

Dean's Roundup: 17 February 2017

Roundup: *Ceiling function*, the mathematical operation of rounding a number up to the next higher integer.

Roundup: a term in American English referring to the process of gathering animals into an area, known as a "Muster" in Australia.

Rounding up: when a helmsman cannot control a boat and it heads into the wind

Roundup: the plan for an invasion of northern France by Allied forces during World War II (Wikipedia)

Dean's Roundup: part blog, part bulletin; part honour roll, part curatorial [cu¹ra-to'ri-al (ky^{oo}r^ə-tôr[']ē-əl, -tôr[']-) n. nounised by the Dean from curator + editorial]

Dear All,

Earlier this week I found JaeHyun Lim, from the Department of Architecture taking down the student posters from 'a-nom-a-ly': **City as a Collection of exceptions**, pinned on the 4th floor corridor. This course, led by Professor Nasrine Seraji and Jae invites students to observe anomalies in the city. I asked Jae not to take them down yet, since I am in the middle of reading one poster a day. They are inspirational in their simplicity. The students have been asked to crystallise their observation in a title of a few words; present a photo of the anomaly; abstract something about it with a drawing; and then write a few lines of text about location, user, function, genesis, and analysis. This is brilliantly simple. The brevity means that both the title and the analysis read more like poetry in some cases. The analysis is sharp and to the point. The discipline of succinctness is more powerful than a 2000 word essay. The very best ones have this succinctness in all components, textual and visual.

It got me thinking about precision, brevity and simplicity in both description and analytics. In my own writing, I know that 5 iterations of editing makes a big improvement and another 5 makes smaller but nevertheless important additional improvements. The same is true of an architectural design. But sometimes as the iteration number rises in a piece of writing or design, something happens. The change becomes qualitative not quantitative. The improvements are no longer marginal, shrinking with each re-edit. You take out a whole sentence, a whole point, a whole paragraph and the power of the prose rises to a whole new level. Sometimes, with the shrinking you move from prose to poetry. Reducing prose ('ordinary writing without metrical structure') requires finding efficiencies in expression, choice of vocabulary and refinement of grammar. At some point, you can't go any further without restructuring the argument. You do that and then grammatical refinement happens again. At some stage you can no longer refine either style or structure. Then you start breaking the rules. Using short sentences. Small sentences. Sentences without proper structure. Then you find that a different kind of improvement becomes possible: refinements that instead of making the writing more efficient in explaining, makes it sing. At that stage, the prose has become poetry.

Please take a look at the poetic a-nom.a.lys on the wall outside the dean's office. I think there is a lesson there for our teaching and our designing and our research. Less is more. More or less always.

Congratulations to colleagues for the achievements listed below.

Chris

Teaching and other Achievements

FoA Departments and Divisions

Department of Real Estate and Construction (DREC)

1. Ms YANG Tianwei and Ms ZHOU Lu (both are PhD students)
 - have been awarded fellowships by the Ronald Coase Institute to attend the Ronald Coase Workshop on Institutional Analysis in Xiamen, China on 14-20, May 2017. Only 26 applicants from all over the world have been selected to attend the workshop. They will present their research ideas and coached by 10 eminent faculties.

Department of Urban Planning and Design (DUPAD)

1. The HK2030+ Workshop

The HK2030+ Workshop, co-organized by the Development Bureau and Planning Department of the HK SAR Government and, the Department of Urban Planning and Design (DUPAD), was held on Sat, 11 Feb 2017 in the DUPAD's Studio. The Workshop was organized exclusively for students of the Faculty of Architecture (FOA). There were about 90 students from the various programs of FOA participating in the Workshop. They were briefed about the proposals of the update of the territorial plan HK 2030 and had actively contributed their ideas on the future plan for Hong Kong in the group discussions, in the areas of Living Space; Planning for all Ages; Urban Rejuvenation; People, Health and Nature; Planning for Youth Development; and, Capacity Creation and Smart, Green and Resilient City.



2. Professor Rebecca Chiu

- Invited by the HKUSU Civil Engineering Society to speak at the Academic Forum on "Hong Kong 2030+: Should we develop East Lantau Metropolis?", 8 February 2017.



- Interviewed by Ms Saima Tarapdar, the Assistant Private Secretary of the Minister for Welfare Delivery in the United Kingdom on Hong Kong's subsidized housing policy, 15 February 2017.
- Interviewed by Business Times (of Singapore Press Holding) on the Well-off Tenant Policy (Housing Subsidy Policy) of Hong Kong, 15 February 2017.

