

RESISTS IT HETERO UTOPIA

A NARRATIVE-BASED STUDY ON
A COUNTERFACTUAL VIRTUAL
SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN HONG
KONG



CHALMERS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**Resistant heterotopia: A narrative-based study
on a counterfactual virtual social movement in Hong Kong**

Ziyu Zhao

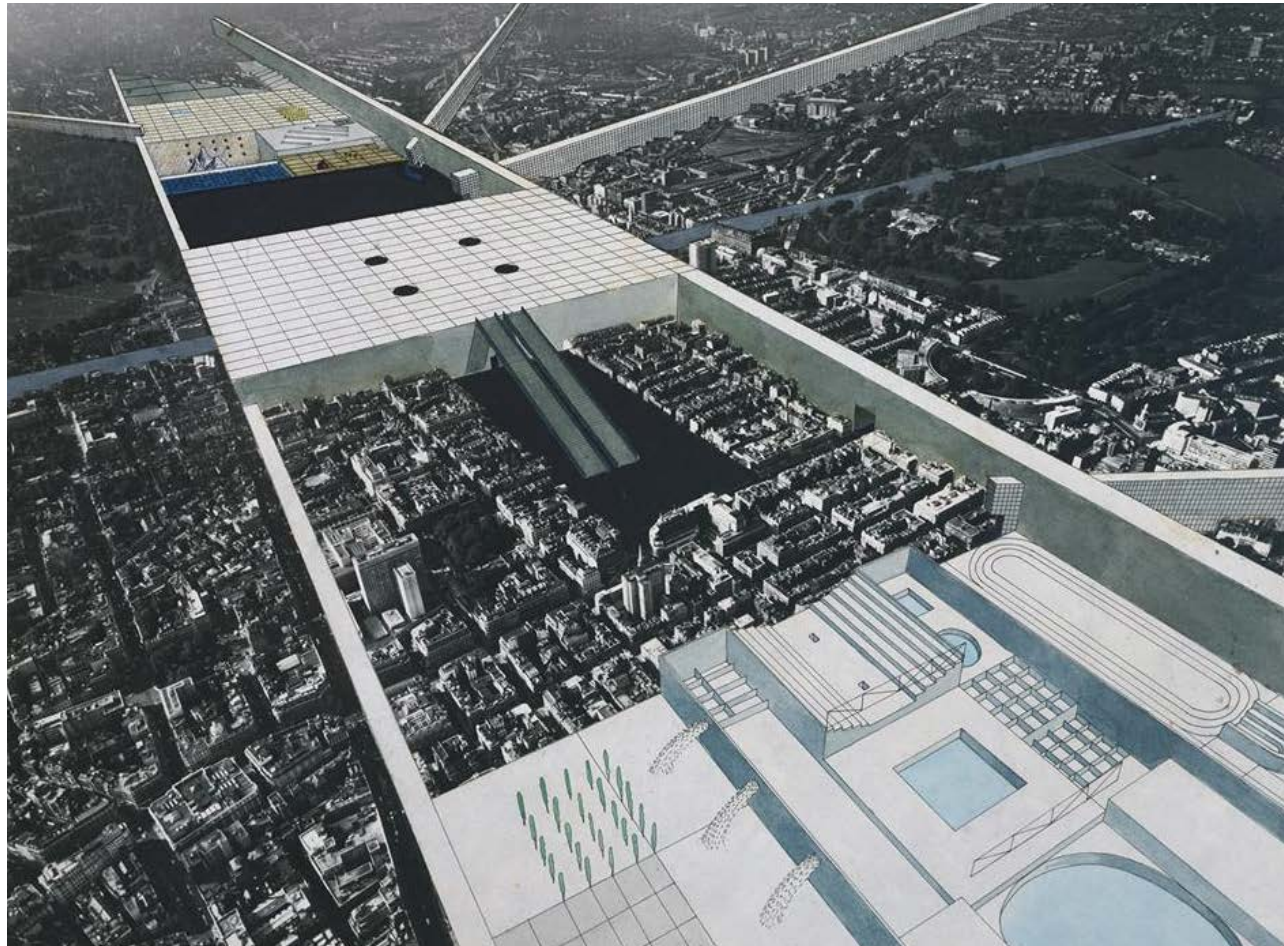
Master Thesis Spring 2020

Examiner: Jonas Lundberg

Supervisors: Kengo Skorick, Jonas Runberger

Chalmers University of Technology
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering,
Gothenburg, Sweden
June 2020

ABSTRACT



Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: The Strip (Aerial Perspective), 1972
Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, Madelon Vriesendorp, Zoe Zenghelis

Spaces made for human activities lose their purpose when no one uses them. Only when people interacts with the space it starts to function. This interaction generates events, which makes the space complete. Architecture is a vessel that contains occurrence. It reflects its ability of narrating.

However, even though current urban spaces and architecture are mostly programmed, people's actions, behaviors and movements are not limited by these programs. The events architecture facilitates can be diverse. This fact makes architecture consist complexity and rich possibility of narration. The 2019-20 Hong Kong protests is an extreme example. The urban spaces transformed completely when the movement took place.

The idea "Right to the city" proposed by Henri Lefebvre discussed the relationship between citizens and the urban spaces. The Hong Kong protests are uprisings against the authority, whose approach is using urban spaces to address the appeals, which can be seen as a claim of the "right to the city".

Heterotopia is a concept elaborated by philosopher Michel Foucault to describe certain cultural, institutional and discursive spaces that are somehow 'other': disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory or transforming. When the protests take place, the spaces that protesters create can be seen as heterotopias. They are transitory and temporary spaces that isolated from the rest of the city.

