



香港教育大學

The Education University
of Hong Kong

A Gathered Dialogue Eco-afterlives and Slow Hope

13-14 May 2024

The Education University of Hong Kong

PROGRAMME BOOK



Collaborators



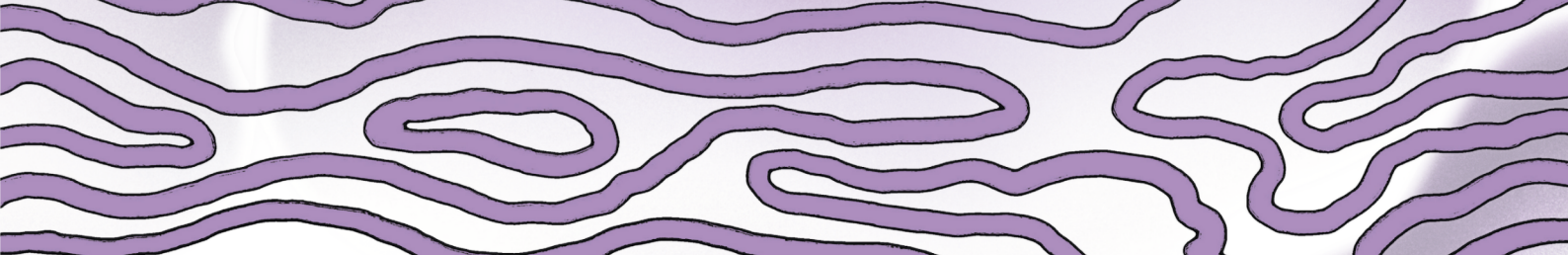
A GATHERED DIALOGUE

Amid the environmental degradation and mass extinction, life and lifeforce is cut short, ruptured, recomposed by industrial capitalism and technocratic development. The afterlives of many become the witness and/or embodiment of slow violence (Nixon 2013) and entangled colonial, racial and environmental injustice.

As agricultural drug diclofenac kills the *Gyps* Vultures, as ghost fishing nets around the world drown various marine mammals, and as transcorporeal toxicity enacts new modes of “toxic kinship” (Alaimo 2010; Cielemeńska and Åsberg 2019), the multi-dimensional afterlives of “multi-being” (Reid, cited in Price and Chao 2023) require urgent attention and new modes of thought and engagement. Thinking of and with the afterlife in the Anthropocene is to move beyond the human timescale, to dismantle the life and death binary, and to take seriously the ongoing “intra-activities” (Barad 2010) of biotic and abiotic matters.

How might our “weather bodies” (Neimanis and Walker 2014) continue to index the afterlives of heat, rainfall, flood, toxins and the half-lives of radioactive waste? What are the by-products of some supposed sustainable technological (techno-optimistic) methods, and their impacts? As we grapple with these tensions and intricacies, we propose the term “eco-afterlives” to explore and foreground the interconnection and valence of “eco” and “afterlives”, and their spatial, temporal and material dimensions. Approaching eco-afterlives not only attends to the ecological and metabolic cycles of the many beings, but also considers them as relational and situated phenomena. It seeks to explore the way in which these relations impact, structure, make and unmake worlds. The possible ecomediation of afterlife confronts the uneven environmental debt, the hierarchised life and lifeforms, and the unmourned more-than-human death and loss. It invites us to befriend the ghosts and monsters from the Anthropocene ruins, and to speculate with our “oddkin” (Haraway 2016).

This interdisciplinary symposium seeks to create a space where theory, praxis gather to imagine an onto-epistemological shift in accounting for the ongoing aftermath of anthropocentric disasters and enacting new modes of hope and worlding through the notion of *eco-afterlives* and *slow hope*. We are concerned with life, loss, and unevenly distributed environmental impacts. More importantly, we ask: How might the thinking of eco-afterlives enable other kinds of relations of a



more-than-human world through eco-mediations? As militarisation, colonialism, nuclear power, plantations and their afterlives continue to haunt and sustain slow violence, how might a different approach to the ambivalent notion of hope (re)story human-environment relations? What are some of the ecological practices that resist the death narrative, and sustain death into life (Rose 2004)?

The opposite of fast is rarely slow (Wang 2023). Rather being slow may be a radical process of unlearning and learning hope otherwise, opening up ways for transformation and reflective reproduction. While highlighting some of the ecological narratives, we also ask: What are the temporal and material dimensions of hope and slowness contextualised in and animated by Hong Kong and other translocal areas? What are the issues, frictions and compromises that may be associated with some ecological initiatives themselves?

We invite you to think of, with, through these questions with us, and one another. By centring environmental humanities scholars and practitioners with particular grounding in Hong Kong and other parts of Asia, and beyond, this symposium attempts to create a space for situated dialogues, collective visions, and the development of practices and actions inspired by translocal tenacious sparks despite the seemingly overwhelming Anthropocene challenges.

Zimu ZHANG & Jamie WANG
Symposium Conveners

*For more details of the Symposium, please visit our webpage:
<https://www.eduhk-irccs.com/eco-afterlivesandslowhope>.*

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- Price, Catherine, and Sophie Chao. "Multispecies, More-Than-Human, Nonhuman, Other-Than-Human: Reimagining idioms of animacy in an age of planetary unmaking." *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal* 10, no. 2 (2023): 177-193.
- Wang, Jamie. (2023). "Summer, black". *Feminist Review*, 135, no. 1 (2023): 192-193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01417789231189745>.

AGENDA

May 13, 2024 (MON) | Hong Kong Time (UTC+8:00)
C-LP-02, EDUHK

08:30 - 09:00

Registration

09:00 - 09:15

Opening Remarks

Professor John ERNI
Dean, Faculty of Humanities,
Director, International Research Centre for Cultural Studies, EdUHK, HK

Dr. Zimu ZHANG
Symposium Convenor
Assistant Professor, Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, EdUHK, HK

Dr. Jamie WANG
Symposium Convenor
Research Assistant Professor, Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, EdUHK, HK

09:15 - 10:45

Panel 1: History and Eco-afterlives of Urban Plants

Chair: Dr. Klaus DITTRICH, EdUHK, HK

- **Picturing Eco-Fascism: Photography, National Parks, and the Troubling Origins of American Environmentalism**
Dr. Eric FENG, EdUHK, HK
- **Eco Afterlives of Trees: Urban Greening as Companion Species**
Dr. Maxime DECAUDIN, University of Singapore, Singapore
- **(Film)Miasma, Plants, Export Paintings**
Dr. PAN Lu, PolyU, HK

Discussion

10:45 - 11:00

Coffee Break

11:00 - 12:00

Keynote Talk: Planetary Blues, American Environments and Slow Hope for the Future

Professor Dr. Christof MAUCH
Director, Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, LMU Munich, Germany

Chair: Dr. Jeffrey CLAPP, EdUHK, HK

12:00 - 13:00

Lunch Break

13:00 - 14:50

Panel 2: More-than-human Materiality and Kinship

Chair: Dr. Bidisha BANERJEE, EdUHK, HK

- **Staying with the Trouble of Feces: Metabolic Disturbance in the Chinese Context**
Dr. Daren Shi-chi LEUNG, Lingnan University, HK
- **Affective Attunement and Agencement with Wild Pigs in Hong Kong**
Prof. Kwai Cheung LO, HKBU, HK
- **Toxic Afterlife of E-Waste and the Politics of "Slow to Hope"**
Dr. Emily Yu ZONG, HKBU, HK
- **Plastic, Citizens and Future Imaginaries in Chinese Takeout Media**
Dr. Ka-Ming WU, CUHK, HK

