11 DESIGNING STABILITY: HONG KONG'S PAVILION AT EXPO 70 AND LOCAL EXPOSITIONS

Daniel Cooper and Juliana Kei

In March 1970, Hong Kong sent its first official pavilion to a World Exposition. Expo 70, held in Osaka, was also the first such event in Asia and continued the celebrations that had begun a few years earlier when Tokyo hosted the 1964 Olympic Games. The Expo's theme was "Progress and Humanity for Mankind." Its 330-hectare site was meant to be an experimental model for cities of the future showcasing ambitious infrastructure projects such as the monorail and cable gondola transport system, whose precise locations were indicated on small, internally backlit translucent plastic maps.[1] The preeminent Japanese architect Kenzo Tange designed the site's masterplan and members of his Tange Lab, including emerging avant-garde architects Arata Isozaki, Kisho Kurokawa, and Kiyonari Kikutake, offered imaginative visions of the future. They did so—particularly in the corporate pavilions—by using experimental video, projection screens, sound work, and other multi-sensory displays, which they combined with moving inflatable structures.[2]

Hong Kong's contribution stood apart from the futuristic flamboyance of the other pavilions. Its design emulated a sampan, a fishing boat with batwing-like sails specific to the South China Sea, which provided a look back at Hong Kong's past. By 1970, the sampan was already a retrograde symbol of Hong Kong, long since replaced by commercial trawlers and container ships transporting goods around the world.[3] Why did Hong Kong send a pavilion that was both out of step with the predominantly futuristic designs of the Expo and out of time with Hong Kong's present? To answer these questions, we take a step back to look not only at the pavilion in Osaka but also the ones built for Hong Kong's local trade fairs between

1967 and 1973 as part of the colonial government's response to the territory's unprecedented social turmoil that erupted in 1967. The themes of these local pavilions included rational housing, education, and hygiene—all of which were also explored at Expo 70—presented in designs that were, unlike the pavilion in Japan, overwhelmingly Modernist. Through an in-depth exploration of the pavilions in Hong Kong and Osaka, and using Eric Hobsbawm's notion of "the invention of tradition" to testify to the stability of a colony, this chapter analyzes the ways that the pavilions represented an attempt by the colonial government to form a cogent identity that represented both the people and their values to the world abroad.[4] These pavilions connected the branches of colonial bureaucracy tasked with managing the territory and image of Hong Kong. Revisiting them, therefore, offers an example of what we term "design by bureaucracy", exemplifying how design emerged from governmental agencies to define a population and present a stable and industrious image of Hong Kong life to prospective international partners.

THE "BERLIN OF THE EAST": HONG KONG AS A STRATEGIC ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE

In March 1967, the Information Service Department (ISD), part of the colonial government, announced its plan for Hong Kong to participate in Expo 70 and in so doing made Hong Kong the ninth pavilion to confirm its participation in the event.[5] Hong Kong's early acceptance was rewarded with a generously proportioned site near one of the west gates along the two main cross-expo avenues next to the British pavilion. Although Hong Kong's Chamber of Commerce expressed concern about the Hong Kong pavilion's "proximity to the fair's exit," the site was nonetheless larger and better positioned than those of former British colonies, such as Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma (Myanmar).[6]

Expo 70 press material advertised the fair by publicizing its ever-growing scale—"76 nations and one special administrative zone"—and specially singled out Hong Kong for notice.[7] The so-called "administrative zone" stood out from the other corporate and government participants as neither a commonwealth colony, nor a region of another country. Grahame Blundell, administrative director of the pavilion, celebrated this unexpected publicity boon.[8] Writing in a semi-regular bulletin that he sent to the Expo 70 planning committee in Hong Kong, Blundell reported "on every occasion that the ever-ascending total of participants was announced at any conference, Hong Kong was always mentioned specially by name [...] From the publicity point of view, this is an immense value to us."[9]

While the exposure may have been valuable for publicity, the description of Hong Kong also served to situate the colony's peculiar geopolitical status. The Expo organization committee in their description used "administrative zone" and

"Crown Colony" interchangeably.[10] The discrepancy may simply have been because Hong Kong was, in fact, part British territory and part colony. Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula were Britain's territories in perpetuity under terms agreed at the end of the First and Second Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860). In 1889, at the Second Convention of Peking, the British "leased" the area north of Kowloon from the Qing government as a colony for ninety-nine years, renaming it the New Territories.[11]

