping narratives, society, culture and identity. Thus it is fundamental to understand Macao's spatial structure and how it constructs individual's narratives (past and current) trying to enlarge specific spatial experiences to the dimensions of a more general, collective one. History must be sensitive to the variety of forms of (re)presentation of historical knowledge, and architectural urban space is one of its dimensions. Still there are several discursive historical and spatial domains in Macao that criss-cross. Further questions must be explored to understand which groups are involved and how their interests are being articulated, given that historical and cultural aspects of preservation and reinvestment cannot be disconnected from the political and socio-economic dimensions (Jackson 1991; Smith 2001).

There is no such thing as 'perspective-free history' as the past highly depends on 'what happened' (facts) and 'what are we interested in' (interpretation) (Little 2007). And this view does not question the objectivity of the past since Macao's events and actions happened without our interest in them. But the way we organise these facts, these spaces, into a narrative about the 'city's identity' or 'historical spatial memory' then we are imposing an interpretation on them that is highly dependent on the observer's significance. In addition, historians always produce the writings of history from the standpoint of the present.

I do not wish to contest the meaning or conflict over imagery of the past. My focus of contestation in this debate is not the conflicting account of what happened but instead to critically observe *whom* or *what* is entitled to speak for the past in the present: in spatial terms. How is history spatially being represented in modern Macao? And whose history? Whose memories? In short I am contesting the present's spatial representation of the past: its inexistence in the new urban areas and its possessiveness in the historical centre. And I must

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note the insufficient attention paid to the Chinese spatial inheritance in contrast to the Portuguese (Latin-European) legacy. In brief, Macao needs to carefully re-assess which are the spaces of historical interest and if these are faithfully representing the way of life and aspirations of the plurality of its citizens.

'We invent ourselves the major part of our experience' (Nietzsche 1979a) and we do so by rearranging that which, socially, culturally, naturally and spatially, confronts us in the world. We stamp

our impressions of what is and what is to come (Rapport 1997: 32). Cities are born into certain socio-cultural conditions, historical situations, but they are responsible for the sense they make of these conditions, their meaning and evaluation, and finally their actions.

2. ABOUT TIME AND SPACE

'There are two moments in time in Macau: the moment as a pause in the passage of time,

Macao in 1818 (Zhao Bao's painting) and in 2006.



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oblivious of past or future, and the moment of history. The two moments coexist everywhere yet are seemingly detached from one another' (Porter 1996: 127).

Physical space embodies time and the virtues of individual images we generate are vital for the life of a society and a culture: 'a desirable image is one that celebrates and enlarges the present while making connections with past and future. The relationship is therefore reciprocal' (Lynch 1972: 1).

Macao has always experienced a series of rapid urban transformations marking specific periods in time. It provides evidence for evolutionary biology's new theory of 'punctuated equilibrium' (Eldredge and Gould 1972) which argues that change is localised in unusual, rapid events of branching speciation; it criticises the traditional theory of phyletic gradualism (evolutionary development) and argues that evolution proceeds in a pattern of punctuated equilibrium.

The city resisted furious urbanization until the 1960s when it rapidly started to expand, mainly through land reclamation. However, the pace of spatial

replacement was never as accelerated as it is today. At present Macao is experiencing simultaneously a 'spatial annihilation' and a 'hypertrophy of the historical sense of time' generated by the blend of two main factors: firstly the economic growth generated by the gambling industry induces a spatial erasure that generates strong senses of loss, uncertainty and displacement, and secondly by history's authority as a way of city branding, tourism investment and global status. The first will inevitably emphasise the power of the second as citizens will become obsessed with places that retain their surviving memories. Therefore a *culture of the past* is being reinforced in Macao, an 'antiquarian historical sense of reverence' (Nietzsche 1874, 1980: 19).