Discussion

14:50 - 15:05

Coffee Break

15:05 - 16:30

Panel 3: Oceanic Commons and Amphibious Worlding

Chair: Dr. Jamie WANG, EdUHK, HK

- **Seeking Refuge: A Hopeful Exegesis**
Dr. Kelly Yin Nga TSE, EdUHK, HK
- **Amphibiousness Worlding and Eco-feminist Speculations of the Chinese Pearl River Delta**
Dr. Zimu ZHANG, EdUHK, HK
- **Virtue of Slow Ferry: Kaitos in Hong Kong**
Dr. LEUNG Po-shan Anthony, Island Studies Network (Hong Kong), HK

Discussion

16:30 - 16:45

Coffee Break

16:45 - 18:30

Panel 4: Eco-communities and Alternative Futures

Chair: Dr. Zimu ZHANG, EdUHK, HK

- **Old Photos, New Technologies: Rediscovering Slow Hope in The New Lives of Gibson-Hill's Landscape Photography**
Dr. Kiu-wai Chu, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- **Learning Endings, Learning Care: Reimagining Hope and Death in Two Artists' Works**
Dr. Winnie Lai Man YEE, HKU, HK
- **Practicing as a Dweller, Practicing (Un)intentionally**
Dr. Sipei Stephanie LU, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, China
- **Reanimating the Past, Storying the Future**
Dr. Jamie WANG, EdUHK, HK

Discussion

18:30 - 18:50

Closing Roundtable

19:30 - 20:30

Symposium Dinner at Green Hub (Internal event)

20:30 - 21:00

Post-Dinner Heritage Tour (Internal event)

EXCURSION

May 14, 2024 (TUE) | Hong Kong Time (UTC+8:00)
(Internal event)

LAMMA SOUTH: THEN AND NOW

Guided Tour by Dr. Leung Po-shan, Anthony
Island Studies Network (Hong Kong)

Lamma Island is the third largest natural island in Hong Kong, second to Hong Kong island. Though its approximate distance from Hong Kong, Lamma Island is often being regarded as “outlying”, “primitive” and “exotic”. These perceptions reflect the preconception of terrestrial and city dwellers who prioritize efficiency than social time. Islands are historical settlements of the land and the sea people. By interacting with its natural setting, islanders found their livelihood and shaped the cultural landscape of Lamma. In this tour, Dr Leung Po-shan Anthony will explore two types of settlements with the group on Lamma South: Sok Kwu Wan Main Street and Mo Tat Village. The former is a typical fishing village marked by its Tin Hau Temple (Goddess of the Sea) and mixed ethnic groups (Tanka and Hakka). The latter is an inland village established by “indigenous”. The tour will also highlight contemporary changes and challenges to islands, including industrialization and tourism. In fact, islands have always been responding to the changing needs of the city, both passively and proactively.



10:30 - 10:55

Gathering at Chuen Kee Ferry Pier, Aberdeen & Introduction

11:00 - 11:30

Ferry journey (Aberdeen to Sok Kwu Wan)

11:30 - 12:30

Guided tour in Sok Kwu Wan

12:30 - 13:30

Lunch

13:30 - 15:30

Guided walk through Mo Tat Village

15:30 - 15:40

Walk back to the Mo Tat Wan Pier

15:40 - 16:10

Ferry journey (Mo Tat Wan to Aberdeen)





Keynote Presentation

Planetary Blues, American Environments and Slow Hope for the Future

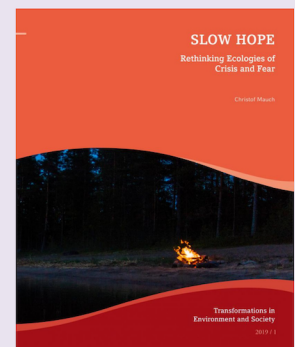
In this lecture Christof Mauch will take us on an unusual journey down the paths of America's history, nature and culture. Based on his *Paradise Blues: Travelling through America's Environmental History* (2024), he will introduce us both to a new understanding of the United States and to his methodology that combines travel reporting with nature writing, personal observation and philosophical reflection. One of the dominant themes of Mauch's research is that human relationships with nature are highly ambivalent. His lecture shows us how fragile our world is, - in America and beyond - how humans have damaged environments and created today's polycrisis, while also arguing that it is possible to look to hopeful narratives, stories of *Slow Hope* (2019) that can help us to think creatively and act courageously in these times of planetary destruction and calamity.



Professor Dr. Christof MAUCH

Director, Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society
The Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

Christof MAUCH is Director of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, and Chair in American Cultural History at LMU Munich. He is an Honorary Professor at Renmin University in China, a past President of the European Society for Environmental History, and a former Director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. (1999-2007). Mauch has received many awards for his research and professional engagement including the Teaching Innovation Award of LMU Munich (in 2019 and 2023), the Distinguished Career in Public Environmental History Award of the American Society for Environmental History (2017), and the Planetary Award of the Institute of Future Competences (2015).



About the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society

The Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC) is an international research center dedicated to the study of environment and society from a wealth of different disciplines and international perspectives.

A nonprofit institution, the RCC was founded in 2009 as a joint initiative of LMU Munich (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München) and the Deutsches Museum, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research as a Center for Advanced Study (Käte Hamburger Kolleg). The RCC has since evolved into a permanent center directed by LMU Munich's chair in American cultural history and the newly established chair in environmental humanities.

 <https://www.carsoncenter.uni-muenchen.de/index.html>



Panel Presentation - Panel 1: History and Eco-afterlives of Urban Plants

Picturing Eco-Fascism: Photography, National Parks, and the Troubling Origins of American Environmentalism

This paper highlights the problematic roots of American environmentalism, particularly its manifestation in creating and representing National Parks. By critically examining the works of 19th-century photography and the fundamental ideologies, the paper shows how these iconologies shaped an exclusionary narrative of environmentalism mirrored in the creation and portrayal of American National Parks. This further exposes the troubling intersection of white supremacy, eugenicist ideologies, and Eurocentrism in the early conservation movement.

As a powerful medium of representation, photography played a crucial role in reinforcing these problematic narratives. By analyzing the works of photographers like Carleton Watkins and Ansel Adams, the paper demonstrates how their images of pristine wilderness, devoid of indigenous presence, reflect the early environmental movement's exclusionary tendencies. In response to this troubled history, the paper argues for the potential of art and political iconography to challenge and redefine ecological narratives. Drawing upon the shift in landscape photography in the 1970s, which began to recognize landscapes and human activity as intertwined rather than separate, the paper will explore how such perspectives can foster more inclusive environmentalism.

In conclusion, this paper calls for a radical re-evaluation of our environmental histories by unmasking the troubling origins of American environmentalism and examining the role of photography in reinforcing and challenging these narratives. A proactive approach to combat eco-fascist ideologies and to re-imagine a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future. This endeavor involves acknowledging and addressing past harms while nurturing hope for a more just environmental ethos.