The confusion of terms framing Hong Kong in press bulletins in the postwar era also reflected the colony's uncertain political status. Since the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the British government had recognized that, should the Chinese People's Liberation Army invade, Hong Kong would be "indefensible."[12] In 1949, the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, described Hong Kong as the "Berlin of the East," emphasizing both the valuable and vulnerable aspects of its geopolitical position. This framing was part of an attempt to solicit United States military support to the British to help augment Hong Kong's security, which amounted to more or less nothing.[13] Not only was the United States unwilling to lend its support to secure Hong Kong, it also imposed a strict trade embargo on both China and Hong Kong at the outbreak of the Korean War. In doing so, the United States reduced Hong Kong's stability, sustainability, and usefulness as an entrepôt for trade with China.[14] Britain's interest in, and ability to defend, Hong Kong further diminished as British attention turned to the Egyptian-Suez Crisis (1956–1957), as well as to conflicts in Indochina (1946–1954), Malaya (1948–1960), and Korea (1950–1954).[15] Meanwhile, Cold War geopolitics had the unintended consequence of boosting Hong Kong's economic development as the latter half of the century began. The United States' trade embargo accelerated Hong Kong's nascent manufacturing hub into a full-scale industrial effort. Refugees fleeing the regime of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (1949) and later famine (1958–1961) brought capital and industrial know-how that promoted the growth of labor-intensive and export-led industries.[16] In 1961, the manufacturing industry employed over 43 percent of Hong Kong's workers, nearly half of whom worked in the textile and garment industry.[17] By 1970, Hong Kong's light industrial manufacturing had grown exponentially and was on the verge of overtaking Japan as the world's largest toy producer and exporter.[18] Amidst the tensions characterizing the Sino–American relationship, Japan functioned as a reliable trading partner, a model of what an Asian industrial society could become, and a source of raw materials such as textile yarns and base metals for Hong Kong's industries.[19]

As those industries grew, so too did income inequality. Hong Kong workers began protesting for better wages, safer working conditions, and affordable housing. In May 1967, influenced by the Cultural Revolution in China, factory workers began picketing factories to demand a government response to the class divisions rife throughout Hong Kong and exacerbated by industrial growth. The

government's first response was to send police to confront and quell the protesters, but police presence turned the protests into riots. By June the clashes had escalated, disrupting business as explosives killed several people. After two months of protests, Hong Kong's economic standing in the world had begun to waver. While protesters and police continued to clash, the government started work on two plans. In one, the ISD pledged Hong Kong would participate in Expo 70, claiming in press releases that its pavilion would "have the effect of enhancing the image of Hong Kong overseas."[20] The second plan came only two weeks after the Expo 70 announcement when the ISD committed resources to Hong Kong Week, an event unprecedented in Hong Kong consisting of a hodgepodge of performances, exhibitions, and parades. Organized by the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, Hong Kong Week was first intended to stimulate local industries, but as the riots worsened it was hastily reframed as a community-oriented event celebrating Hong Kong's peace and progress. That same month, as protests peaked, the ISD implemented yet another plan, this time to participate in the upcoming Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo (HKBPE). All of this happened against the chaotic backdrop of the colonial government's plans to evacuate itself from Hong Kong if the protests worsened.[21]

HONG KONG WEEK AND HKBPE

Histories of twentieth-century Hong Kong frequently identify the 1967 protests as a watershed for British colonial governance.[22] The government introduced a series of reforms in education and housing, followed at once by anti-corruption campaigns.[23] Design historian Matthew Turner suggests that these modernization projects caused a shift in the public's conception of the colony, from a safe haven from China for a society of refugees, to a permanent home for 3.7 million residents.[24] Turner notes that the term "Hong Kong People" was used for one of the first times by the Hong Kong government and institutionally in promotional materials for Hong Kong Week, testing the rhetoric of citizenship, community, and belonging.[25] Clothing modeled in the week's fashion shows and publications, for example, were conspicuously labeled "Made in Hong Kong" and were the nascent foundation for two cogent identities, one for objects and the other for people. At that time, "Hong Kong Goods" was a novel identity and was applied to products that, in a broad sense, could be described as manufactured in Hong Kong regardless of where the raw materials had come from. Likewise, the new term "Hong Kong People" was extended to a population of whom more than half had migrated from mainland China.[26]

Hong Kong Week's slogan, "Hong Kong People Use Hong Kong Goods," identified the people who made, used, and bought Hong Kong goods. We can read in this slogan a consolidation of territory, and a rupture between mainland people

and Chinese-made goods. The claim also opened the door to assimilation, since consumption and production would be the means by which people were identified. "Hong Kong People Use Hong Kong Goods" was itself not a new slogan but, rather, an adaptation of the well-known "Chinese people use Chinese goods," a phrase used in mainland China at the turn of the twentieth century to encourage Chinese people who had suffered from decades of foreign invasion and oppression to imagine a nation strengthened by modern industrialization.[27] During the interwar era, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong incorporated the notion of Chinese goods into the marketing for the Brand and Product Expo (1938), which became a niche for the promotion of Chinese manufactured goods and represented the overseas Chinese merchant community in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.[28] The planned use of production and consumption to form a new identity in the region for Hong Kong was thus based on the familiar attempts to do the same among emigrant Chinese communities in the region.