This thesis is about narrative. It is represented by a semi-fictional story that showcases counterfactual scenarios of the movement when it became virtual and how the urban spaces could accommodate the situations. In those scenarios protesters claimed "the right to the city" by occupations that are performed in a different way. The space that contains it is virtual yet influences the physical environment, which is people's heterotopias. The thesis also explores how people could be a factor of forming spaces under a semi-fictional setting.

Ziyu Zhao

Academic

Bachelor of Architecture: Hunan University, China

Master of Architecture: Chalmers University of Technology
Matter, Space, Structure 1&2
Residential healthcare
Material Turn (Thesis)

Practice

RSAA, Beijing
White Arkitekter, Malmö
SANS, Shenzhen

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSES & AIMS



Two scenes from *The Golem*. It looks like two different places when different things happened in the same street. Bernard Tschumi used this example to show the space is defined by what happens in it.

Image: Paul Wegener, *The Golem*, 1920 (set by Hans Polzig), retrieved from *Architecture Concepts: Red is Not a Color* by Bernard Tschumi, 2012.

There are four purposes of this thesis:

1. To present an alternate “What if” scenario. Exploring how the movement could develop under a counterfactual situation and how the urban spaces in Hong Kong might be affected because of it;
2. To transcribe the scenarios and using the narrative as a guide for the design process;
3. To use the thesis as an example, to study and create “heterotopic” space that act as “other spaces” than the usual spaces;
4. To study the city of Hong Kong and the 2019-20 protests.

This thesis aims to showcase what-if scenarios in Hong Kong where the occupation of urban spaces by protesters comes to another stage, when the whole movement came to a plateau. Through creating this narrative, the purposes above were fulfilled.

In those scenarios protesters claimed “the right to the city” by occupations that are performed virtually. The proposal seeks an possible alternative of protesting that is more open, nonviolent and sustainable. It creates a vision for the future resistances in urban spaces. The scenarios are arranged to generate a semi-fictional story as the form for executing the narrative.

THESIS QUESTION

- How have the protests, especially the occupations, affected the spaces in Hong Kong?
- Are there spatial approaches that can make the protests enduring and less destructive but still powerful?
- What kinds of scenarios would there be in Hong Kong if the spatial approaches works?
- How can architects respond to societal issues?

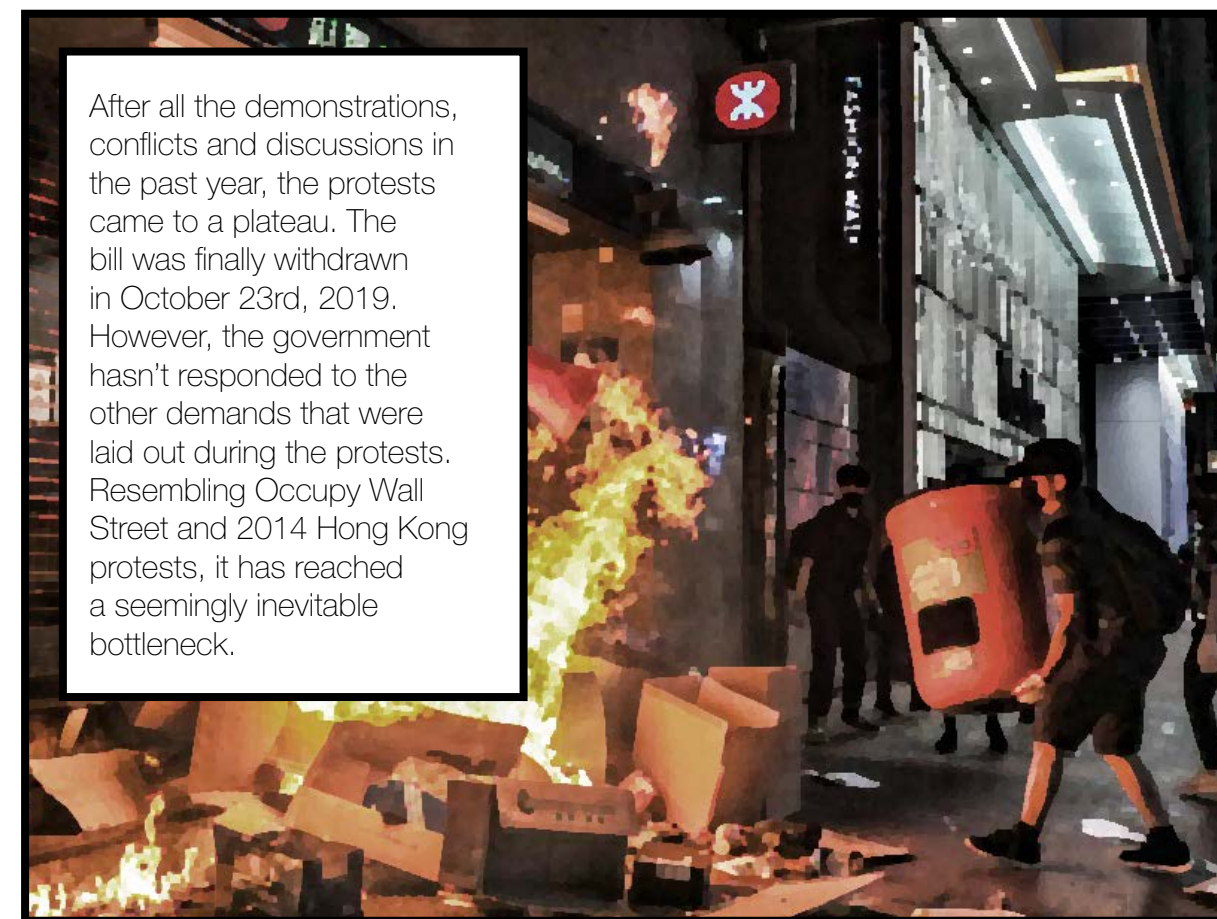
METHODS & DELIMITATIONS

Investigations of the facts and contexts of Hong Kong and the movement was the foundation of this thesis. It provides the background, clues and elements to work on. Parallel with it were the study of theories regarding the theme of the thesis. During the study process, facts, contexts and theories have influenced each other, and generated a setting of the thesis.