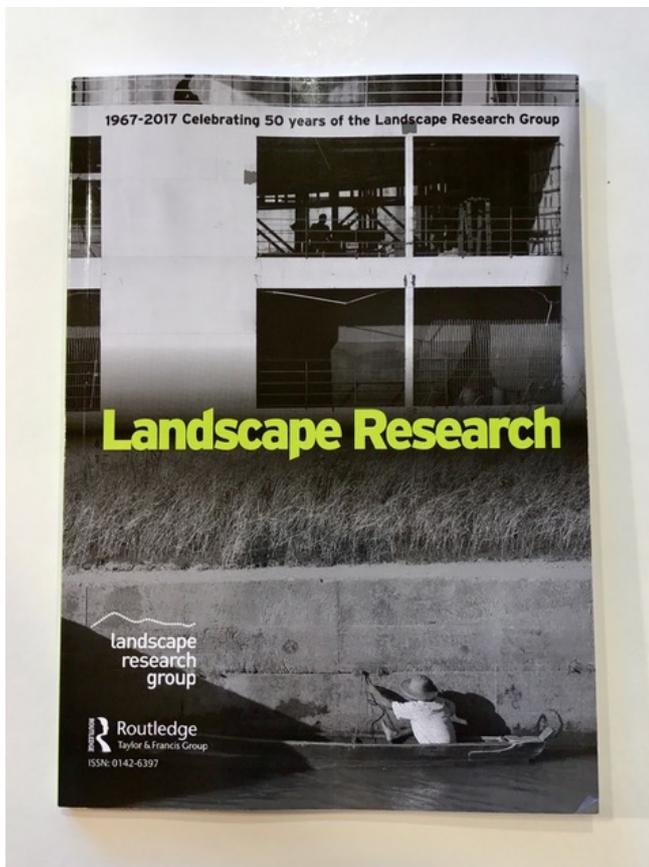
Division of Landscape Architecture (DLA)

1. Scott Jennings Melbourne

- Provided the cover photograph for the current issue of Landscape Research journal:

Melbourne, SJ (2017). Infrastructure appropriation at Yangon's Pazundaung Creek. [Cover photograph]. *Landscape Research*, 42(1).

Abstract: *Yangon, Myanmar (Rangoon, Burma) is a place in transition, as decades of authoritarian rule give way to representative governance and the country attracts a new found level of international engagement. This photograph was taken at the base of a large bridge that spans Pazundaung Creek to link the city's historic core with Thaketa Township to the east. The kinds of tensions represented in the image, especially between this human figure appropriating a work of infrastructure in the face of larger industrial forces, will continue as planning schemes are implemented in coming years and the city experiences urban change.*



Research Achievements

HKUrbanLab research groups

iLab

1. Dr. Wilson Lu

- Visited Ethiopia, Africa and joined in a small team to deliver a training programme to Ethiopia Road Authority (ERA) from 20 Jan to 25 Jan 2017. The training programme was sponsored by the World Bank to train more than 150 government officials, construction managers, and engineers from the Ministry of Construction, ERA, Ethiopia Construction Association, and companies, who are responsible for materializing the built environment of the country from a very low basis. In the five days training, Dr Lu delivered five lessons:

Lesson 1: Hong Kong's construction industry;

Lesson 2: Welcome to the digital world of the construction sector

Lesson 3: Introduction to Building Information Modelling (BIM)

Lesson 4: Digital Technologies, BIM, and Smart Construction in Ethiopian Road Projects: Prospects and Challenges

Lesson 5: Managing waste in construction – the Hong Kong and China experiences

- Dr. Lu also visited two Chinese State-Owned Enterprises undertaking construction projects in Ethiopia. They also visited a local orphanage.



Healthy^{HD} Cities

1. Dean Webster and Dr. Chinmoy Sarkar

- The Dean and Chinmoy Sarkar have a paper accepted (subject to minor edits) in the journal *Frontiers of Micro-biology*. This is the first of two papers reporting research led by the Faculty of Science that looks at the microbial ecology of HK, one study looking at how microbes circulate through the urban environment on bank notes, the other looking at how they travel on the MTR. The twin studies were inspired by a similar study in New York and resulted in some interesting findings relating to the prevalence and spatial distribution of anti-biotic resistance in HK and also, a daily 'urbanisation' process that happens invisibly on the hand rails of the MTR as microbes originating from the sea, forest and agriculture initially colonise the cleaned rails earlier in the morning and are gradually succeeded by urban microbes. The bank note study shows how microbes circulate differently in different locations and on different denominations of notes. The results have implications for public health but also represent a novel spatial scale of urban studies.

Yoshitaro Heshiki, Thrimendra Dissanayake, Tingting Zheng, Kang Kang, Yueqiong Ni, Zeling Xu, Chinmoy Sarkar, Patrick CY Woo, Billy K C Chow, David Baker, Aixin Yan, Christopher John Webster, Gianni Panagiotou, Jun Li. Towards a metagenomics understanding on the bacterial composition and resistome in Hong Kong banknotes. *Frontiers in Micro-biology*. (IF=4.1) Manuscript ID: 2535