In their subsequent pavilion in the HKBPE in late 1967, the ISD introduced new elements into their attempt in manufacturing a colonial identity through consumer culture. The ISD used pavilion architecture and graphic design to underscore the social welfare programs the colonial government was developing and, in some cases, already implementing around the territory. They employed Modernist architectural designs and explicitly sought out young architects who, by education or preference, had been influenced by foreign design. The records of many of these designers have vanished. Prominent among the extant records, however, is the work of Tao Ho, who studied at Harvard University and worked for Walter Gropius.[29] Ho designed the 1970 HKBPE pavilion, which caused considerable upset in Hong Kong since he was not at the time a registered architect.[30] His design consisted of a cluster of white circular volumes elevated on plinths that functioned as both the pavilion and the display: their internal walls were covered with diagrams and charts illustrating governmental spending and various initiatives in social welfare. The 1972 pavilion—the probable design of Donald Liao—followed a similar aesthetic path. It featured a white, flat-roofed circular volume marking the tenth anniversary of the territory's first public housing scheme.[31] Liao graduated from the architecture school at Durham University, and was, at the time, leading the Hong Kong government's ambitious Ten-Year Housing Programme (1972) to build more public estates. His work also included the well-regarded public housing Wah Fu Estate.[32] In these and other pavilions constructed for the Hong Kong government between 1967 and 1973, tenets of Modernist architecture were self-evident: white walls, flat roofs, and elevated volumes on plinths (Figure 11.1). Their designers also used orthogonal shapes, sans serif fonts, and the pavilions' interiors were devoid of ornament. The visual message from the ISD, by way of these aspiring young architects, was cohesive: Hong Kong was well on its way to becoming a modern city with improved housing, education, and health and hygiene standards. The response from the ISD

FIGURE 11.1 Hong Kong Government Pavilion in the 1967 Brand and Product Expo, Hong Kong. © Hong Kong Government Information Service Department Photo Library.

to the 1967 riots helped push Hong Kong from one kind of politics to another: from a Chinese diaspora community under laissez-faire colonial rule to "Hong Kong people"—a community living in a modern capitalistic society with increasing welfare provisions.

Visitors to the ISD's pavilion saw clearly the work of building a social-welfare state. Through diagrams, pie charts, and photographs showcasing government initiatives represented in rational displays, the restrained design and display of the government pavilions set them apart from their flamboyant commercial counterparts, which employed lavish neon lights, colorful banners, and enlarged models to sell their goods. In the 1967 HKBPE, for example, the pavilion for the Hoe Hin White Flower Oil Embrocation—a multi-storey structure—had a façade that featured a large picture of its oil bottle situated among dragons and other Chinese motifs. The China Paint Manufacturing Company pavilion advertised its

products by similarly ostentatious means and placed on a plinth an enormous paint-can measuring eight meters high. Although the design languages differed, the government and commercial pavilions complemented each other: Hong Kong's progress toward affluence depended on both government-led projects and the burgeoning consumer culture.

Another actor that took part in the efforts in consolidating Hong Kong's industry, image abroad, and identity was the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC), a statutory corporation established in 1967 to promote the standing of Hong Kong-manufactured goods overseas. Positioned as the international marketing arm for Hong Kong manufacturers and service providers, the TDC worked closely with the local business community and was thus uniquely positioned to rapidly respond to the riots. The TDC's primary role was as an advisory body for Hong Kong's industries. It was meant to develop Hong Kong brands and designs and diversify Hong Kong industry, which at that point consisted predominantly of original equipment manufacturing (OEM) industries, such as factories that produced parts, and goods developed, designed, and marketed by other foreign companies.[33] The TDC remit was to cultivate Hong Kong's industrial products under Hong Kong's own brands that would be recognized internationally in their own right. To do this, the TDC—a council of colonial bureaucrats—hired designers to produce clothing and light industry product designs that would serve as examples of the ability and range of manufacturers. Among the designers was Bernard (Nardi) Navetta, a multi-talented American designer who worked in graphic, interior, and clothing design, and who went on to design the Industrial Progress section of the Expo 70 pavilion.

"76 NATIONS AND ONE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE": HONG KONG IN EXPO 70

Bernard Navetta's work for the TDC shed light on the concerns of Hong Kong officials regarding representations of Hong Kong overseas. In 1967, when Navetta presented possible TDC logos, TDC officials and board members argued over whether Chinese elements should be combined with English-language elements in the design, and whether the two elements should be merged or remain distinct within one design.[34] Eventually, a design was chosen that combined the Chinese characters for Hong Kong and the English spelling of Hong Kong, but the debate remained open. While the TDC labored over one logo design, Navetta was asked to design another: this time specifically for the pavilion at Expo 70. He used a visual language that was clearly both Western and modern, while his use of juxtaposing circular shapes to symbolize a pearl, a natural and local motif, evoked Hong Kong as the "Pearl of the Orient."