Instead of finding a solution, the thesis explored new possibilities. Therefore, the setting was semi-fictional in order to support an alternate narrative. Based on the setting, a story was made. The story was drawn and organized to form a short graphic novel, through which it communicated the narrative.

The representations in the novel tended to show “what if”. It focused on what could happen in a counterfactual Hong Kong. This Hong Kong is under current time but with more advanced augmented reality technology that allows objects to be projected by hologram. The thesis did not dig into specific technologies nor political issues.

THE NARRATIVE



After all the demonstrations, conflicts and discussions in the past year, the protests came to a plateau. The bill was finally withdrawn in October 23rd, 2019. However, the government hasn't responded to the other demands that were laid out during the protests. Resembling Occupy Wall Street and 2014 Hong Kong protests, it has reached a seemingly inevitable bottleneck.

A group of protesters collected the documents and information related to the movement and built a website to store them.

WELCOME TO HONG KONG

歡迎來到香港

用戶名/Username

密碼/Password

☐ 記住我/Remember me

登錄/Log in

創建賬戶/Create account

The platform acted originally as an archive. Users can take tours in it by creating an account. The accounts are connected to their ID but encrypted. Everyone stays anonymous and their private information is protected.

The starting page is a map of Hong Kong. By selecting different locations, the users would get access to news, photos, videos, and all the other information regarding certain places.



If a user is in person at a place and logged in, his/her avatar will present in the virtual map, until he/she logs in at another location. This user would be able to post messages on line. For example, commenting on an event happened there.

EVENTS NEARBY

2019.07.07 Kowloon district March

2019.08.03 Mong Kok March

2019.08.31 Prince Edward station attack

[About](#) [Media](#) [Archive](#) [Comments](#) [Other](#)

The 31 August Prince Edward station incident or 31 August MTR station incident, refers to an incident in which Hong Kong police allegedly indiscriminately attacked passengers during their arrests of returning home alleged protesters in Prince Edward station, on the night of 31 August 2019, after a protest was held that same day. [More](#)
[Comment](#)

2019.09.02 Mongkok Police Station demonstration

2019.09.03 Strike action

2019.09.06 Prince Edward area demonstration

2019.09.07 Demonstrations

2019.09.13 Mid-Autumn Festival events

2019.09.21 Mongkok Police Station conflicts

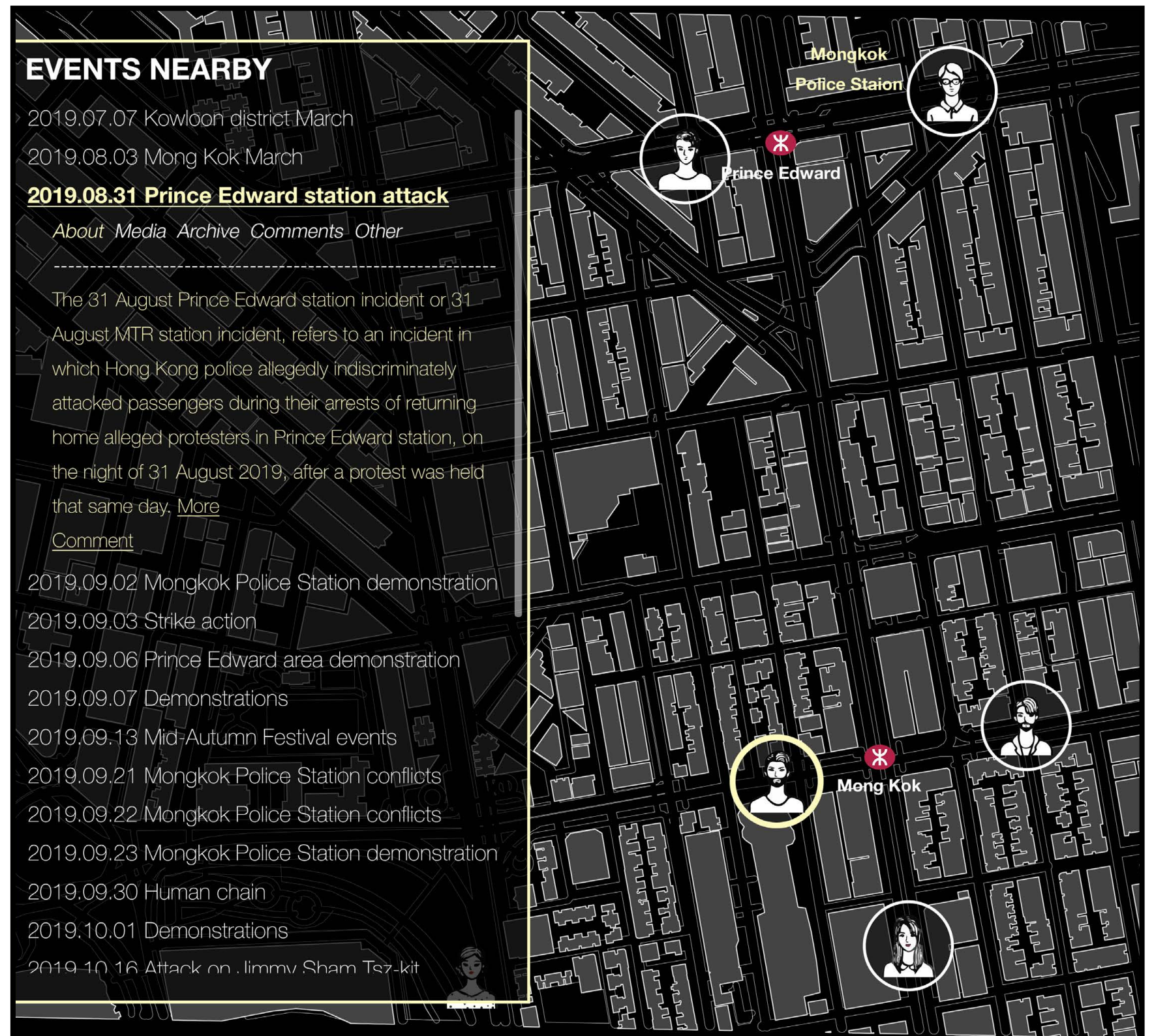
2019.09.22 Mongkok Police Station conflicts