In spite of unfortunate situations of simulacra the positive presence of the past is still stronger in Macao's spatial structure, especially in the areas that have been classified by UNESCO and under the protection of the Cultural Institute. However, there are so many *historical* spaces that are in urgent need of protection. It is extremely complicated to evaluate what is 'significant' to preserve and what is 'irrelevant' to destroy, what to 'forget' and what to 'remember', as it highly depends on the values of different groups and individuals. The question of *why* we preserve buildings, historical structures and environments remains unclear. Is it because they are unique, and provide time representation, individual or group symbols, quality and function, or even due to their research relevance about our history? Or perhaps because they provide comfortable environments in which we feel secure? (Lynch 1972) Or could it be that the present is not providing the necessary fulfilment of our aspirations? If the present would be visibly qualitative then past structures would become less relevant...perhaps not. These are difficult questions that have no direct answer as the degree of attachment to the city and to its past is individual and culturally related. New environments are generally unfamiliar therefore more difficult to understand and accept. But again to preserve all the past would be life denying (Nietzsche 1874; Lynch 1972) so we must learn how to forget. To forget we must delete, to delete we must first select; and the very process of selection is by far a complex and conflicting one particularly in a place like Macao: subject to a plurality of perspectives.

Additionally, preservation in Macao has been concentrated in the long past and 'yesterday' is thought

St. Michael's Cemetery (2009).



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‘Spatial annihilation (examples of loss in form and in function)’



Chinese Bazaar area (2009).



Doca do Lamau area (2009).

‘Antiquarian historical sense of reverence’ (examples of *dysneitis* and simulacra)



St. Paul's Ruins Hello Kitty, Macao tower (2006).



St. Dominic's Square (2009).

of as something unimportant to discard. It provides developers the opportunity of argument, as there is no ‘historical interest’ in this setting since ‘it does not belong to the 16th century’. In general there is a preference for ‘the remote past’ since it does not ‘threaten the present’ (Lynch 1972: 42). Furthermore, many of these long historic locations are seething with visitors but rarely

visited, or inhabited by its citizens, and this is another form of *loss*; the act of tourism becomes more important than place. Nevertheless the survival of these unvisited spaces is a set of local emotional comfort, shelter and continuity; the global dimension of this idea is that Macao, as a city, can be understood in the same way for its Diaspora: a point of emotional reassurance.

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I live in a historical neighbourhood in a building that is two and a half centuries old; architects and designers often find themselves living in old structures in older neighbourhoods, unless we have chosen to inflict our personal design on ourselves (Lynch 1972: 38). But we do not inhabit the space as it was, we modify it. We erase and transform, as the forms and structures we preserve are opportunities for improvement. The future must also be protected as conservation will easily transform itself into conservatism, maintaining things as they are: the present places, because we are used to looking at them, the existing traditions and the present city ecology (Lynch 1972: 105).

Place, home and roots are primary and Yi-Fu Tuan argues that 'place is an organised world of meaning. It is essentially a static concept. If we see the world as a process constantly changing, we would not be able to develop any sense of place' (Tuan 1993: 179; Cresswell 2006: 31). Indeed culture, form and tradition will reinforce the sense of permanence of places, as they are the present expressions of past experiences and events of hopes for the future (Relph 1976). However 'we build our image of the world with data from our senses' and by presenting 'data in novel patterns, artistic inventions alter our sensibilities—change what we see and therefore how we conceive the world and again how we look at it. We argue a particular aspect of this general case: that there are novel temporal manipulations of environment that will not only delight us but also vivify our images of time—help us to heal the breach between the abstract intellectual concept and our emotional sense of it' (Lynch 1972: 7). Time and space encompass change; it is the spatialization of time and the temporality of space (Cresswell 2006).

MACAO URBAN NARRATIVES

1. JONATHAN'S PORTER NARRATIVE (1513-1999)

'By the end of 1999, when the territory is handed back to China, Macau will have been occupied and governed by Portuguese for 443 years—almost half of the closing millennium.... Thus Macau became the first continuously occupied European settlement in China and finally became the last European territory in Asia. Perhaps that fact alone imparts to Macau a sufficient symbolic significance' (Porter 1996: xi).

As architects we make time visible, however, the limits of time representation are still rather uncertain to us. Literature, in contrast, can organise 'the longest span that any art admits, since it may represent enormous reaches of time and may be read or heard within a lapse of days or weeks. Both talents provide representations and images of our individual experience, and a rich source of information about the human image of time' (Lynch 1972: 163).