A mix of modern Western elements and Chinese characters is similarly characteristic of the design of the Expo 70 pavilion. Grahame Blundell, the exhibition director, chose Alan Fitch, a familiar name in Hong Kong due to the success of his design for Hong Kong's City Hall (1958)—co-created with Ron Philip—as the architect of the pavilion.[35] Fitch divided the Osaka interior into three sections highlighting themes of Social Progress, Industrial Progress, and Cultural Heritage, echoing some of the design and thematic components of the HKBPE. Other architects were put in charge of the different thematic sections and Wong Ng Ouyang & Associates, founded by the first graduates of the University of Hong Kong's Department of Architecture in 1955, designed Social Progress.[36] Ouyang had studied under Raymond Gordon Brown, a proponent of Modernist architecture who had previously worked for the Architectural Association in London.[37] Bernard Navetta designed Industrial Progress, the second in the series of the three sections, where he dedicated most of the space to Hong Kong's manufacturing and shipping industries. Christopher Haffner, who worked for the Scottish–Shanghai firm Spence Robinson and had attended the University of Liverpool, another school with a curricular history of Modernism dating back to at least the 1930s, designed Cultural Heritage.[38]

Inside the pavilion, visitors walked a zig-zag path through the first section as they were introduced to Hong Kong and its history. Against back-lit translucent plastic displays, visitors read the narrative of the metaphorical Mei Ching, the "Girl in the Crowd." The story, written in black sans serif type on white translucent displays, was an attempt to encapsulate Hong Kong's history through Mei Ching's transformation and was told in multiple languages. Seen first as a fisherman's daughter on a sampan—boats characteristic of the Tanka people, a minority group living on the shores of the South China Sea—she and her family were then shown standing in the shadow of Hong Kong's architecturally imposing business district, a contrast emphasizing the vast changes that characterized both Mei Ching's life and that of the city. The narrative continued as viewers watched Mei Ching leave her family's fishing village to begin working in manufacturing, which transformed her into a "modern woman," one in a crowd, and detached from her history.

The story was simple and blunt. At the end of Mei Ching's narrative arc, she transformed into a member of a crowd of people nearly indistinguishable from one another whose paths through life, so visitors were led to think, may have been similar to hers. At home in her urban environment, she had exchanged her fisher-girl clothing—bamboo hat and *samfu* (a traditional two-piece shirt and trousers, like pajamas)—for a *cheongsam*, a mini-dress with a flat collar popular abroad and evocative of Hong Kong in its oriental and modern phases. Dressing Mei Ching in a *cheongsam* was noteworthy; by the 1960s the dress had become associated with cosmopolitanism, modernity, femininity, and financial independence.[39] As such, Mei Ching was the embodiment of Hong Kong and its impressive ability to adapt to Western economic demands and tastes.[40] Her idealized emancipation, signified

by the wealth she gained from participating in the labor market, was, however, not the only narrative that the Hong Kong government wanted to convey.

Early in the preparation for Expo 70, Blundell wrote to the ISD telling an alternative version of Mei Ching's story from the one that was eventually shown in Osaka; sharing the same ending but differing in its development. In it, he described Mei Ching as a refugee from mainland China who first lived with her family in one of Hong Kong's many perilous hillside huts. The government's housing provisions helped her family rise in the world and, as visitors were told, thanks to the support of the state, Mei Ching had ended up in the Wah Fu Estate, an exemplar of Hong Kong's public housing schemes at the time. Her father, in this version, worked there as a building contractor, making them both beneficiaries of Hong Kong's new social provisions and an example of the contribution made by the labor of Hong Kong people to improve others' quality of life.[41] In Blundell's telling, Mei Ching was transformed into a nurse at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a centerpiece of government support for the population and an image of Hong Kong's architectural modernity.[42] These components of modernization—housing, infrastructure, health and hygiene—were focal points along Mei Ching's path and were similarly the highlight of the HKBPE pavilions. In his letter, Blundell stressed that Mei Ching and her family were all contributing to "the massive development projects that have given Hong Kong more land, more roads, more housing and social services, and more water."[43]

It is not clear when or why the narrative of Mei Ching evolved from Blundell's initial description to the version in the pavilion, but the changes highlighted a shift in strategy. In addition to stressing the Hong Kong government's work on behalf of the territory's population—the HKBPE's core message—the story would have reminded visitors of the terrible conditions Hong Kong had largely left behind. The hillside huts mentioned in Blundell's version were a reference to Hong Kong's postwar housing history, including an infamous fire that swept across the Shek Kip Mei hillside on Christmas Day 1953. The fire left more than 50,000 people homeless and became a primary impetus for the government's public settlement housing initiatives and eventually its public housing scheme.[44] The progression from hillside hut to government housing was part of a shared heritage in Hong Kong, especially since the squatter population who lived in impoverished hillside housing had at one point made up more than 25 percent of the colony's entire population.[45]