Eric FENG is an artist and project officer at the Faculty of Humanities at the Education University of Hong Kong. Before joining EduHK, he was an Associate Professor of Art at the Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University. His work is in several public collections and has produced numerous public art commissions around China. In 2015, he was awarded the "East Asia Fellowship" by ARIAH (The Association of Research Institutes in Art History).



Panel Presentation - Panel 1: History and Eco-afterlives of Urban Plants

Eco Afterlives of Trees: Urban Greening as Companion Species

As more people are living in cities and as global cities are competing to become healthier and more sustainable, urban greening is increasingly displayed as a spectacle of technological progress. However, environmental and urban historians have shown that urban greening has a long history. Sometimes associated with health and progress, its development is always entangled with political propaganda and the consolidation of identities.

Focusing on the cases of Hong Kong and Singapore, this presentation will explore the history of urban greening in the context of heritage. In Hong Kong, urban reforestation is a multigenerational legacy of early colonial anxieties about the environment, while in Singapore, urban greening is part of an ongoing nation building effort and curated as post-colonial alternative of tropical aesthetics. Recent trends in heritage studies have emphasized the need to better integrate natural and cultural heritage (cultural landscape), in particular in urban contexts (historic urban landscapes). Indeed, the trees and plants that live with us in urban areas offer an interesting case at the intersection of cultural and natural definitions of heritage. How do people relate to urban greening as a natural-cultural heritage?

Building on recent theoretical reflections on the process of ruination and curated decay of heritage sites as well as on recent shifts in landscape architecture practice, this talk will propose to rethink our collective engagement with urban vegetation. Can urban greening be considered our collective "companion species"? While Donna Haraway's shepherd, Cayenne Pepper, can easily be accepted as a human companion, it is harder to think of park and street trees and shrubs in the same way. How could we rethink the value and care of the very plants we keep alive in our cities through the idea of companion species?



Maxime Decaudin is a Senior Lecturer in landscape architecture. Situated at the intersection of landscape studies and environmental history, his research examines the historical agency of nature in Asian contexts. He completed a PhD in Art History at Sorbonne Université titled '*A Barren Rock: An Environmental History of Hong Kong Landscapes under British Colonization, 1794-1898*'. In 2019, he was emerging curator at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) and in 2017 he was a doctoral fellow at the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC). Maxime was trained as an architect in Paris. Prior to joining NUS, he taught landscape architecture at the University of Hong Kong for ten years.



Panel Presentation - Panel 1: History and Eco-afterlives of Urban Plants

Miasma, Plants, Export Paintings | Two Channel Video | 28min | 2017 | A work by Bo Wang & Pan Lu

The devastating tropical climate created strong fear and anxiety in the British troops who stationed at Hong Kong after the opium wars. The 19th Century myth of Miasma, the bad air, related epidemic diseases with air, environment and race, which later helped to consolidate the vertical segregation on Hong Kong island. Acclimatization efforts were made in pace with expansion of the British Botanic Empire, a global network of scientific research of plants, which circulated not only botanic specimens but also images created for the purpose of study. In the particular case of Canton in South China, local commercial artists were commissioned to make plant paintings. This work examines the peculiar dynamics between imperialism, scientific research, race and the right to look in 19th Century Canton. The film won Award for Excellence, 32nd Image Forum Festival, Japan.



PAN LU is Associate Professor at Department of Chinese History and Culture, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Pan is author of three monographs: *In-Visible Palimpsest: Memory, Space and Modernity in Berlin and Shanghai* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2016), *Aestheticizing Public Space: Street Visual Politics in East Asian Cities* (Bristol: Intellect, 2015), and her new book *Image, Imagination and Imaginarium: Remapping World War II Monuments in Greater China* is published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2020. She is chief editor of *The 70's Biweekly: Social Activism and Alternative Cultural Production in 1970s Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: HKU Press, 2023) and *The (Im)possibilities of Art Archives: Theories and Experience in/from Asia* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024). As a filmmaker, she co-directed *Many Undulating Things* (2019), *Miasma, Plants, Export Paintings* (2017), *Traces of an Invisible City: Three Notes on Hong Kong* (2016) with Bo Wang and *Anachronic Chronicles: Voyages Inside/Out Asia* (2021) with Yu Araki. She was one of the curators of Kuandu Biennale, Taipei, 2018.



Panel Presentation - Panel 2: More-than-human Materiality and Kinship

Staying with the Trouble of Feces: Metabolic Disturbance in the Chinese Context

In dialogue with Donna Haraway's call to 'stay with the trouble' in real and particular places and times, this paper engages with the most mundane yet deeply troubling matter—human feces. Rather than dismissing it as merely a foul pollutant or a source of contamination, this study examines feces as both organic fertilizer, or nightsoil, and a site of metabolic disturbance within the Chinese context. Drawing on the Marxist ecology of social metabolism, I argue that the disruption of the nutrient cycle between humans and soil is not just a rift but a manifestation of a continuing collective political struggle. This struggle seeks to reconcile the separation between our experiences and knowledge of human/nature relations and the social conditions of life under capitalism. I trace this disturbance back to the dawn of reform-era China, where the decline of the 'socialist toilet system'—which recaptured the manual value of waste through town-and-countryside exchange—presented a crossroads: whether to maintain this modern farming technology as an alternative. In the 1980s, the 'urban trouble with feces' sparked a moral crisis characterized by impurity and revulsion. Despite this, various actors, including governors, health experts, and peasants, struggled to sustain, repair, or revitalize it amidst political failures in management that left nightsoil with nowhere to go. Describing this environmental disruption as historically grounded and unsettling, this study liberates feces' materiality from Western-centric hygienic modernity, driven by excremental colonialism. The concept of metabolic disturbance not only highlights the environment as man-made but also prompts ethical considerations: whether we face a slow death manifested by abjection toward wastewater disposal or slow hope through the rejuvenation of farming land. To hold onto our discards, which could no longer be simply flushed and forgotten, means to make trouble, as Haraway concludes, 'to stir up potent responses to devastating events, as well as to rebuild quiet places'.



Daren Shi-chi LEUNG is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University. He received his PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of Sydney in 2021, where his thesis was a finalist for the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Thesis Prize. Leung is interested in the material politics of food and waste and their intersections with technology, history, and community within China and beyond. His scholarly contributions have been featured in journals, including *Cultural Studies*, *Peasant Studies*, and *China Perspectives*. He is currently working on a RGC-funded project about 'waste commons' that integrates research, teaching, and community engagement to address waste issues in Hong Kong.



Panel Presentation - Panel 2: More-than-human Materiality and Kinship Affective Attunement and Agencement with Wild Pigs in Hong Kong

The wild pig issue could be an emerging site of contest between the authorities and civil society. A specific sociopolitical atmosphere also constituted a catalyst for affective attunement. From November 2021 to March 2024, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department captured and killed 916 wild pigs that approached urban populated areas throughout Hong Kong. The government announced its reversal on the “trap, neuter, return” policy to “humanely euthanize” wild pigs that enter urban areas. It’s believed that the change of policy was motivated by an incident of which a wild boar knocked down a policeman and bit his leg, causing a deep wound. People who are sympathetic to wild pigs strongly object to such a change in the government’s policy. Wild pigs are the most commonly seen wild animals in the city, and they are not a protected species. The extensive urbanization has driven the wild pigs accustomed to wandering in the city to look for food. The animal rights groups slammed the new culling operation as abhorrent, and the slaughter was considered a major setback to the early progressive policy promoting the co-existence of humans and wildlife in the shared environment.