2019.09.23 Mongkok Police Station demonstration

2019.09.30 Human chain

2019.10.01 Demonstrations

2019.10.16 Attack on Jimmy Sham Tsz-kit



MONG KOK Forum

Posts | Chat rooms | Archive | My page | Search

Trending Latest Following Channels

[News] Arrests in Hong Kong during seven-month commemoration of the prince edward MTR Attacks (Blog)

2020.04.03  135  209   

[Event] Commemoration of march of 1 million | June 9th

2 days ago  434  325   

[COVID-19] Looks like many places are already open?

1 day ago  201  103   

Help oppose police station's restaurant applying for liquor license!!

1 day ago  235  164   

The platform became available for uploading and downloading. When the contents got richer and immediate, the press started to use it as source for articles, which were also synchronized back to this virtual space.

Developers decided to open posting function for everyone, no matter where the user is. Every location/event hence became a forum that is free for sharing opinions and start discussions as well as debates. Users can also choose to share contents to their social media. Gradually the space turned into a hub of information.

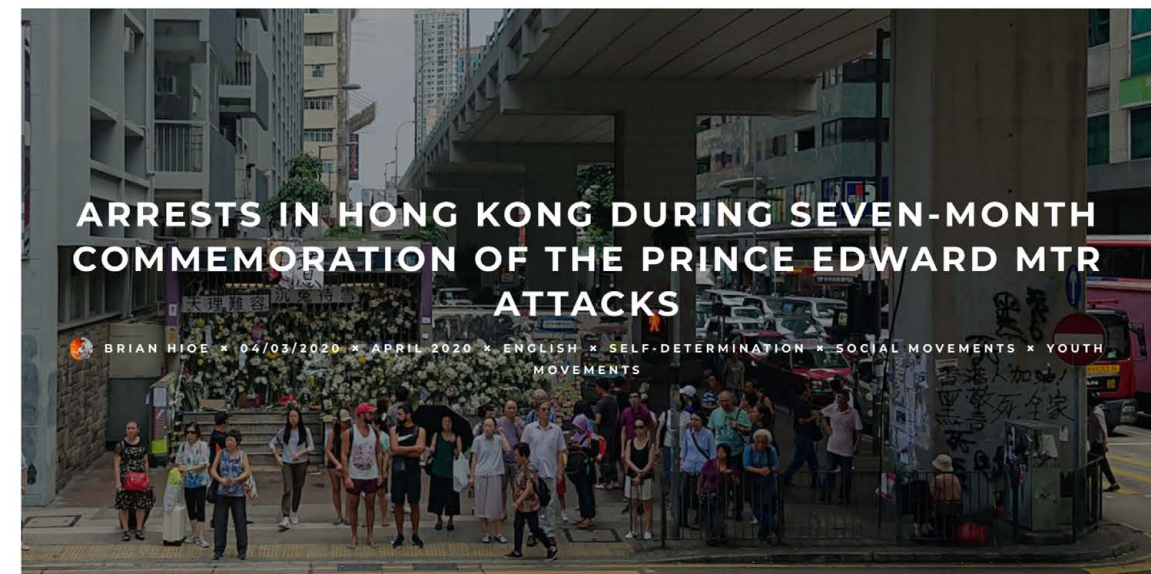
ABOUT LANGUAGES ISSUES ARCHIVES DAYBREAK CONTACT

NB NEW BLOOM

論述台灣分析亞太的激進新觀點

Radical perspectives on Taiwan and the Asia Pacific

ARTS/CULTURE INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEWS POLITICS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS



by **Brian Hioe**

語言:

English

Photo Credit: Wpcpey/WikiCommons/CC

DEMONSTRATORS IN Hong Kong gathered on Tuesday to commemorate the seven month anniversary of police attacks on protesters in the Prince Edward MTR station on August 31st of last year. However, **54 participants in the commemoration were arrested by the Hong Kong police.**

43 men and 11 women were arrested, the oldest being seventy years old and the

ABOUT NEW BLOOM

New Bloom is an online magazine covering activism and youth politics in Taiwan and the Asia Pacific, founded in Taiwan in 2014 in the wake of the Sunflower Movement. We seek to put local voices in touch with international discourse, beginning with Taiwan.