Hong Kong's narrative of growth and transformation continued in Industrial Progress, the exhibition's second section, which showcased products such as watches, cameras, and clothing manufactured in Hong Kong. The dynamism underlying much of Hong Kong's manufacturing and trade success was not, however, reflected in the exhibits. Instead, the section consisted primarily of textual descriptions of Hong Kong industries as well as mannequins encased in Plexiglas. Cultural Heritage, the final and largest of the pavilion's divisions, was a display of live traditional craft demonstrations that included jade-carving, black-wood furniture, and ivory.[46] These

performances, featuring prominently in the press material delivered by Blundell, were the focus of attention in the Japanese media's coverage in Osaka of the Hong Kong pavilion.[47] Fitch, the pavilion's architect, placed the whole of the structure inside a reflective pool, complementing the boat-like building with its own sea to sail over and visitors were granted a full view of the sails that topped the pavilion as they left (see Figure 11.2). On the 2,300m^2 site visitors were greeted by dragon dances, Cantonese pop music, fashion shows, traditional Chinese dances, and other daily performances on the pavilion's platform. The emphasis on live demonstrations and performances, Blundell explained, was to capture the attention of visitors on holiday

FIGURE 11.2 The "bat-wing" sail on the Hong Kong Pavilion at Expo 70, Osaka. © Hong Kong Government Information Service Department Photo Library.

FIGURE 11.3 Hong Kong Pavilion at Expo 70, Osaka. © Hong Kong Government Information Service Department Photo Library.

who would "naturally wish to enjoy themselves."[48] A popular Cantonese restaurant was housed at the other end of the building.

The three-section exhibition was but one small part of the Hong Kong pavilion and its arrangement signified Hong Kong as a place for consumable pleasures and amusements (Figure 11.3). In addition to the platforms used for live performances, Fitch and Blundell also made a spectacle of the pavilion itself. The boat's roof-mounted batwings moved with the wind, creating a dramatic silhouette and shadow formations designed to be seen from above in the Skyway, a cable car system traversing the park grounds.[49] To add dramatic flair, the ISD hired Cantonese fishermen dressed in *samfu*, as though they were going out to sea, to raise and lower daily the pavilion's sails. But the role of the fishermen was not only theatrical but also functional, since they also raised typhoon signals ahead of storms in Osaka, transforming the ritual into a normal and pragmatic part of the Expo. Through its design and exhibits, Hong Kong's pavilion pushed performance and spectacle to the forefront of visitors' experience.

"JUST A BLOCKHOUSE WITH A LOT OF SAILS ON IT"

In addition to persuading tourists to identify Hong Kong as a Far Eastern colony sustained by crafts and fishing—a small part of Hong Kong's past—the pavilion's

design invented traditions by modifying and ritualizing existing customary practices.[50] Given Hong Kong's rapid modernization it is perhaps not surprising that the pavilion's organizers leaned toward such a strategy in its first official appearance at an Expo, a location tied to the representation, expression, and symbolization of many kinds of (pseudo) national identities.[51] Hong Kong's pavilion, in its design and execution, was the pinnacle of this kind of invention.

Presenting Hong Kong's mythologized origins went beyond legitimizing colonial governance and laying foundations for economic expansion. It was a way to mediate its people's peculiar geopolitical conditions and the framing of what it was for them to be "Chinese." When sampans were used to fish they did so in the South China Sea, an area far from the historical seat of power of the Chinese ruling dynasties. The boats therefore marked the distinctness of these people from mainland Chinese culture and differentiated Hong Kong from the regimes of both the Republic of China in Taiwan and the People's Republic of China on the mainland.[52] The design of the pavilion sent a dual message: it distinguished Hong Kong from others by indicating that it was both a part of Chinese society and economically, politically, and culturally unique.

Although Hong Kong's effort to bring a vernacular symbol to Expo 70 resonated with Japanese and international visitors, the architectural establishment all but rejected it. Official souvenirs of the Expo—including matchboxes and postcards—celebrated the pavilion's batwing sails, as did a special coin container fashioned into the shape of the pavilion's fisherman donning his traditional hat and *samfu* commissioned by a Japanese bank.[53] Even though the influential British magazine *Architectural Design* prominently featured the pavilion's sails in a collage for their special issue "EXPO A-Z," the pavilion was infrequently included in architectural journals outside the colony, and when it was mentioned the reviews were overwhelmingly negative.[54] In Hong Kong, when the pavilion's design was first revealed in 1968, comments from local architects ranged from "slightly unfortunate" and "undistinguished," to "puerile" and "makeshift."[55] J. Prescott of the University of Hong Kong Department of Architecture derided the structure as "just a blockhouse with a lot of sails on it," and as an architectural example was "just not on."[56] This discrepancy between the pavilion's reception in architectural circles compared to that at the Expo reflects a distinction, suggesting that tourists and architects wanted different things from it.[57] Critics in Hong Kong may also have been irritated by the design's lack of originality: Hong Kong authorities had previously sent sampans and sails to various overseas trade shows, including the 1964 United States World Trade Fair in San Francisco and the 1966 Far East Festival at Macy's in New York.[58] Fitch's retreat from Modernist designs established at Hong Kong trade fairs may have also contributed to the harsh criticism he received. Nevertheless, the concealing of the technological and industrial advances that made the design and performance of the pavilion possible also suggests the development of another way of exhibiting progress and stability.