Jonathan Porter's (1996: xi) narrative is particularly shaped by places, largely retrospective, individual and analytic. It is an extremely relevant work providing information on Macao's culture of space and time as constantly evoked moments and its relation to places and people. Porter attempts to grasp, and communicate, a 'sense of place' looking at Macao's cultural history. His strong analytical framework is clearly expressed in his approach, in the way he structures the narrative not chronologically, but instead thematically and topically. He examines the city in an unconventional way: in terms of cultural and historical imaginary directly linked to the spatial structure (Porter 1996: 8). Macao is in fact unique and unusual, and research would fall short in analysing this city through a conventional method. Places are not experienced in an independent way, therefore to understand the essence of places we must look to a variety of scale, location, people, culture, personal experience and, of course, history.

But the key question is: how strongly was Porter's narrative influenced by a historical lens while experiencing the city? I could argue that the city's spatial structure and culture of everyday life was so *historically* strong that it indeed influenced his account. Furthermore it is, in itself, historical as it evokes the past and is at the same time part of it. This narrative is strong evidence of how passionate history may become to individuals when experiencing Macao. It appears as if the city had the power to pull you into the past by the means of space, people and perhaps by its relaxed pace of time, producing in individuals a strong historical consciousness. We definitely cannot underestimate the influence that some squares, streets and dead ends, corners and narrow paths, and mainly the balcony of Bela Vista had in Porter's writings.

Time used to run slow in Macao; not anymore. As much as Porter (1996) wants to refer positively to the present and imminence of change, there is a nostalgic sentiment all through his narrative. I cannot

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say if the objective of his book unconsciously aimed to understand his deep fascination with the city, to protect an individual memory or communicate an 'imaginary' that he considered endangered; perhaps all these motives were implicit. But what makes Macao so special? Is it the space, time, or the people? Perhaps the answer is in the relation between space and time and its combined construction of a society and culture; as we cannot aim to preserve one without the others. Macao's value is multidimensional and paramount, and it encompasses local and global significance.

What is Macao's global significance at present? Is it a *historical* symbol for Western and Eastern relations?!

Gary Ngai (1996) once claimed that Macao could be a bridge between space and time in the service of human relations. Macao could create optimal conditions in order to maintain that role that once gave significance to its global status. Porter (1996: xi) also begins his narrative stating the importance of Macao in the history of global foreign relations, in particular the exchange between Europe and Asia. He emphasises different historical meanings at national level for both China and Portugal, and the contrasting diversity of its cultural elements as a result of Macao's cross-cultural identity. Porter (1996: xiii) envisages the future of Macao's cultural diversity as 'largely meaningless to China' but 'paramount to Portugal'; however in politico-economic dimensions it will be highly relevant to China. In short he argues that China is primarily an 'economic investor' and Portugal aims to retain its cultural significance as it reminds them of a 'nostalgic sense of national pride'. As a result post-1999 Macao has become the stage of interaction of two distinct, but not necessarily contradictory, ambitions. In an increasing global plurality Macao can set the example of how two radically different aspirations could coexist and thrive together once more, honouring both past and future.

Portuguese explorers did not bring 'European History' to people without it. They brought individual histories far less predictable than we may have expected. Macao is one of those places that provides evidence that global forces played in local contexts and forms in unexpected ways, changing known structures into unusual spatial and cultural settings (Comaroff 1992): 'Money and commodities, literacy and Christendom challenged local symbols, threatening to convert them into a universal currency. But precisely because the

cross, the book, and the coin were such saturated signs, they were variously and ingeniously redeployed to bear a host of new meaning as non-Western peoples (Clifford 1988: 5-6; Comaroff 1992: 6-7).

Significance in Macao operates in the plural and in the individual. According to Oscar Wilde (1913: 205) 'a truly great artist cannot conceive of life being shown or beauty fashioned, under any conditions other than he has selected. And the history of urban space, as of literature and poetry, was 'a history of the influence of the past and yet of its creative appropriation through the 'capable imagination' of strong individuals' in the present' (Bloom 1975: 5; Rapport 1997: 31).

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As a final point 'Macao is a very personal experience. There is some quality in the place, something unusual yet elusive, that makes a deep impression on the imagination. ... It is as if the city were not entirely real or, rather, not of the real world. Perhaps that is because it belongs, in fact, not to one but to two worlds' (Porter 1996: 9); it is an exceptionally unconventional city, and just like Jonathan Porter (1996: 9) I 'still find it hard to define what appeals to me so much about Macao'.