Though the sympathetic projection of the wild pig might have served as an emotional vent for Hong Kong people under the changed political environment, there is a genuinely felt relationship between the citizens to their lived environment and the wild animals that share that environment in the face of the climate change and the unpredictability of life. The growing interest in nature, environment, and wildlife may imply a “nonhuman turn” in Hong Kong cultural politics. At the same time, the cityscapes and their symbolic meanings have been drastically reshaped and transformed by forces larger than what the local community can master.

To seek multispecies justice indicates the shift to subtle feeling and emotion functions as a reflective mode of inquiry attentive to implicit and elusive dimensions of one’s own experiences and connections with others in the drastically changing world. As Vinciane Despret argues, “There is no agency that is not interagency. There is no agency without *agencement*, a rapport of forces.” It is becoming with others rather than becoming like others in a mimetic process. All living beings render other beings capable of affecting and being affected. Hence, human and nonhuman animals are entangled in rapports of forces, that constitute the assemblage.



Kwai Cheung LO is a Professor and Head of the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, at Hong Kong Baptist University, specializes in trans-Chinese cinemas and cultural studies. PhD in Comparative Literature at Stanford University, he is the author of *Excess and Masculinity in Asian Cultural Productions*, and *Chinese Face / Off: The Transnational Popular Culture of Hong Kong*. His forthcoming book *Ethnic Minority Cinema in China’s Nation-State Building* will be published by the University of Michigan Press.



Panel Presentation - Panel 2: More-than-human Materiality and Kinship Toxic Afterlife of E-Waste and the Politics of “Slow to Hope”

Environmental NGOs and international media often portray e-waste as toxic pollutants prone to North-to-South dumping. Yet, local communities participating in the e-waste economy frequently see it as a valuable resource, despite being aware of its toxicity. Such friction invites us to witness competing worldings of environmental justice, where normative narratives of global inequality, vulnerability, and fast hope need to be revised through situated human-waste sociality in local lived ecologies. Through an analysis of e-waste toxicology in China, I explore the politics of “slow to hope,” where intoxicated people experience hope and agency in delayed and contextual ways, just as the slow violence imposed upon them has been multiscalar and accumulative. To come to terms with the biochemical regimes of industrial modernity that trash and transmute racialized and working-class bodies, I reflect on the potential and limits of “toxic kinship” as a framework to restructure ethics and politics, and illustrate through a Chinese sci-fi narrative that centers the ambivalent, unruly, and haunting afterlives of waste for (dis)engaging slow modes of hope in toxic lifeworlds.



Emily Yu Zong is assistant professor of literary studies and environmental humanities at the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, Hong Kong Baptist University. Her research focuses on Asian diasporic literature and culture, migrant and refugee ecologies, and critical posthumanism. She has published in *Critique*, *ISLE*, *ARIEL*, *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *The Cambridge History of the Australian Novel*, among other venues. She is co-editor of *Decolonizing Asian Diasporic Ecocriticism*, a forthcoming special issue of *ARIEL*. Emily is also curator to *Waterborne: A Climate Art Exhibition* (2022) and *Thus, Soil* (2024); and co-producer to *Bovine Calling: A VR Story on Eco-vulnerability in Hong Kong* (2023) and *Healing Atmospheres: A VR story on Topo-poetic Care* (2024, forthcoming).



Panel Presentation - Panel 2: More-than-human Materiality and Kinship

Plastic, Citizens and Future Imaginaries in Chinese Takeout Media

Takeout is a major component of urban living in today's China. Singletons, long work hours and lately Covid have all contributed to the industry boom. In 2020, the takeout business in China has grown to reach 650 million yuan and the industry is fuelling the media landscape in powerful form of advertisements, billboards and videos in both online and physical public spaces. This paper explores the media imaginaries of plastic, citizens and the environment in recent online video productions about takeout. It examines three types of productions. The first concerns online advertising videos produced by major takeout companies such as *Meituan* and *Elema*. These corporate-made high-quality videos often mobilize class mobility, gender stereotypes and the technological future in marketing takeout as a superior food and convenient lifestyle. Second, the paper looks into videos produced and posted online by delivery man and women. Responding to the high rates of accidents, even death, among delivery work in recent years, delivery workers are starting to post online videos about their own labor on the road, precarious everyday life and platform capital exploitation. Their video productions have received much attention and public discussion. Third, the paper looks at some government-sponsored online video productions about plastic reduction and carbon emission reduction along the official goal of ecological civilization. In each of these video productions, this paper examines how the polluting material of plastic is figured and represented. Through examining three different kinds of video productions, the paper explores and analyzes the kinds of citizenship, environmental future and social practices these media imagine and engage. The aim of this research is to contribute a cultural media analysis to the takeout phenomenon and associated environmental imaginaries.



Ka-ming Wu is Associate Professor in the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Trained as a cultural anthropologist, she has taken up ethnographic research to examine the cultural politics of state and society, waste, and most recently, volunteering and urban infrastructure in contemporary China. Her first book is *Reinventing Chinese Tradition: The Cultural Politics of Late Socialism* (UIP 2015). Her second book *Feiping Shenghuo: Lajichang De Jingji, Shequn Yu Kongjian* (CUHK 2016) (*Living with Waste: Economies, Communities and Spaces of Waste Collectors in China*) discusses the socio-cultural impacts of waste. Her academic papers have been published in many journals such as *Feminist Studies*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Modern China*, *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theories*, *The China Journal*, *Urban Geography*, and *China Perspectives*. Her recent interests include waste, ecological identities, environmental humanities, STS and New materialism.



Panel Presentation - Panel 3: Oceanic Commons and Amphibious Worlding

Seeking Refuge: A Hopeful Exegesis

This paper addresses a central question: How might the environmental humanities embrace cautious optimism? It does so by turning to the oceanic commons as depicted in the literary works of Vietnamese refugee writers such as Viet Thanh Nguyen and Nam Le. Specifically, the paper attends to the haunting materiality of the Pacific Ocean as traversed by the boat people of Vietnam in the wake of the war (1955-75). On the one hand, by drawing readerly attention to perilous wet matter in their prose, Asian literary artists point to the tenuousness of hope amidst oceanic crossings. Their dismal depictions become a powerful indictment of the conjoined forces of imperialism and nationalism that have co-produced the displaced. On the other hand, however, these writers also foreground the ocean as a hopeful, affective presence, such literary writing refigures maritime Asia not simply as conflict spaces but also possibly, propitious waterways.



Kelly Yin Nga TSE is an Assistant Professor of English at the Education University of Hong Kong. Her research interests lie in world literature, Asian studies, and the environmental humanities. She has published in *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, amongst others.