The invention of tradition and remaking of history for contemporary uses is a hallmark of postmodern culture as understood by historians such as David Lowenthal, who has labeled the kind of technique pursued by Fitch as "creative anachronism."[59] The Hong Kong pavilion unintentionally manifested postmodern tendencies in a myriad of ways: through Blundell and Fitch's focus on performance and spectacle, and by shifting architecture into the world of icons. One could argue that these architectural strategies predated and prefigured the lessons that architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Stephen Izenour laid out in *Learning from Las Vegas* two years later.[60] By enclosing the rectangular halls in the sampan, the designers framed Hong Kong as a place still best understood through a history of Orientalism and reduction to a simple made for consumer society.

RE-INVENTING TRADITIONS

Although Blundell and Fitch did not intentionally devise a postmodern pavilion, the postmodern framework can be used to situate the Hong Kong pavilion at Expo 70 in the longer history of Hong Kong's participation in international expositions. The content of the Cultural Heritage section—demonstrations of black-wood furniture-making, sails, embroidery, bamboo scaffolding, and rattan work—were little changed from the Hong Kong pavilion at the 1886 Indian and Colonial Exhibition.[61] In subsequent world expositions Hong Kong's exhibitions continued to engage in this perpetuation of myth, returning stubbornly to the past and the familiar characterization of Hong Kong. In the 1986 World Expo in Vancouver, architect Tao Ho moved away from the High Modernist aesthetics he had used in the 1970 HKBPE pavilion. Ho designed a yellow box wrapped in bamboo scaffolding—a craft and visual reference to Hong Kong's building industry that echoed features used at the 1886 exhibition. He added mannequins resembling workers climbing around the bamboo, clearly linking his structure to the scaffolding used in Hong Kong construction. Ho also brought a dragon boat used in races in Hong Kong to the waters around Vancouver and added martial arts performances on bamboo stages.[62] These examples demonstrate that regardless of the progress Hong Kong made as a shipping port, manufacturing base, and world financial hub, these tropes would persist.

By comparing the 1970 Expo pavilion in Osaka and the HKBPE pavilions, we see two overlapping but different strategies in which design was used to project stability. The HKBPE government pavilions employed Modernist design and architecture to foster a welfare-state consensus and the construction of a "Hong Kong people." This strategy, together with the contemporary government projects for housing, hygiene, leisure, and cultural developments adapted abstract Modernist language to form a new identity. In the Expos, designers relied on performance and spectacle to invent tradition, drawing visitors away from the

more complicated demands of colonial rule and the volatile conditions in a modern industrial city. In doing so, the government repeatedly returned to ostensibly neutral motifs such as sails, bamboo scaffolding, and crafts that had been frequently reused and were now detached from Hong Kong's ever-changing social, economic, and cultural conditions. The displacement of the former strategy by the latter highlights the short-lived attempt in devising a representation of Hong Kong that brought together colonial politics, modernisation, industrial progress, and everyday life. This change may be attributed to a wider postmodern shift in architectural culture, but also signposts a missed opportunity in articulating a vision of Hong Kong that acknowledges its complexities.

POSTSCRIPT

As we write, Hong Kong is undergoing new and unprecedented social turmoil. Pro-democracy protests, known as the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement, have continued unabated since March 2019, bringing to a head issues of nationalism, internationalism, and China's infamous two-state solution. In light of the protest against repressive politics for a future that has not yet been articulated, we ask what kind of techniques will next be employed to represent Hong Kong? What will become of the "Hong Kong People," born of necessity in 1967, and what design formulations—future facing or retrograde—will these events represent for Hong Kong?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

1 "Expo '70," *Architectural Review* 148, no. 882 (August, 1970): 122.

2 Yuriko Furuhata, "Multimedia Environments and Security Operations: Expo 70 as a Laboratory of Governance," *Grey Room*, no. 54 (Winter 2014): 56–79.

3 The planning of Hong Kong's Kwai Chung Container Terminal had already started in 1966 and the construction was completed in 1972. Kwai Chung in the 1980s overtook New York and Rotterdam as the busiest port in the world. Gillian Chambers, *Supertrader. The Story of Trade Development in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 1989), 6.

4   Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

5   *Exposition Quarterly*, no. 8 (1968), World Expositions Digital Collection, HMLSC_AMD401, National Art Library, London.

6   Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, *Osaka Expo* (Hong Kong: General Chamber of Commerce, 1968).

