

## **Water, Sand and Settlements—Land Reclamation and Creation of Landscape, Pearl River Estuary after the Late-seventeenth Century**

TIAN, Mengxiao

Intake Year: 2016

Research Track: History and Theory of Architecture and Urbanism

Supervisor: Prof. WANG, Wei Jen

Co-supervisor: Dr. SENG, Eunice

### **Dissertation Abstract**

This thesis will examine the Pearl River Estuary's shifting geographic pattern over time, taking into account the extensive land reclamation that occurred from the late-seventeenth to the early-twentieth century. Furthermore, it will trace the relationship between the changing processes of land reclamation and settlement formations, in addition to landscape creation.

By defining "reclamation landscapes" as the settlements formed in the reclamation area with the reclaimed land itself, the work identifies various prototypes of landscape form and questions how and why these landscapes became such shapes. In examining the broader historical and cultural contexts, it intends to reveal how the physical appearances of Pearl River Estuary (PRE), is not the result of one power's domination but is rather a process of competing relationships between human agency and natural energy, and also a shift in land and water notion.

The thesis will construct a historical narrative through an examination of society, environment, form, and explore key factors in selected areas and distinct time periods to build a spatial-temporal network for morphological analysis. In the course of a discussion of a typical case's formation history, this work will also conduct a horizontal comparative study of several examples of reclaimed landscapes. In doing so, the thesis will not only underline the importance of providing a critical understanding of the human and natural worlds, reclamation activities and the landscape but will also generate an evaluation of the sustainability of reclamation landscapes.

**Keyword:** Pearl River Estuary, land reclamation, reclamation landscape



Linear settlements on the newly reclaimed land. Buildings stood on the water, facing the waterway which let people trade agricultural products by boats.