Panel Presentation - Panel 3: Oceanic Commons and Amphibious Worlding

Amphibiousness Worlding and Eco-feminist Speculations of the Chinese Pearl River Delta

The 2022 Chinese novel *Chao Xi Tu* (Tidal Stories, my translation) by female writer Lin Zhao has become a domestic sensation, leading to much discussion on her unique use of vernacular Southern China dialects and speculative nonhuman matters embedded in the rich history of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) in the early nineteenth century, the late Qing Dynasty, during the Canton trade period. Through the sensorial eyes of a mystical giant female frog, Wa, the novel narrates an amphibious journey through the waterways of the Chinese Pearl River to Portuguese-occupied Macau all the way to the colonial heartland of London via the colonial trading route. In this article, I conduct an eco-feminist reading of the novel departing from a situated analysis of amphibiousness borrowed and reconceptualized from delta anthropology and migrant ecologies. This intends to further engage with a dynamic multispecies worlding of the PRD during the period of West-East colonial contact when it gained a violent momentum. Wa's amphibious journey across land and ocean, and its affective bondings with humans and nonhumans could be read as a form of speculative eco-afterlives of the PRD deltatic matters and hopeful narrative to counter the colonial-capitalistic hierarchical material flow that still haunts us today, in what we know as the Anthropocene crisis.



Zimu ZHANG is an environmental humanities scholar working on visual culture, eco-cinema and ecofeminist arts. She is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong. She is the recipient of the 2022 Landhaus fellowship at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, LMU and 2023 VisitANTS fellowship in Critical Studies of Biodiversity and the Anthropocene Research at University of Oulu, Finland. Her writings have been published in the *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, *British Journal of Chinese Studies*, *Chinese Independent Cinema Observer* and *Artforum*, etc. Along with her academic research, Zimu also practices filmmaking and curation.



Panel Presentation - Panel 3: Oceanic Commons and Amphibious Worlding

Virtue of Slow Ferry: Kaitos in Hong Kong

As a place surrounded by water, ferries used to be the major means of transportation in the old days. Apart from giant vessels plying on the global route and ferries linking the two shores of Victory Harbour, there were more than a hundred regular Kaito lines, linking villages and markets, market towns and the city. Often run by families or local organizations, these smaller boats are most adaptable to the local needs both technically and economically. In fact, apart from their functional value as a transportation means, Kaito is also a social space for the community providing face-to-face encounters for the passengers on a regular basis. Its slowness and flexibility seem to be a virtue rather than a disadvantage for the accumulation of collective social time.

As a long-term islander, I have been benefited by my local Kaito ferry and have developed an interest in researching the history of Kaito in Hong Kong. This presentation is a sharing of my work-in-progress with my Island Studies Network (Hong Kong) team. Taking the Chuen Kee Ferry (Lamma South), Peng Chau Kaito and Kat O Kaito as cases, the presentation will explain the local knowledge of navigation, mode of operation and the needs of island communities. Though this project is still in a preliminary stage; it will attempt to reinstate the virtue of Kaito for the high-speed city.



LEUNG Po-shan Anthony studied Fine Arts and Cultural Studies at the Chinese University and the Leeds University. She was a member of Para/Site Art Space. Her research interests include, among others, art ecology, city space, and art labour. She is a member of the art critic collective, Art Appraisal Club. Leung has developed an interest in Island Studies recently and is the co-curator of *Lamma Mia*, and the author of *Mo Tat Then and Now - Historical and Social Research on Mo Tat Wan, Lamma Island*. She is the founder of Island Studies Network (Hong Kong) and the principal investigator of *Ma Wan: study of a coastal community in Hong Kong*. (Funded by the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust)



Panel Presentation - Panel 4: Eco-communities and Alternative Futures

Old Photos, New Technologies: Rediscovering Slow Hope in The New Lives of Gibson-Hill's Landscape Photography

Under a three-year research project “Creation and Analysis of a Digital Asset with the Gibson-Hill Photographic Collection”, the Gibson-Hill Photographic collection at the National Museum of Singapore has recently undergone digitisation and restoration by our research team at Nanyang Technological University. Working on this newly created digital asset of close to 7,600 film negatives, our team, comprised of artists who have used art and photographic technologies to re-engage and imbue new meanings and significance to British expatriate Carl Alexander Gibson-Hill's photographic works, which captured predominantly natural and urban landscapes in the late colonial Malaya in the 1940s and 60s.

Viewing these historical visual images and their contemporary adaptations as “untold stories/narratives of slow hope” (Mauch, 2019) that are awaiting discovery, this presentation explores how contemporary technological adaptations of historical landscape photography - through lenticular imagining, re-photograph, A.I. object detection, and immerse virtual reality experiences - can facilitate ecocritical thinking and reflections in our current age of ecological crises and fears. Should we approach with caution and concern the human species' growing use and reliance on technologies in reshaping our understanding of the past and our environmental perceptions of the present, in what Hoborg (2015) calls the Technocene? Or should we maintain hope for a healthy coexistence and cooperation between humans and artificial intelligence in what Lovelock (2019) coins a “Novacene” that is on the horizon? Can new technologies breathe new lives into old stories to inspire positive ecocritical reflections?



Kiu-wai Chu is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Humanities and Chinese Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research centres on environmental humanities, ecocriticism, and cinema and visual art in East and Southeast Asian contexts. He is an Associate Editor of Environmental Humanities (Duke University Press), and formerly an executive councillor of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (2021-23), and a Luce East Asia Fellow at the National Humanities Center (2022-23). He is co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Ecomedia Studies*, and his articles have appeared in numerous outlets, including *Transnational Ecocinema*, *Ecomedia: Key Issues*, *Chinese Environmental Humanities*, *Oxford Bibliographies*, *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, *Asian Cinema*, *photographies*, *Screen*, *ASAP/J*, *Prism: Theory and Modern Chinese Literature*, and more.



Panel Presentation - Panel 4: Eco-communities and Alternative Futures

Learning Endings, Learning Care: Reimagining Hope and Death in Two Artists' Works

Hundreds of marine mammal strand on terrestrial shores every year. These ocean-dwelling animals are mostly hidden from humans during their lifetimes, but in a stranding death, they reveal themselves to humans, and call on humans to care. The scientific practice of necropsy attends these marine animals in their deaths as a queer way of witnessing their lives, and caring for their kin through collecting samples and data to help understanding living population and the threats they face. Examining the multi-media performance offered by Learning Endings (led by artist Patty Chang), this paper asks what role does science and art play as part of the ecologies of mutual care in and for the oceans and beings that call it home?

Alongside the growing concern for marine lives, a renewed interest in land preservation and farming also took hold, inspiring artists to re-articulate the human/nature relationship in a much more conscious and determined manner. Different from registering Hong Kong with a unique identity through its urban skyline, creative experiments exhibited in the post-Choi Yuen Village era (after 2010) make a creative use of nature, de-center from an anthropocentric approach and look up to nature for inspiration. These works challenge the cognitive self of Hong Kong and offer critical insight into an eco-urban identity that is underexamined and repressed. While the farmland may look old and vulnerable, and at the verge of disappearance, yet the species, the bacteria, the vegetation, and the organic community centered around the land nurture a new possibility of an unknown future. Reflecting on Lo Lai Lai Natalie's multi-channel video installation titled *The Days Before the Silent Spring*, this paper attempts to understand how the artwork opens the land and the species to human sensorium; and how slow resistance in life generates slow hope to survive.



Winnie L. M. YEE is a Senior Lecturer of Comparative Literature and program coordinator of the MA Program in Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Hong Kong. Her research interests are ecocriticism, contemporary Chinese literature and film, Hong Kong culture, and independent cinema. She has been a fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society at Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich and the Worldmaking Center—A Dialogue with China. She is currently working on a book project exploring the relationship between ecopoetic, Chinese literature and independent film scene, and an edited volume on lives of the Deltas. She has published essays in journals including *Interventions*, *Cultural Studies*, *CLCWeb*, *Asian Cinema*, *PRISM* among other places.