7   Eventually the participants comprised 76 countries; 4 international organizations; 3 states, 2 cities, and 2 companies from the United States; 3 Canadian provinces; 1 German city; and Hong Kong. Grahame Blundell, *EXPO 70 Bulletin No 12*, 1969, ISD 26/147GR, Hong Kong Public Records Office, Hong Kong.

8   Peter Moss, *No Babylon. A Hong Kong Scrapbook* (Bloomington, Indiana: iUniverse, 2006).

9   Grahame Blundell, EXPO 70 Bulletin No. 12, 1969, ISD 26/147GR, Hong Kong Public Records Office, Hong Kong.

10 "Expo 70 All Colour Guide." 1970, HMLSC_guide_AMD279a, National Art Library World Expositions Digital Collection, London, UK.

11 John Mark Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 67.

12 Chi-Kwan Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War. Anglo-American Relations 1949–1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 40.

13 Mark argues that Hong Kong's problems in the Cold War were, in fact, more akin to "the security dilemmas faced by the Scandinavian or Nordic countries—Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland—and their roles in the US-Soviet rivalry." These countries, caught between US power and close proximity to Russia, had little choice but to become "semi-allies" or "semi-neutrals." Mark considers Hong Kong as another example of what might be called "reluctant allies" to the two sides of the Cold War divide. Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 40.

14 Tracy Steele, "Hong Kong and the Cold War in the 1950s," in Priscilla Roberts and John M. Carroll, eds, *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, 92–116 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016).

15 Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 1.

16 Stephen Chiu and Tai-Lok Lui, "Hong Kong Manufacturing from Boom to Bust," in *Hong Kong. Becoming a Chinese Global City* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 25–55.

17 Other important industries in Hong Kong included plastics and small electronics. See James Riedel, "The Hong Kong Model of Industrialization," Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Kieler Diskussionsbeiträge, no. 29 (February 1973): https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/48056/1/055872107.pdf; Gary S. Fields, "Industrialization and Employment in Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan," in Walter Galenson, ed., *Foreign Trade and Investment. Economic Development in the Newly-Industrializing Asian Countries* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 333–375.

18 Riedel, "The Hong Kong Model of Industrialization," 8.

19 In 1967, Japan was the second-largest supplier of material to Hong Kong, accounting for 17 percent of all imports. It was also Hong Kong's second greatest re-export market. Gary Cross and Gregory Smits, "Japan, the U.S. and the Globalization of Children's

Consumer Culture," *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 4 (2005): 873–890. Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Yearbook 1967*, 39–60.

20 Grahame Blundell, "Hong Kong to Take Part in Japan World Exposition in Osaka, 1970. 30 Million Visitors expected, 1967, HKRS 43-1-5" (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Public Records Office).

21 Gary Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed. The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 99.

22 Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 99. David Clayton, "The Riots and Labour Laws," in Robert Bickers and Ray Yep, eds, *May Days in Hong Kong. Riots and Emergency in 1967* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 134.

23 Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 5.

24 Matthew Turner, "60's/90's: Dissolving the People," in Matthew Turner and Irene Ngan, eds, *Hong Kong Sixties. Designing Identity* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Arts Centre, 1994), 15.

25 Turner, "60's/90's," 15.

26 In 1961, when the first census was taken after the British reoccupation, the total population was 3,129,000, out of which 1,643,000, or 52 percent of the population, were postwar immigrants.

27 Yongmei Wu and Pui-tak Lee, *Graphic Images and Consumer Culture. Analysis of Modern Advertising Culture in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), i.

28 Ip, Lan Chuen. *An Overview of Manufacturing Industry and the Development of the CMA Committee.* Report. Hong Kong: The Chinese Manufacturers Association of Hong Kong, 1946. https://www.cma.org.hk/uploads/ckfinder/files/z_CMA%20 Historical%20Resource/Doc/Development%20of%20Manufacturing%20Industry%20 and%20CMA/An%20Overview%20of%20Manufacturing%20Industry%20and%20 the%20Development%20of%20CMA%20%EF%BC%881st%20General%20 Committee%20%EF%BC%8D%206th%20General%20Committee,%20 1934-1946%EF%BC%89.pdf (accessed June 21, 2021.)

29 Danny Mok and Olga Wong, "Pioneering Architect Tao Ho, Known for Designing Hong Kong Bauhinia Flag and Buildings such as the Arts Centre, dies at age 82," *SCMP*, March 30, 2019.

30 ~~*Far East Architects & Builders*, "Government Pavilion Sets a New Standard," March 1967.~~

31 The authors have been unable as yet to find documentation confirming Liao as architect.

32 Kan Tai Keung (prominent retired designer) in discussion with the authors, June 15, 2017. Miles Glendinning, "Wah Fu Estate, Hong Kong," Twentieth Century Society, accessed May 12, 2020, https://c20society.org.uk/building-of-the-month/wah-fu-estate-hong-kong

33 Chambers, *Supertrader*, 66.

34 Trade Development Council. Meeting Notes, February 13, 1967, HKRS160–1. Hong Kong Public Records Service, Hong Kong.

35 The precast concrete structure took design cues from the International Style in Europe and the United States and was bare of all ornament. Even before it opened its doors, it

was perhaps Hong Kong's best-loved Modernist building. Today architectural historians of Hong Kong herald City Hall as an attempt to symbolize government transparency and accountability through the generous use of glass in its façade that allows the activities inside to be at least superficially visible to the public.