SOCIAL MEDIA

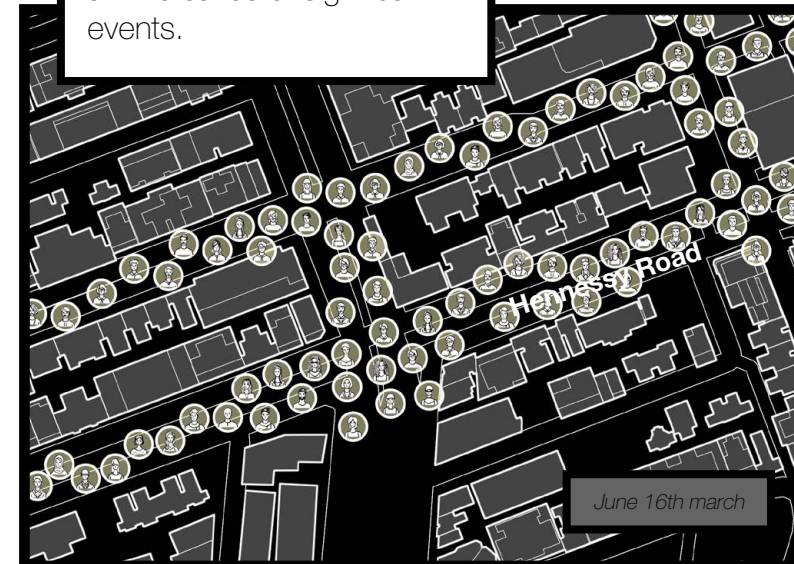


中文/English

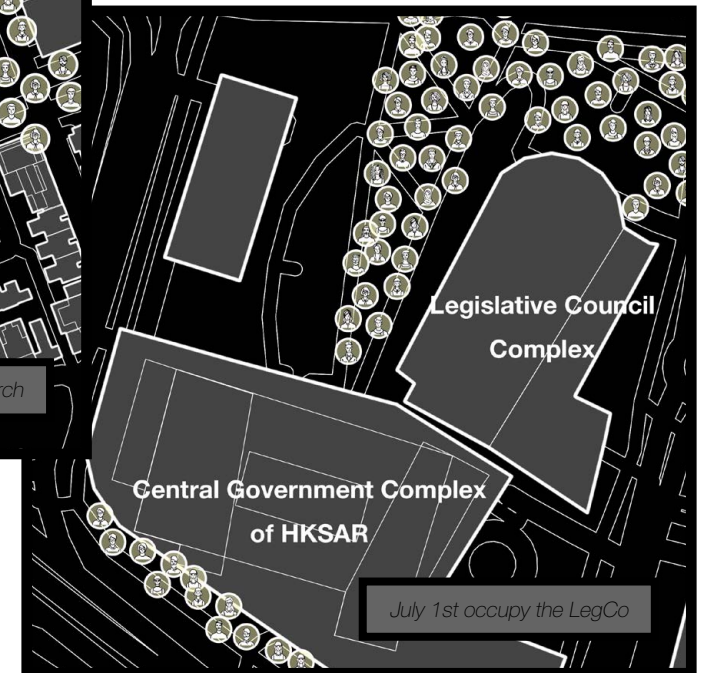
On June 9th, 2020, the anniversary of the rally where 1.03 million people (as Civil Human Rights Front claimed) attended, thousands of people's avatar appeared in the street where the demonstration took place...



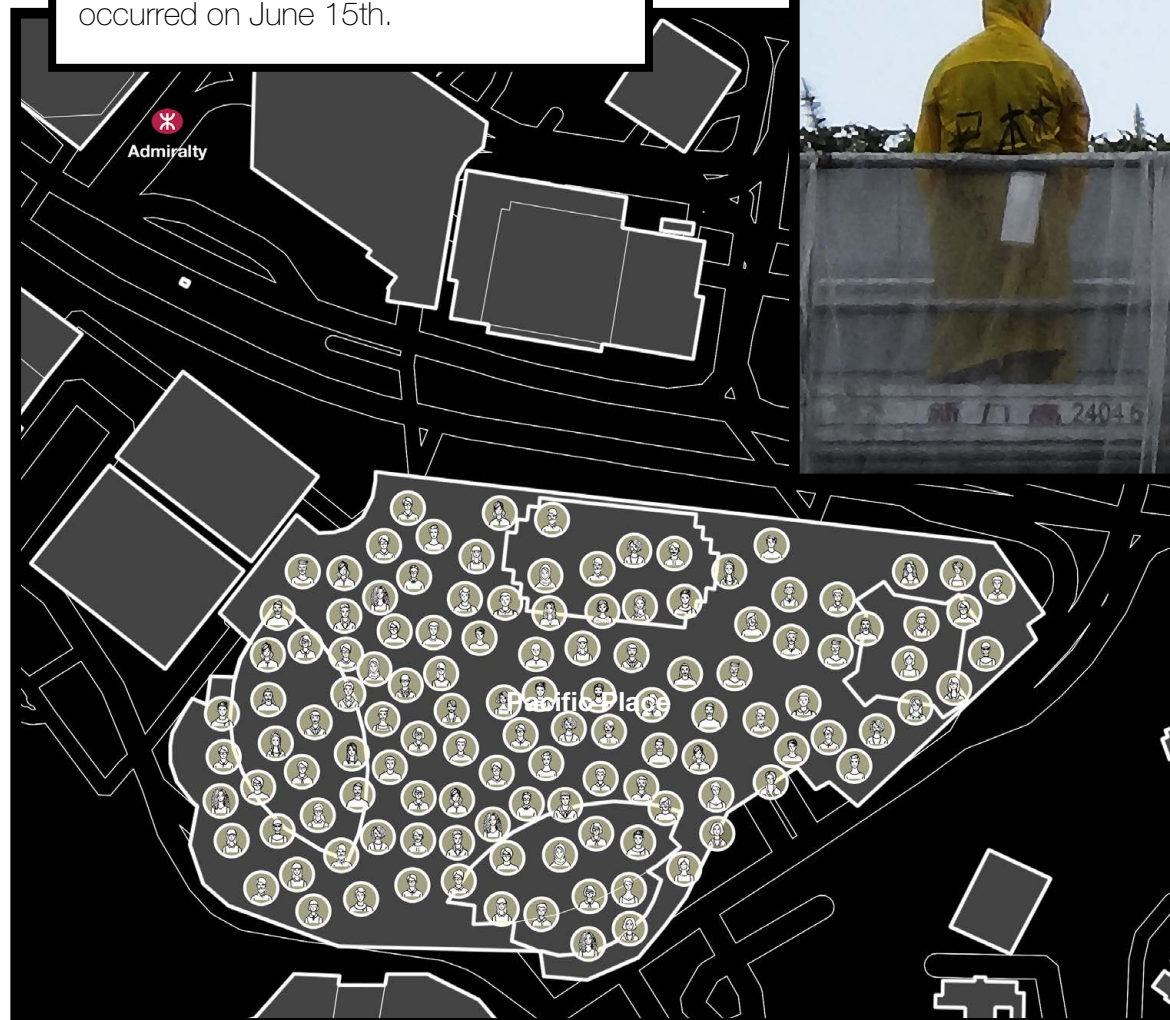
Following are June 16th, July 1st, July 14th... The "virtual occupations" have kept happening on the anniversaries of significant events.