2. THE CITIZENS' NARRATIVES (1999-2009)

Is Macao an imaginary city? 'I wonder if the city I've just been describing ever existed? Or was just a place that faded in memory, an imaginary reconstruction of the past' (Pons 1999, 2002: 131).

I cannot stress enough that there is an excessive *sense of loss* and *culture of the past* in Macao today. There is strong evidence of these sentiments through the narratives collected during the last and present years; and these are transversal to main cultural groups

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(Chinese, Macanese, and Portuguese). It is indeed primarily to blame for the devastation created by the latest unplanned urbanization but so is the city's historical passion. At present there are two conflicting spatial phenomena, on one side the erosion provided by current economic trends directly related to the 'gambling city' and the 'historic city' which fights disappearance and unintentionally emphasises a sense of 'antiquarian historical sense of reverence'.

Furthermore, I must point out the negative influence produced by the 'disneyitis' and simulacra created by several of Macao's gambling and entertainment industries, and some sporadic cases in the historical core (Zukin 1991; Morais 2008). These spaces retail the past and promote an 'antiquarian historical sense of reverence' as a form of economic and tourism asset. In places like Fisherman's Wharf we do not *sense history*; you are led to experience and consume *a history* displayed in space as an assorted cookie box, it is just artificial. These sorts of spatial experiences also guide to the concept of 'post-tourism' where individuals accept that 'there is *no* authentic tourist experience – there are merely a series of games or texts that can be played' and to a phenomenally rich culture as Macao this threat is both real and potentially disastrous (Debord 1970: 168; Cuthbert 2001: 306).

It is now again clear in Macao how magical and enchanting the forms of a capitalist culture can be (Comaroff 1992: 7). Sharon Zukin (1991) writes about the culture of the contemporary market economy as a 'creative destruction'; Zukin (1991: 254) claims that 'we do not find coherent values in the landscapes of consumption' and that 'abstract market forces tend to detach people from social institutions overpowering specific forces of attachment identified with place'. Moreover, place is becoming sharply divided between landscapes of consumption and devastation (Polanyi 1957; Zukin 1991: 4). History in Macao has become another good for consumption. Yet historical or cultural consumption is not particular to this case, it is a global malaise which prioritises the value of capital (Harvey 2001).

In fact there is a strong campaign of local resistance emerging at this very point in Macao. This emergent 'culture of resistance' (Bird 1993) should be encouraged, not only to prevent spatial erosion but also to fight for a local cultural politics of alternative historical memory which avoids a 'melancholic politics

of loss and regret by recording the 'voices of challenge and resistance encoded in the rhythms of subcultural street life... and the presence of alternative traditions of representation' (Bird 1993: 134). This type of approach allows the construction of 'alternative representations of local traditions in the same place, thus making room for a conceptualization of the local as site of contestation over meaning and power rather than a reservoir of unitary local subjectivity' (Bird 1993: 134; Smith 2001).

In Macao it is not only the displaced that experience a displacement (Bhabha 1989: 66; Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 10; Morais 2009); as place does matter, and more importantly *who* and *what* it represents. As a result what does Macao mean for its residents? What is its present local significance? In next page I present a few samples of Macao's citizens 'imaginary' and 'sense of loss' that were collected as part of my research on the city's urban identity to illustrate present displacement phenomena. I interviewed in-depth nearly eighty residents from different cultural groups, ages and genders, the elites and the public.

There is a vast 'sense of loss' in the narratives collected, unusually cohesive; therefore I could argue that it is indeed a collective sentiment shared by the citizens of Macao, and most likely its diaspora abroad. However, these emotions of loss are often contradicted by reasoning due to acknowledgment of the socio-economic prosperity that the territory has experienced in the last few years. The public is largely lost, confused and insecure, and is forced to negotiate between their emotions and reasoning and the immediate reality they are facing. At present in a 'world where both time and space are being absorbed under the homogenizing powers of money and community exchange', the city of Macao is apparently surrendering to what seems an inevitable destiny (Harvey 1990).