Charlie Q.L. Xue, *Hong Kong Architecture 1945–2015. From Colonial to Global* (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 39–50.

36 Wo Hei Lam and Robyn Beaver, *Wong & Ouyang. Blueprints for Hong Kong* (Victoria, Australia: Mulgrave: Images Publishing Group, 2008), 173.

37 Christian Caryl, *Building the Dragon City. History of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 14–15. Brown was a member of the Modern Architecture Research (MARS) Group, which was the chief proponent of Modernism in Britain in the interwar era. At the beginning of his tenure in Hong Kong, he invited J. M. Richards, the influential editor of the *Architectural Review* magazine, to comment on the curriculum and greet the students and staff. J. M. Richards, *Memoirs of an Unjust Fella* (London: Faber & Faber, 1980), 222–227.

38 Peter Richmond, *Marketing Modernisms. The Architecture and Influence of Charles Reilly* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 139–161. "Obituary: Christopher Haffner," *Church Times*, August 9, 2013. Spence Robinson, originally named Stewardson & Spence, was first founded in Shanghai in 1921 by Scottish architects and had completed Modernist housing blocks—including the Jubilee Court in 1934—before its staff were sent to internment camps during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai (1937–1945). It relocated to Hong Kong in 1947. Edward Denison and Yu Ren Guang, *Building Shanghai. The Story of China's Gateway* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 248.

39 Annie Hua-nung Chan, "Fashioning Change: Nationalism, Colonialism, and Modernity in Hong Kong," *Post Colonial Studies. Culture, Politics, Economy* 3, no. 3 (2000): 293–309.

40 Turner, "60's/90's," 40.

41 Glendinning, "Wah Fu Estate, Hong Kong."

42 Arthur E. Starling, *Plague, SARS and the Story of Medicine in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 116–118.

43 Grahame Blundell, "Daily Information Bulletin: Girl in the Crowd, Picture Story of the Chans for Expo 70, 1969", ISD 606.43, Hong Kong Public Records Office, Hong Kong.

44 John J. Dwyer, "Urban Squatters: The Relevance of the Hong Kong Experience," *Asian Survey* 10, no. 7 (1970): 607–613.

45 Wai Chung Lai, "The Formation of Squatters and Slums in Hong Kong: from Slump Market to Boom Market," *Habitat International* 9, nos. 3/4 (1985): 251–260.

46 Daily Information Bulletin: "Wood Carving at Expo 70", 1970, HKRS 43-1-57, Hong Kong Public Records Office, Hong Kong.

47 "Demonstration of Coromandel," *The Daily Yomiuri*, March 19, 1970; "Young Craftsmen of Hongkong Exhibit Skills in Old Arts," *Japan Times*, March 19, 1970.

48 Grahame Blundell, "Hong Kong Pavilion—Expo 70 Osaka Japan Architectural Description & Design Considerations", N.D., HKRS 43-1-57, Hong Kong Public Record Service, Hong Kong.

49 "Modifications to Hong Kong Pavilion," *Far East Architects & Builders*, December 1968.

50 In the sense that Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have described it. They explain that 'Invented tradition' is the selected use of the past to signify continuity: it takes "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition." Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.

51 Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 6.

52 The PRC did not participate in Expo 70 and Taiwan presented an official "China" pavilion, a high Modernist design with juxtaposed concrete and glass volumes.

53 Auction Item: Vintage EXPO "Osaka Expo: Hong Kong before Transformation, Rakuten, June 2016.

"Vintage EXPO "Osaka Expo: Hong Kong before Transformation," Auction, Rakuten, June 2016, http://item.rakuten.co.jp/space-store/050768-k-kyo/

54 "EXPO A-Z," *Architectural Design*, June 1970, 285.

55 "Controversy over Design of H.K. Pavilion at Expo 70," *South China Morning Post*, February 10, 1968.

56 "One of the Best Sites for H.K. Pavilion at Expo 70," *South China Morning Post*, January 8, 1968.

57 John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990), 8.

58 Chambers, *Super Trader*, 51, 61.

59 David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 384.

60 In it, they distinguished two forms of architecture—the "duck" and the "decorated shed"—and framed debates on architecture for decades after. A "duck," they wrote, uses its form to communicate its program while a "shed" uses signs.

61 Frank Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London: William Clowes and Son, 1886), 42–43.

62 Photograph of Hong Kong at Vancouver Expo 1986, 1986, item PA (4)1833 and PA (4)1873. Hong Kong Information Service Department Photo Collection, Hong Kong.