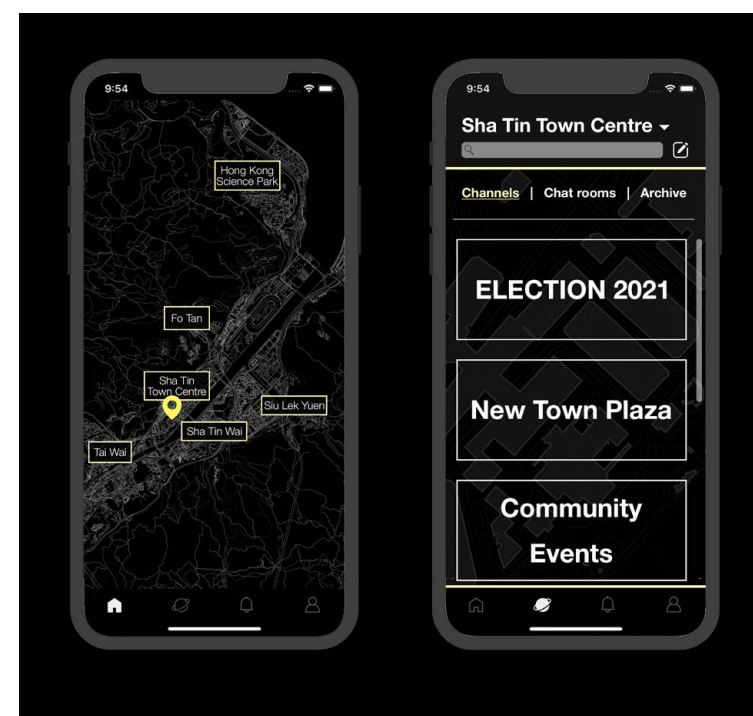
In those events, citizens found this new way to commemorate the protests and keep people together, as well as to make the movement continue whereas the daily lives don't have to take a break.



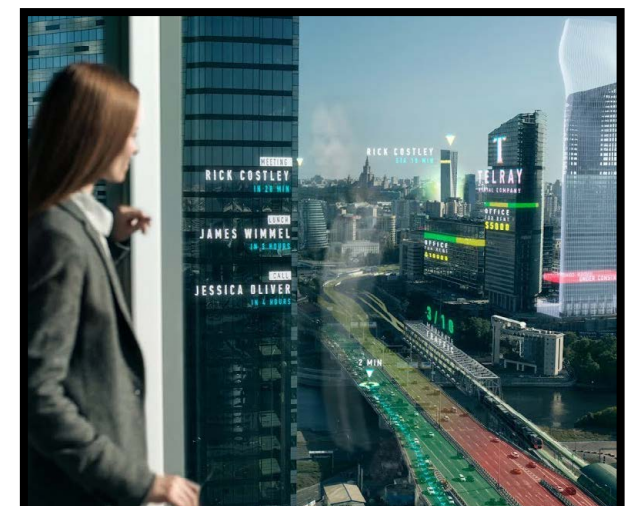
...A similar incident happened at Pacific Place, where the first suicide case occurred on June 15th.



Its mobile app was launched, which made the space became more open. According to different regions in Hong Kong, citizens formed their virtual communities, and began to use it to organize events and activities.



Augmented reality with holograms was combined with the platform. The events happened in the platform hence could have a way to "project" on the physical spaces, which acted as new monuments that added extra surfaces into spaces in the city...



The shopping malls played big roles during the protests. Due to the situation in Hong Kong, many lands are used for commercial development, and the malls have become places where lots of people spend most of their spare time. They became the new "Town center".



New Town Plaza is one of them. The government has built the town hall, parks, sports halls, courts and other other facilities in this area, which make this mall has become the center of the community.

During the protests, different public events has happened in the mall...

...and more.



After the protests paused, New Town Plaza remained as a center of the neighborhoods. Citizens kept coming to the mall to leave messages and having discussions.