Am I contradicting myself after all my arguing and being nostalgic in my observations? Or am I being, like Jonathan Porter influenced by Macao's historic spell? Yes, I also evoke the past... and as an individual I share the same cruel 'sense of loss' with the people of Macao as something very dear to me is being destroyed. But the biggest *nostalgia* I feel is for the future, as the new forms I see are by large unidentifiable, visionless and illusory; a complete lack of individuality that has always been Macao's fundamental characteristic. To

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IMAGINARY

Portuguese	Public 1	'I feel that some spaces are really mine but I think people are more important; when I just imagined the squares I thought about the people that go there: Macao is a shelter'
	Elite 1	'I think the city will become like Monaco, a place for rich people and Formula 1 drivers'
	Elite 21	'It is a laboratory'
Macanese	Public 2	'I always imagined Macao as a tiny place and thought that was made for tiny people like children; you cannot find a place like this anymore'
	Public 12	'A place that still has some culture and some spatial features'
	Elite 13	'Macao is now a transplanted character, it has no local context'
Chinese	Public 7	'Very unique, most cities in China mainland are all the same and here is different; Chinese city with Portuguese style'
	Elite 33	'Lazy people with lazy minds'
	Elite 8	'The image of Macao is very bad; it is just gambling. We need to train people, educate them'

SENSE

Portuguese	Public 1	'Macao today is not a place to live anymore, I am here because it is my home, so I dream and think of the past; I am quiet and silent (going back is impossible)'
	Elite 1	'People are not singing anymore, everyone looks depressed'
	Elite 13	'I feel less identified, not displaced but less identified; there is an annihilation of the culture to accommodate international interests, an incremental destruction of the city'
Macanese	Public 2	'Macao was a good place to retire, but it is not true anymore; not relaxed anymore, too much concrete; the trees are gone, the 'big' water; too many people; We used to have the sea shore, the city was more humble, more natural'
	Elite 31	'This place is not mine anymore'
	Elite 33	'I stopped the car and started crying, the place was not there anymore.....'
Chinese	Public 30	'Ideal and reality are very hard to meet, only in fairy tales; I have money but I am not happy, people are too indifferent now'
	Elite 8	'I take pictures of things that I like because they might disappear'
	Elite 9	'The city is confused; these new designs are too selfish, not caring about the people'

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honour one's elder has long been rooted in Chinese culture, and spatial ancestry is just being disregarded by this new materialistic spatial order.

3. THE CITIES OF MACAO

'Be sure to tell them that different cities with the same name sometimes succeed each other; they're born and they die without ever knowing each other, without any contact between them' (Calvino 1978).

Italo Calvino (1978) was indeed right, but he didn't mention that different cities also exist in the same moment in time. Jonathan Porter (1996: 61-96) dedicates a chapter of his book to 'memories' (as the architecture of history). In his 'memories' he speaks about seven cities in Macao: the 'city of Sojourners and Settlers, the Fortified city, the City in the Name of God in China, the Cosmopolitan city, Chinese city, the Parallel city and finally the Anonymous city. Do these cities belong to history? Could Macao, at present, evoke similar images and narratives?

'At the centre of the city, in the São Domingos market beside the Leal Senado and across Santa Casa da Misericórdia, the changeless activity of the business of living goes with the kind of random intensity of life and decay on a steamy, tropical forest floor. Cars, motorcycles, trucks, bicycles, hand carts, and pedestrians move in every direction, some slowly and seemingly confused, others purposefully on business errands—delivering goods, moving things,

repairing utilities, renovating buildings, or tearing them down and starting new ones. In the market is an endless daily turnover of meat, fish, fruit, and vegetables; stalls and peddlers in the surrounding streets offering every kind of cheap clothes, toys, and trinkets; boutiques, stationery shops, pharmacies, hardware stores selling household goods flowing onto the sidewalk; and bakeries and cafes tempting the crowds with the morning's pastries' (Porter 1996: 127).

This description corresponds to a 'moment in time' in the everyday life of Macao, and at present the diversity and pulse of the past is still invariable.

Macao made Jonathan Porter dream, imagine, create, write. He captured a 'spirit of place', his own city, imaginary or real: 'from now on I will describe the cities to you the Khan had said, in your journeys you will see if they exist. But the cities visited by Marco Polo were always different from those thought by the emperor' (Porter 1996: 1).

