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"TERRITORIZE!"   —A Personal View on Today´s Cities (#339)—

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Basis for Singapore photography captions by NT, edited & augmented by JH.
Beijing photography captions by JH.]

"TERRITORIZE!"
A Personal View on Today´s Cities

Content:

Title: *Team #339 03 IMG_2332 (circular in-between perpetually unfinished scapes)*
Caption: *A few meters further north a railroad track (as part of a circular format) lies in-between unfinished urbanized landscape of poor housing and derelict soft-industry or warehouses (not to spend too much words on the odd-one out; a large-scale signage post in the background of this images might be tailored towards those in transit across the river? ... at about 500 or so meters away?. The track itself (being a circle goes to nowhere and comes from nowhere; it is every so often used by a single locomotive waking up the surrounding inhabitants by means of its obtrusively soundscaping horn. This in-between area and its structures strengthen the tides keeping apart the islands of "cultured" dwellings—The Pingguo Art Street on its southern end—and the CBD (Central/China Business District)t with its BTV tower (Beijing TV) and Koolhaas' CCTV tower to the north.*

Title: *Team #339 04 IMG_2333 (kilometers-long in-between space)*

Caption: *A park-canal strip stretching a few kilometers from east to west has deterritorialized the previously existing markets and inhabitants a few years ago, creating this no-man's land of artificial order and enforced peace. In this city containing about 20 million people hardly anyone can be found here (even during summer it is relatively lacking any maximization).*

Title: *Team #339 05 IMG_2337 (kilometers-long in-between space)*
Caption: *a detailed view of the location as shown in image Team #339 04 IMG_2333*

Title: *Team #339 06 IMG_2344 (in-between broadcasting spaces-01)*

Caption: *A structure as found within the area partly captured in images "Team #339 04 IMG_2333" and image "Team #339 05 IMG_2337".*

This structure is particularly challenging to me as I can not see how its function—as its form seems to hint to me— or as it is possibly intended, coincides with the location it is found nor with the way it is actually used (or not). This podium-like structure might be intended as a place to address a crowd (the crowd would be where the photographer was positioned) and the narrator/demagogue would be either on the lower curved part or the upper straight part (see next photos for different angles). However: 1/ no one is (almost ever) there; 2/ from the "stage" areas one looks out onto a less then exciting defunct canal or across it to less-then appealing cityscape (if one looks far enough Koolhaas can be detected from it).

It could also have been intended as non-traditionally iteration of a Chinese pavilion. Such pavilions are positioned on mountain tops overlooking a breath-taking panorama. However, for the latter both the traditional architectural form as well as the traditional or any worthwhile panorama is missing. To me this symbolizes a confused convolution of possibly (and I am guessing) state-run building guidelines with a confused view on territorialization of enforced functionality without any noteworthy social nor communal responds that might be in-line with the semiotics I sense from the structure.

For those who can see in such detail, there is 1 person underneath performing T'ai chi ch'uan; she temporarily claimed the territory as her own. Hence the structure, on a social or semiotic level occupies to me an in-between state: it is there as well as not there; it means as well as does not mean. It confuses me yet attracts me for non-aesthetic reasons. What will become of it? Is it, based on the intentions behind it, ideal?

Title: *Team #339 09 IMG_2353 (territorial-broadcasting)*

Caption: *Same as image "Team #339 06 IMG_2344" but rather from an eastern standpoint to a westward vantage point (in Team #339 06 IMG_2344 the point of view is north to south).*

Title: *Team #339 08 IMG_2348 (in-between broadcasting spaces-03).*

Caption: *Same as image "Team #339 06 IMG_2344" but rather from a somewhat south-eastern position to north-west vantage point. In the distance one can see the aimed direction of this little excursion. I have not observed skateboarding here... yet... (note: there are guards, and social watch groups with red arm-bands possibly limiting such territorializations).*

Title: *Team #339 07 IMG_2346 (in-between broadcasting spaces-02).*
Caption: *Same as image "Team #339 06 IMG_2344" but rather from a southern position (with one's back against the structure) to north vantage point showing what one can see from the foot of the odd structure. I am not impressed by the "panorama"...*