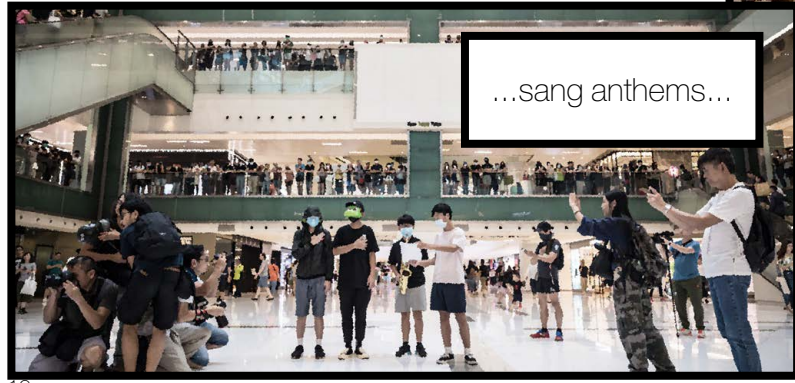
...Citizens posted their thoughts on "Lennon Wall"...



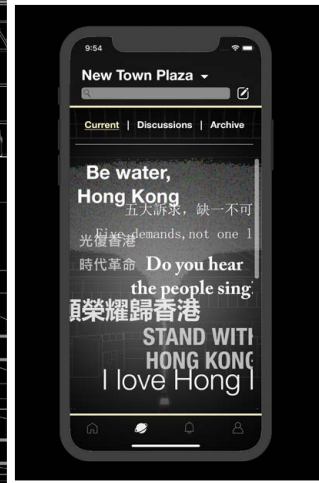
...held discussions...



...sang anthems...



Citizens posted on the platform, either through mobile devices or on an interactive screen built in the atrium of the mall. Through AR, the messages are projected and stayed in the atrium, with the form of post-it notes, which was broadly used during the protests. As messages became more, the projection grew bigger...

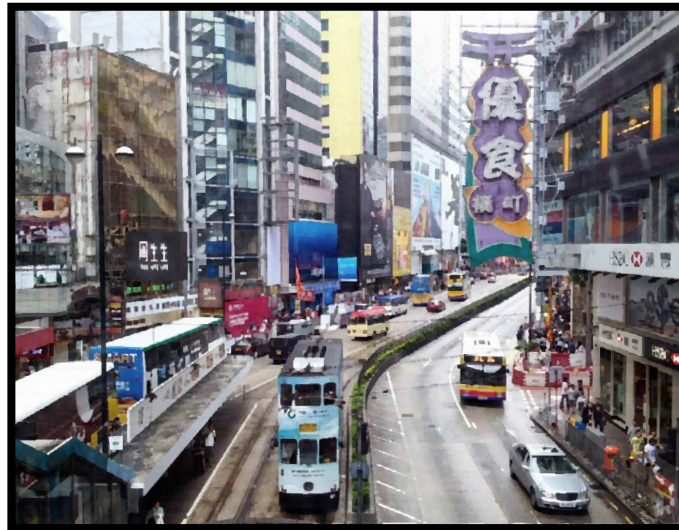




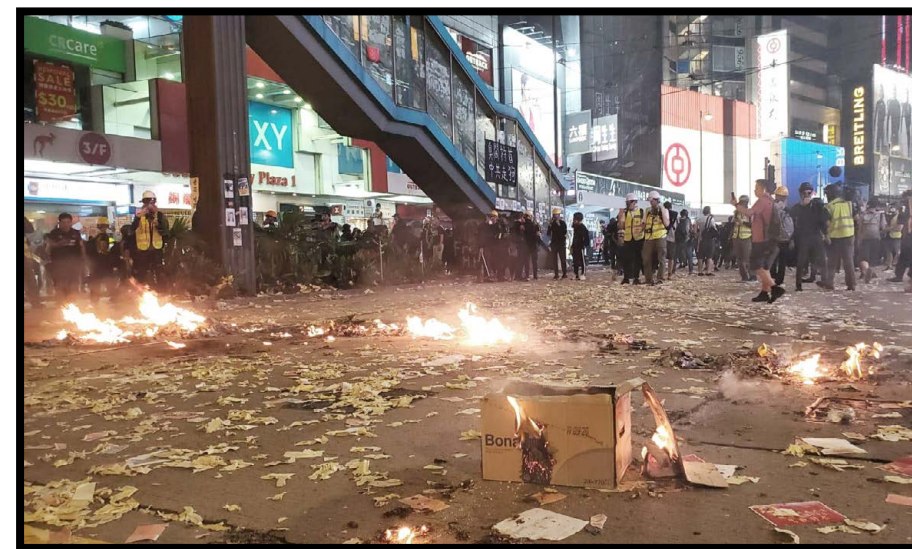
...and finally became a tree. People gathered under it from time to time for community events and activities.

Hennessy Road is a thoroughfare on Hong Kong Island. The portion of the road passing through Causeway Bay was one of the locations occupied during the 2014 Hong Kong protests, and it has been one of the main routes in the 2019-20 protests.

Almost all of the main demonstrations took place on this road.



The power of the mass was overwhelming. Hennessy Road accommodated a large amount of people that changed its usual situation.