Cities are plural; they belong to the individual imaginary of its people. Places in Macao are polysemic and this diversity is underlined as they also evoke different meanings subjected to the individuality and cultural setting of the observer. Jonathan Porter argued that Macao was composed of 'many cities', some still visible and others enduring only in people's memories. Macao is 'a city of memories—memories of many cities in different times, preserved in its architecture of monuments and stones, in its buildings and walls, in the lines of its streets, and in its gardens and shrines and temples. Its personality as a city changed as its purpose and its people changed' (Porter 1996: 62).

St. Dominic's Church area (2009).



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But isn't this a universal truth that can be applied to all cities in the world?

For the analysis of Porter's cities in 21st century Macao I have borrowed the idea of an HSBC bank advertising campaign in 2008: 'Your point of view'. In each 'Different Values' advert, created by JWT, New York and London, a single image repeats three times, with a different one-word interpretation imposed over each photo. It was an excellent initiative that demonstrated the power of image, language, meaning and context; it encapsulated our global outlook that acknowledges and respects that people value things in very different ways: 'Who knows what you'll see when you see someone else's point of view' ([http:// www.yourpointofview.com](http://www.yourpointofview.com)). Jonathan Porter's cities still exist in the contemporary fabric of Macao, and I will let the reader interpret the images freely.

To conclude, every experience is by and large individual, subjective and dependant from our standpoint. There are patterns of behaviour that belong to cities and Macao has always possessed this magic of captivating travellers, inspiring writers and poets; a spirit of coexistence and natural respect for pluralism, vice and virtue. These plural traditions belong to the nature of the city. However today it has become obsessed with its own history and what was once a natural process may become an artificial one. Additionally as the future being produced is visibly senseless and undifferentiated, this reinforces this attachment as a means of urban identity. This is a critical observation and disquiet.

Macao is, and has always been, individual. It is a place at margins that never belonged to any world, neither to Portugal nor China, to history or

gambling but to itself, and its citizens. It is also a fine example of coexistence between two different worlds, and of a society of respect that has become a cultural tradition (Ngai 1996: 7). If the spirit of coexistence is a tradition of Macao, then it should be kept alive in the city's development through a visible equilibrium of heritage and growth. How did it work in the past? These worlds were spatially connected, but clearly differentiated. And all natural processes may assume in time a new form through the means of a strategic spatial planning and informed urban design.

STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING
AND URBAN DESIGN: PATTERNS
OF CONTINUITY AND DIFFERENCE

Macao has always been an interface and synonym of change. The city has been experiencing a transnational phenomenon since the early 17th century, when its golden age attracted a vast inflow of merchants generating city's growth. The flow of cultures, ethnicities, classes and genders was constant almost since its origins. The bid for UNESCO's World Heritage listing described it as an international trading port and a cultural melting pot between the East and the West. Macao should preserve its historical role as much as its culture or architectural space, as its historical responsibility as a cultural interface constitutes a more attractive quality for global identity in contrast to the 'Las Vegas in the East' reputation.

There are two politics of representation at odds, on the one side the 'gambling city' and on the other the 'historic city', and these are directly



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The 'city of sojourners and settlers'.



The 'fortified city'.



The 'city in the Name of God in China'.



The 'cosmopolitan city'.



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The 'Chinese city'.



The 'parallel city'.



The 'anonymous city'.



linked to specific spatial phenomena: 'erasure' and an 'antiquarian historical sense of reverence'. As stated in the introduction of this article my intent is to critically observe, pose questions and voice concerns. I have opened the debate about the relationship between history, time and space, and pointed to the significance of spatial representation as a determinant producer of a culture and society. Three suggestions are proposed for further discussion and the first is about the call for urban history studies.

Research on Macao's urban history has emerged but is not sufficient yet. A methodical analysis of the urban space evolution, patterns of development and change since its origins must be addressed. It is essential to conceptualise the historical development and cartographic representation in spatial terms (i.e. morphological periods) by applying design methods like Conzenian morphogenetic approach. This type of analysis will supply evidence to compare and contrast with socio-cultural, political and economic dimensions

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Original Urban form
(based on 1912 map references overlapping; 2006 base map).