Title: *Team #339 10 IMG_2354 (territorial-broadcasting)*

Caption: *Same as image "Team #339 06 IMG_2344" but rather from a southern position on the upper part of the structure looking across to the north showing the BTV (Beijing's TV broadcasting building) on the left, some unremarkable structures on the right almost masking (or perhaps protecting) Koolhaas' CCTV building (China Central TV broadcasting building). These three points (BTV, CCTV and this 'oratorical-mix-pavilion-like' structure) seem to triangulate and clench their broadcast territory for their (here-absent) audience/community. It makes me feel odd; and, I am still not too impressed by the "panorama" (nor by the possibilities of the structure to function as a stage). What are its functionalities—potential or intended; does it answer any (political or other) ideals?*

Title: *Team #339 11 IMG_2357 (state vs sub-cultural territorialization-01)*
Caption: *walking further west one reaches the structures of (and surrounding) the Guomao Bridge; an important nexus of traffic*
from and to the Beijing's CBD. While standing on the first and lower bridging part (along the north-south part of the Third-Ring Road), over the Tong Hui He canal, looking across to its northern bank, one can observe a (minimal) state versus sub-cultural (de-) and (re-)territorialization. These media battle for ground on real estate mostly ignored by traffic in transit above. Who do these brown-gray banks of the canal speak to?

Title: *Team #339 12 IMG_2358 (state vs sub-cultural territorialization-02)*
Caption: *A close-up of image "Team #339 11 IMG_2357"*

Title: *Team #339 13 IMG_2359 (in the middle of in-between; looking back)*

Caption: *from the same location as the image entitled "Team #339 11 IMG_2357" one can turn around and look back at (or south-eastwards) where this excursion started. Across the canal, the excursion started on the top of the highest building furthest to the left (or furthest east: Pingguo Shequ, Beiqu Building #1). The previous images were shot towards the canal. The southern bank of this canal is where some of the previous images were shot (including the odd structure discussed previously).*

Title: *Team #339 14 IMG_2360 (territorialization; de-centralized recycling initatives)*

Caption: *This scene can be seen from afar in photograph "Team #339 11 IMG_2357 (state vs sub-cultural territorialization-01)". Crossing the bridge, on the northern bank of the canal (Tong Hui He, in Beijing's CBD) southeast from the Guomao bridge, one can observe non-regulated*

decentralized initiative of collection/recycling of several resources (i.e. cardboard, etc). To me it is an example how individuals or fluid communities of similar-minded (or of those with similar intentions/possibilities) territorialize areas in the city. It is my impression that this dynamic is not always constant nor visible and was more readily visible before the 2008 Olympic Games. Can/Should these labor-based communities be (better) supported (infra-)structurally?

Title: *Team #339 15 IMG_2362 (territorialization; deregulated service industries)*
Caption: *This scene can be seen from afar in photograph "Team #339 11 IMG_2357 (state vs sub-cultural territorialization-01)." At the same location a few steps back to the bridge over the Tong Hui He Canal (see earlier description)and similar as described in image "Team #339 14 IMG_2360" one can see a bicycle repair man. The question remains: can/should these initiatives be supported architecturally/structurally/socially? These individuals/fluid communities/labor groups create a dynamic, a kind of organic hint of down-to-earth human activity in a vast city (of between 14 to 22 million of more-or-less officially registered city dwellers). Currently it seems to me these individuals occupy an in-between space (the space is not there for them yet is there for them) as well as an in-between communal status. They are there yet are not serviced to be there (they serviced themselves perhaps?)*

Title: *Team #339 16 IMG_2364 (vertical & horizontal in-between space)*
Caption: *Here we arrive under the southern part of the Guomao bridge complex. One can observe a vertical and horizontal in-between space. The vertical east-west bridged space creates an empty sensation. It territorializes with emptiness. It simply supports vehicles in transit and very little on the scale of human pedestrians in-between yet in-location (besides not being crushed by vehicles if the bridging structures were to magically disappear). Besides a more radical consideration whether structures supporting combustion-based transportation is the way to sustain transition, could such*

spaces as depicted here be re-territorialized; such as by a bicycle repair person or other and more communal facilities/services/immersive systems instead of anti-crushing systems (i.e. a bridge simply as a bridge)?

Title: *Team #339 18 IMG_2367 (Marilyn Monroe-feel & past glamor)*
Caption: *At any moment now... Marilyn Monroe will parade off these grandiose stairs... any second now. Yet, no such idolizing event is to happen. Even though the idols of a past do parade this open space in-between buildings. Virtual shrines without any worshiping in sight; without bystanders; without its followers. Or am I too absent here? It is a space stuck in-between time: a past—knowing its larger context—can not be let go of; a present showing the absence of community, activity, interaction, immersion in to the story being told or the story that could be told. I have my story there, which other paragraphs could my story sit in-between?*