Panel Presentation - Panel 4: Eco-communities and Alternative Futures Practicing as a Dweller, Practicing (Un)intentionally

If you regard City J as a research object, you may lose hope, as you witness there many forms of gentrification, commodification of nature, sanctioned pollution, and environmental neglect, coupled with a lack of support for civil society initiatives. My preference for a relational ethics of reciprocity admittedly struggles to articulate a pragmatic language or strategy for impactful action, except supporting site-specific practitioners and attuning myself to the subtle, often forcefully imposed, changes in these environments.

City J can be anywhere, and one needs much wisdom and experience to navigate and positively impact such a complex and often resistant environment, especially for individuals who choose to work outside official institutions. This talk delves into the motivations and strategies of individuals actively engaged in ecological initiatives in places I have inhabited for an extended period. Among the various tools employed by these practitioners as part of their supporting systems, the most potent is the recognition of one's personal needs, including the reasons behind choosing to reside in a specific place. I perceive such place not merely as a physical location but as a 'site' to intricately understand and confront the systematic complexities of ecological issues, interwoven with daily life. Here, practitioners adopt a stance that transcends mere environmental concerns, eschewing the pressure to categorize actions as either rapid or slow.



Sipei Stephanie Lu is a writer, researcher and curator. She has a PhD in Museum Studies and is a member of faculty at the Research Centre for New Art Museum Studies, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. Her research, teaching and curatorial projects focus on socially engaged art and the publicness of art institutions. Her writings are featured in *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, *The Future of Museum and Gallery Design*, *Meishu*, *Museum Worlds*, etc. Sipei is the translator of *Active Withdrawals: Life and Death of Institutional Critique*. Sipei initiated "Threading through The Eye of the Needle" (2021-), a long-term curatorial endeavor encompassing exhibitions, publications, screenings, and workshops to facilitate exchanges and to create toolkit with/for social practice practitioners in South China and Southeast Asia. You can read one key publication here: <https://www.fiveartscentre.org/process/ways-of-working>.

Sipei is a long-term collaborator and volunteer with NGOs with environment and social concerns such as Nyanpo Yutsu Conservation Association In Qinghai. She is the main author of *ecoartasia.net* (City University of Hong Kong, 2019-2020) as part of her post-doc project on art and ecology. In partnership with Wind&Bones CIC, Sipei co-leads "Dragon-Carving for Writers" (2023), a cross-disciplinary writing project funded by the British Council (<https://wxdl.windandbones.com/>).



Panel Presentation - Panel 4: Eco-communities and Alternative Futures Reanimating the Past, Storying the Future

This presentation starts with my visits to *Lorong Buangkok*, the last Kampong on the Singapore mainland. Along the way, I examine the demolishing of the built and natural environment as part of a program of island-wide urbanisation, and various natureculture heritage work aimed at curating and building certain past and future.

Guided by the stories of the living Kampongs, heritage trees, exhumed tombs, and erected eco-housing, I explore how a narrowed way of sustainable urban-making and inhabiting time disrupts other forms of life. Specifically, I draw on the concept of "double erasure" (Wang, forthcoming 2024) to weave together various threads and capture the process of entwined erasure work and their continuous impacts on landscape and memoryscape.

Amid the escalating effects of climate change, sustainability, an already overused and troubling notion, now faces its own iterations and afterlives—from the popularisation of the reductionist scheme of biodiversity offsetting to more callous forms of greenwashing and to some sterilised ways of recycling the past. Might the lens of eco-afterlives in dialogue with "slow hope" (Mauch, 2019) open up new ways of thinking the simultaneous desire of moving forward and remaining still? Through the participation in a program run by a Singaporean social enterprise, I seek to demonstrate how diverse micro-narratives may help to undermine a forced synchronization, and practise an active way of remembering. Ultimately, I ask: What might it take to interrupt the momentum of future (world)-making so as to allow and learn to attend to other ways of life?



Jamie Wang is Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies at the Education University of Hong Kong. She is an interdisciplinary researcher, writer and poet in the environmental humanities, urban studies and more-than-human studies. Jamie is author of *Reimagining the More-Than-Human City: Stories for Singapore* (MIT Press, 2024), and co-editor of "Feminist Futures", a special issue series of *Feminist Review*.



Honored Guest: Professor John ERNI



John Nguyet ERNI is Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Chair Professor of Cultural Studies at The Education University of Hong Kong. He is also Director of the International Research Centre for Cultural Studies. Until 2022, he was Fung Hon Chu Endowed Chair of Humanics, Chair Professor in Humanities, and Head of the Department of Humanities & Creative Writing at Hong Kong Baptist University. In 2017 and 2019, he was elected President of the Hong Kong Academy of the Humanities and Corresponding Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities respectively. A recipient of the Gustafson, Rockefeller, Lincoln, and Annenberg research fellowships, and other awards and grants, Erni has published widely on international and Asia-based cultural studies; human rights legal criticism; Chinese consumption of transnational culture; youth popular consumption in Hong Kong and Asia; gender and sexuality in media culture; cultural politics of race/ethnicity/migration; and critical public health. He is the author or editor of 10 academic titles, among them *The Cultural Politics of COVID-19* (with Ted Striphas, 2022); *Law and Cultural Studies: A Critical Rearticulation of Human Rights* (2019); *Visibility, Emotions, and Minority Culture: Feeling Ethnic* (2017); *Understanding South Asian Minorities in Hong Kong* (with Lisa Leung, 2014); *Cultural Studies of Rights: Critical Articulations* (2011); and *Internationalizing Cultural Studies: An Anthology* (with Ackbar Abbas, 2005). He was listed among Stanford University's World Top 2% Scientists in 2022.



Keynote's Chair: Dr. Jeffrey CLAPP



Jeffrey CLAPP is Associate Professor of English in the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies at the Education University of Hong Kong. He focuses on contemporary literature in English. His writing has appeared or will appear in *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, *College Literature*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Critique*, *Life Writing*, *Mosaic*, *Post45*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, and elsewhere. He is Director of the community reading project 我城我書 / One City One Book Hong Kong.



Panel Chair: Dr. Klaus DITTRICH



Klaus DITTRICH is an Assistant Professor of history at the Department of Literature and Culture of The Education University of Hong Kong. His research takes education as a lens into broader phenomena of cultural and social history in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe and East Asia. He has established and is now leading the Master of Arts in Global Histories of Education (MAGHE).