Heritage classified areas
(based on UNESCO and IC's protection areas; 2006 base map).

providing a comprehensive narration of Macao's history and the processes of city transformation. Historical space must be conceptualised and placed. Equally imperative is the analysis of contemporary spatial phenomena and its multidimensional relations, as we

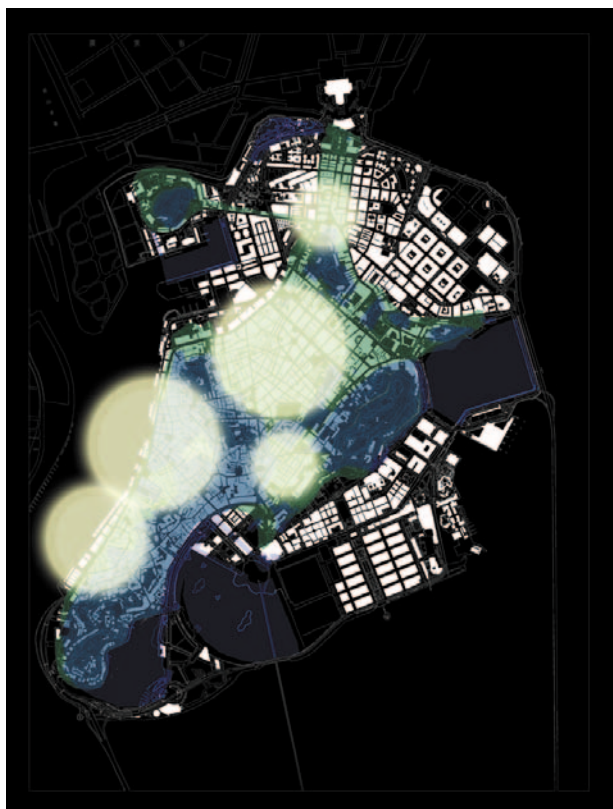
Examples of everyday life and places that have a significant socio-cultural role embedded in the spatial function and form.

live in a time of accelerated economic and socio-cultural change that we have not yet learnt to understand.

The second is the contest of the present's spatial representation of the past: its large inexistence in the new urban areas and its possessiveness in the historical centre. And I must refer again to the insufficient attention afforded to the Chinese spatial inheritance as Macao still entails cultural and spatial traditions that are long extinct



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Patterns of continuity and difference: examples of significant areas to protect, places that can simultaneously promote spatial continuity and time variation.

in mainland China and a unique blend of everyday life practices that you can experience in simple places like Café Nam Ping in Rua 5 de Outubro. Areas like the Chinese Bazaar (commonly called 'tin tins') or the Three Lamps Market buzz, and a series of significant places like Lou Lim Ieoc Garden, are by large historic. The Chinese city is still mostly observable in the fabric structure, its form and function, in the street life and temples as much

as the Portuguese is found in the churches and squares. Historical spatial analysis incorporates a combination of zoom-in and zoom-out scales of places, morphologies and identity, and not only individual buildings and its surrounding areas or interconnected paths. And this analysis must criss-cross with different layers and perspectives of the socio-cultural past: the monumental and everyday life histories.

Historical space in Macao should be re-evaluated by a knowledgeable treatment of spatial form, function and significance. This re-assessment should be analysed from Portuguese, Chinese and Macao perspectives as the 'making of place' must be participated in by a wide variety of cultural and 'political actors, including local neighbourhood groups, government officials and business interests, as well as wider networks of social practice such as architectural activists, historic preservationists, and global developers' (Smith 2001: 113). I acknowledge that this is an extremely difficult task due to the plural nature of Macao as these actors often collide in contests over the cultural meanings and relevance of place (Bird 2003; Watson 1991; Smith 2001), but nevertheless it is critical. In brief, Macao needs to carefully re-assess which are the spaces of historical interest and whether these are faithfully representing the way of life and aspirations of the majority of its citizens.

My final suggestion refers to the management of spatial change in atypical places like Macao. New urban planning theories present spatial planning as the way through. The term spatial brings to attention the 'placement' of things and the protection of special places and sites; it implies understanding and selectivity, and a focus or a vision that really makes a difference for an area over time (Healey 2004: 298). Space may



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play an effective role managing different scales: global, national, regional, municipal, the neighbourhood and the individual. The Macao-Zhuhai metropolitan region will constitute another scale for planners to address and at the regional level Macao should be carefully integrated in the Mega-City Region of the Pearl Delta planning strategy as it must clearly preserve its individuality in relation to Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Zhuhai.