Panel Chair: Dr. Bidisha BANERJEE



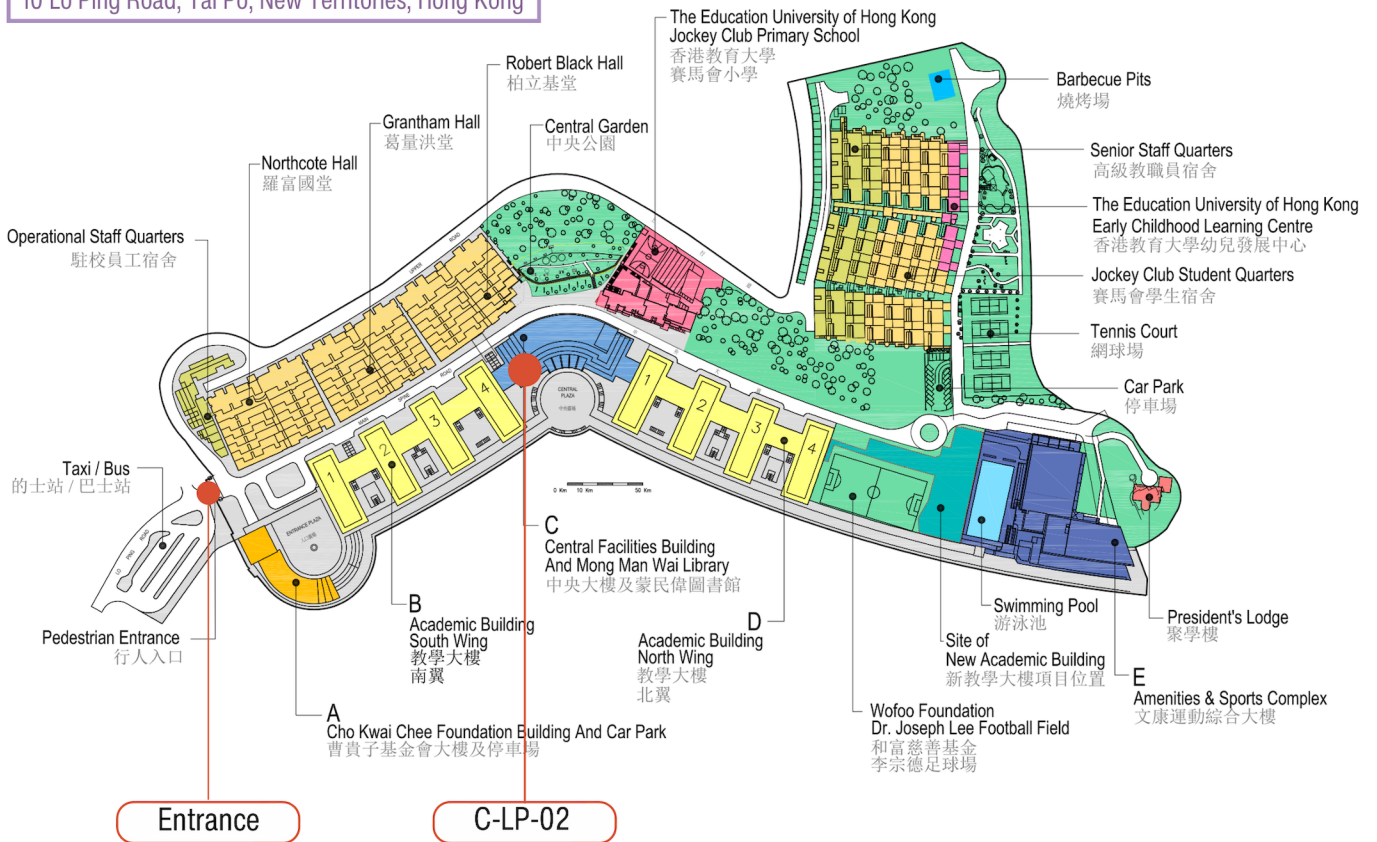
Bidisha BANERJEE is Associate Professor in the Literature and Cultural Studies Department at EdUHK. Her research interests include postcolonial studies, visual studies and cultural studies. She leads a transdisciplinary project called *Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces*. Her monograph, *Traces of the Real: The Absent Presence of Photography in South Asian Literature*, is forthcoming with Liverpool University Press.



LOCATION

The Education University of Hong Kong Tai Po Campus

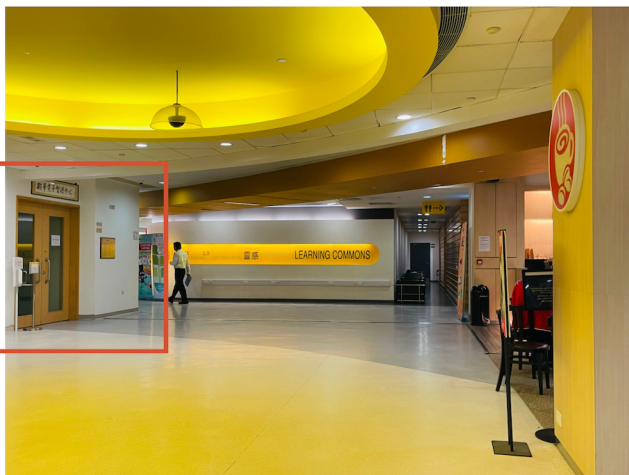
10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong



Symposium Venue C-LP-02, EduHK



(Symposium venue is one floor below the campus square)



(Near Pacific Coffee on campus)



(Symposium venue)

TRANSPORTATION

Get to EdUHK

Free Symposium Shuttle Bus: May 13th (Mon), 8:15am

The boarding point of the free symposium shuttle bus to the campus is outside the MTR University Station (Exit B). For details, please refer to the map below. To board the shuttle bus, please show the event poster to our student helper at the bus boarding point;

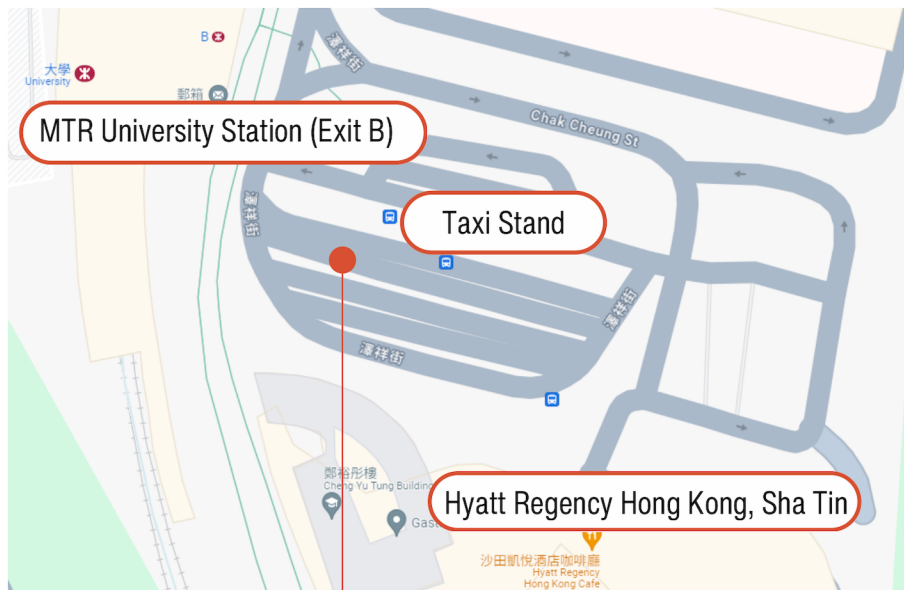
For NON-EDUHK attendees who are unable to make use of the provided event shuttle bus due to scheduling conflicts, please consider public transportation.

Public Transportation

From Tai Po Market MTR Station

- KMB Bus - 74K (HK\$5.4)
- New Territories Green Minibus No. 26 (HK\$6.6)
- Taxi (about HK\$60)

*For those who plan to drive to the venue, please contact us at least 3 days prior to the event to inquire about parking availability.