Additionally, spatial replacement requires the participation of urban design. Urban design is 'a form of—and contribution to—place-making', it is *about* and *for* people, and the significance of place; the importance of design as both a process and product is often ignored by the market economy and political forces (Carmona et al. 2003: 1). Design principles must always be used with the flexibility of a deeper understanding of the value of the context in which they are going to be applied, as there are no right or wrong answers, and the quality of these will only be known over time (Carmona et al. 2003: 1). Urban design can generate 'patterns of continuity' and 'patterns of difference' in the city form; and these patterns will help minimise a 'sense of loss' through promoting a 'creative forgetting'.

Urban design should preferably provide images that can be both historical and unhistorical, that is 'open-ended, adaptable to change, allowing the individual to continue to investigate and organise reality' (Lynch 1960). Spatial structure should provide enough references to the past but inevitably newly produced images will reflect its space and time, its location and people. A strong sense of place will strengthen the socio-cultural imaginary of these different scales operating as a communicator and qualifier of urban life. In short Macao must protect its culture of space and time, still allowing the future to unfold

CONCLUSION

Macao needs a call of attention towards the city's urban history, spatial planning and urban design. The destruction of its historical space will have an immediate impact on the city's socio-cultural construction, and as we stated at the beginning, 'what is at stake here is the affirmation of domination over a territory and control over the privileges this territory provides, by means of claims of identity' and this spatial break can soon

provide 'an axis to legitimate a new set of identity referents' (Pina-Cabral 2002: 71). It is not at a point of no return but the citizens must prevent this 'spatial annihilation' continuing before the city's spatial history is lost forever. There are already some strong reactions in the population but nevertheless they are still fragmented and act in relative isolation. The public must be aware of the dangers of radical spatial replacement as the ways people perceive the physical changes in their surrounding environment will strongly affect the cultural construction, and the fabric of society. This statement is equally valid for the historical centre in which heritage policies must assess how history is being represented (and how truthfully) allowing patterns of temporal difference to coexist and fight simulacra.

The space of imagination, of place-making and meaning (the space of architects and urban designers) should be engaged with the world of everyday experiences designing contexts that fit our time, daily activities and aspirations; it should not be a space solely confined to the artistic or historical domains but a space placed in our everyday lives. Spatial planning underlines the impact of the physical structure as a space for representation and reaction that is able to generate relationships with a 'sense of place'. But be alert to what is going to constitute the patterns of continuity in the city design, and how, so it does not become a fiercely destructive force that will misrepresent the past and constrain free forms of expression. Planners, architects, developers and public officials, as regulators of change, have an important mission of defining design principles, spatial concepts and vocabulary that 'not only carry strategic ideas from the arenas of their articulation to these sites of material and imaginative use' but bear in mind that 'they also affect the structuring of political debate and struggle over the impacts of projects, the distributive justice of investments and regulatory principles, and over imagined futures' (Healey 2004: 64)

Macao can make a difference; it can present a unique model of development and become an exemplar of how harmony can be achieved among presence and absence, remembrance and forgetting. Spatial planning and urban design principles can recognise the importance of space as a signifier of local relations, systems and identities, and absorb material realities (demands and needs of the public) in order to become successful in establishing a relation between different

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space-time dimensions, local and regional dynamics and their multiple driving forces (Healey 2004: 64-5).

Is Macao gambling its future? There is a moment of opportunity now. Today the new administration brings confidence to the city as they represent a new image. As former Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, the new chief-executive embeds a strong socio-cultural awareness that hopefully will generate a different vision for Macao based on the equilibrium of local and global values; a 'spatial political economy'

(Cuthbert 2003). The city must empower local capacity in order to moderate and shape the power of global and regional forces and their impact in the territory (Healey 2004: 65). There is optimism for Macao now as for many people responsibility is as important as money. To care for a place involves more than having a concern for it that is based on a glorious past and future opportunities, as the real responsibility and respect for Macao is for itself, and for what it represents to us and to others. **RC**

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