Symposium Shuttle Bus Boarding Point
(MTR University Station to EdUHK)

Depart from EdUHK

For all audiences who want to leave the campus after the event, please note that no free shuttle bus service is available. You could:

- Take the EdUHK U shuttle service (every 10-15 min) back to the University MTR station (the boarding point is located outside Block A, near the pedestrian entrance; HK\$7 for student, HK\$11 for non-student, octopus only)
- Take the public transportation as stated above

For symposium attendees who would join the event dinner, free shuttle bus service would be available to the dinner venue. The bus boarding point is at B4-G/F. No shuttle bus service is available after the dinner.

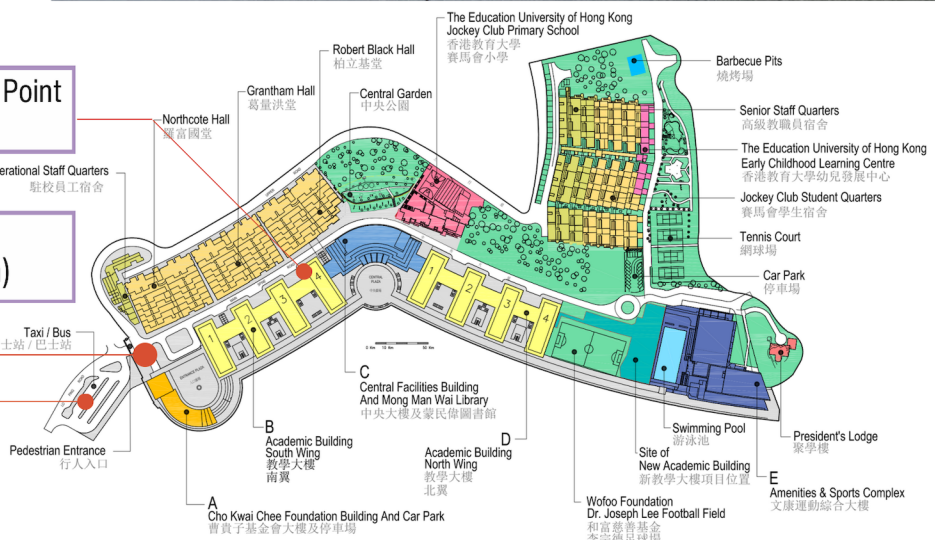


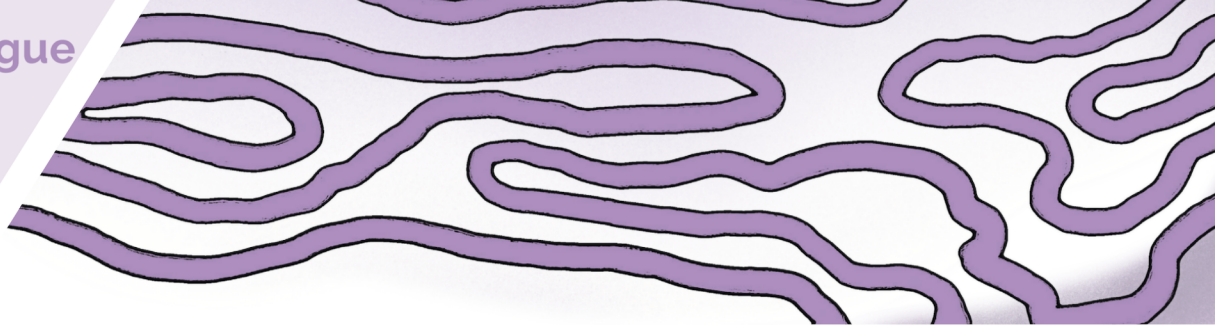
Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Sha Tin

Symposium Shuttle Bus Boarding Point (EdUHK to MTR GreenHub)

U Shuttle Bus Boarding Point (EdUHK to MTR University Station)

Public Transportation





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Conference is generously funded by the International Research Centre for Cultural Studies, and the “AoS” Project of the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, the Education University of Hong Kong;


The symposium dinner, hosted by Green Hub, is partly sponsored by the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden.

ABOUT IRCCS

The International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (IRCCS, 文化研究國際中心) replaced the Centre for Popular Culture in the Humanities (which was established in 2016) in August 2022, as a new vibrant hub for cultural studies research and development under the Faculty of Humanities (FHM) at the Education University of Hong Kong.

With current research initiatives spanning two primary areas - Critical Migration Studies and Comparative Cultures of Care - alongside our community-driven ‘One City One Book Hong Kong’ program, and with members across the Humanities and Social Science faculties, IRCCS is dedicated to developing interdisciplinary Cultural Studies.

 <https://www.eduhk-irccs.com>

 [/irccs.hk](https://www.facebook.com/irccs.hk)




International Research Centre
for Cultural Studies

ABOUT LCS

The Department of Literature and Cultural Studies under the Faculty of Humanities (FHM) gathers together academic and teaching staff specialising in Chinese literature, English literature, comparative literature, creative writing, cultural studies, and history. This breadth of expertise makes the Department distinctive in the context of tertiary education in Hong Kong.

 <https://www.eduhk.hk/lcs/en/>

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COLLABORATOR - GREEN HUB

The Green Hub project is recognized with an Honorable Mention in the 2016 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, the Grand Award (Existing Buildings Category: Completed Projects - Institutional Building) and Special Citation in Eco-service Infrastructure Network under the Green Building Awards 2016, jointly organized by the Hong Kong Green Building Council and the Professional Green Building Council.

 <https://www.greenhub.hk>

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綠匯學苑
Green Hub


The Eat Well Canteen of KFBG Green Hub is the Gold Award Winner of the Hong Kong Award of Environmental Excellence (2017). Green Hub strives to minimize the carbon footprint of all meals they serve, and maximize the educational, social and environmental benefits of all food costumers consume. This may take a bit more effort but the rewards - for us, our families and our common future - are too big to pass up.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

COLLABORATOR - ISLAND STUDIES NETWORK (HK)

The Network will serve as a platform to enable knowledge and practice exchange among members and the public, both regionally and inter-regionally. We embrace all kinds of academic scrutiny, social innovation, technological experiment as well as creative praxis as a way of knowledge production about or via the island. By standing in Hong Kong, a place surrounded by water connecting to the world, the Network will be a bridge for us all to link up with other interested parties, both regionally and inter-regionally, to open up a new horizon for island studies.

 <https://isnhk.org/>

 [isnhk.org/](https://www.facebook.com/isnhk.org/)

 [@islandstudiesnetworkhk](https://www.instagram.com/islandstudiesnetworkhk)



島嶼研究網絡(香港)
Island Studies Network (HK)



First and foremost, we would like to express our deepest appreciation to all of our symposium speakers and audience for their insightful contributions to the discussion on this event.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to Aubrey AU (Gwo Bean Collectives) for her wonderful work in designing the symposium poster.

We are equally grateful for Nanxi (Gwo Bean Collectives) for designing the symposium souvenir, as well as her assistance in the poster riso printing and souvenir silk print process.

Finally, we express our sincere gratitude to Miss Karmen ZHENG (Project Assistant, Comparative Cultures of Care: An Interdisciplinary Project, IRCCS, FHM, EdUHK), and all the other people who have offered their invaluable support and assistance in the organisation of this event.

 [@gwobean](https://www.instagram.com/gwobean)

THANK YOU.

Zimu ZHANG & Jamie WANG
Symposium Conveners