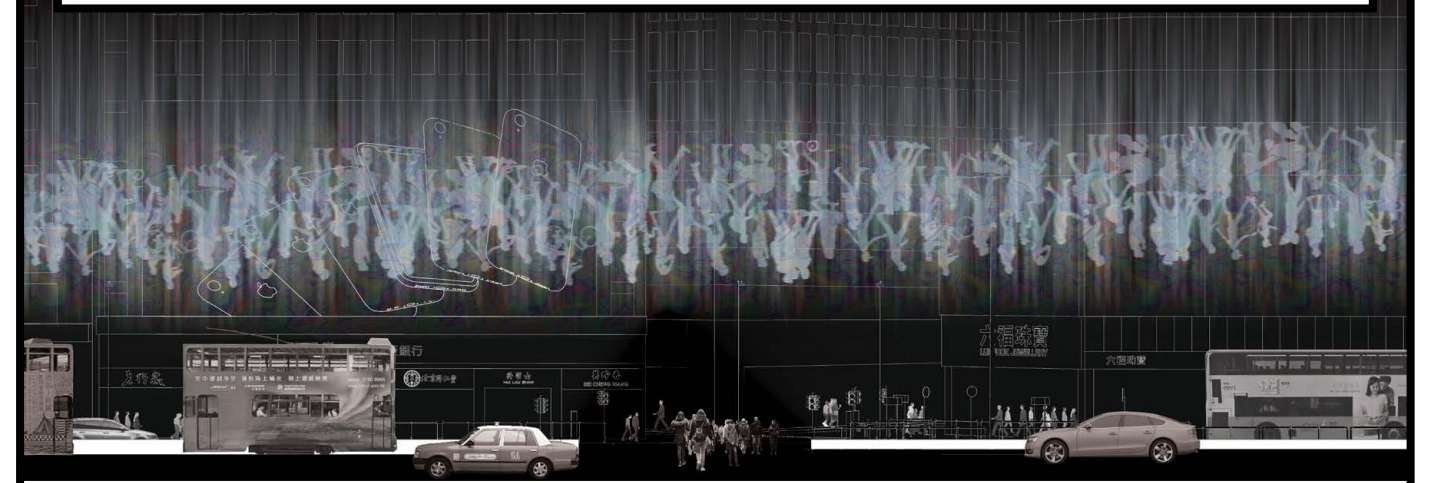


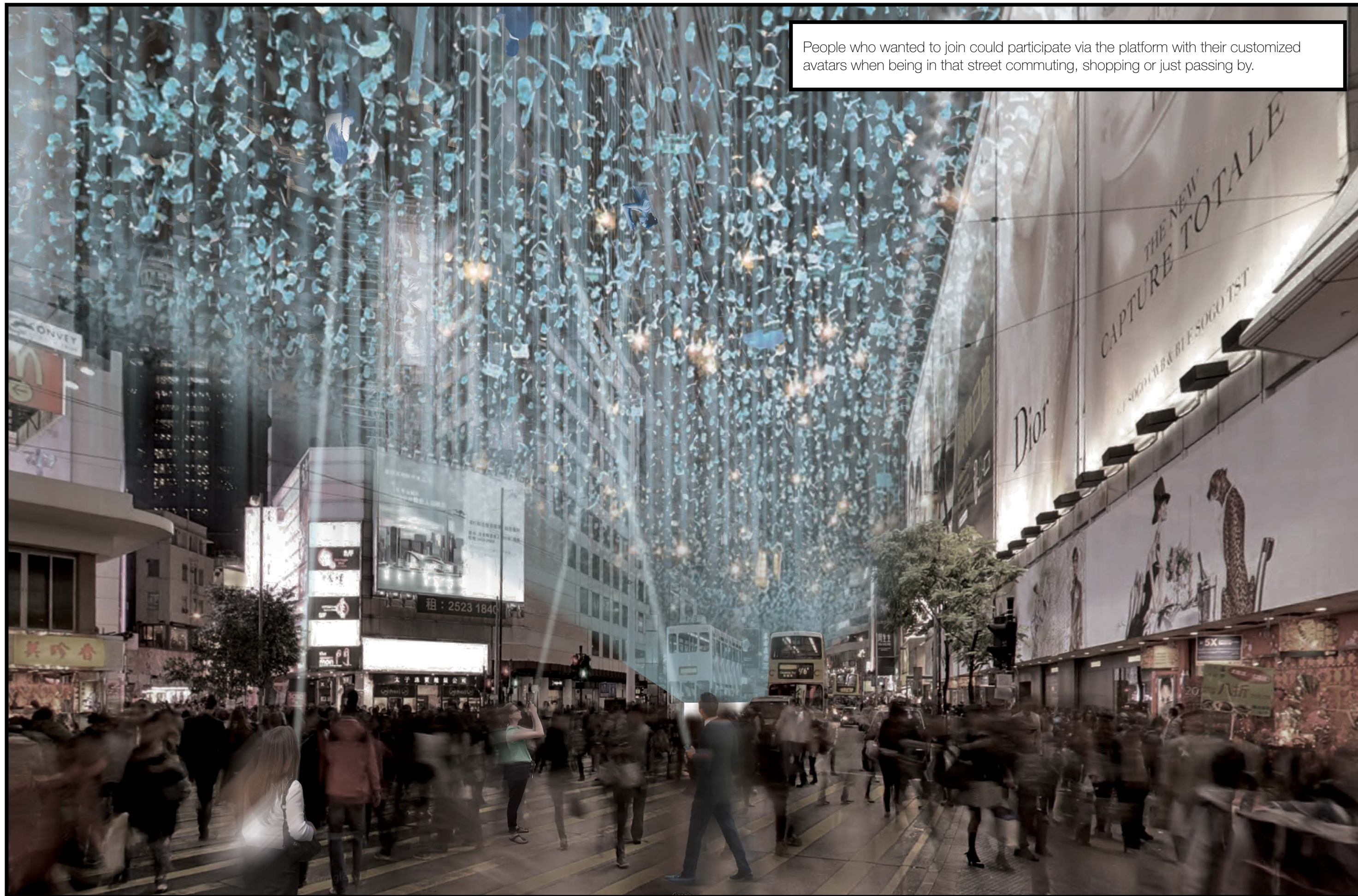
The purpose was to interrupt daily lives and gather people together in order to put pressure on the government.

However, in fact the protests also created damages that the city needed longer time to heal, which became bothering for some citizens, and did not help the protests.

Protesters wanted to continue the demonstrations. It should still show the mass' power and value everyone's effort, but without interrupting the city's operation and any physical violence.

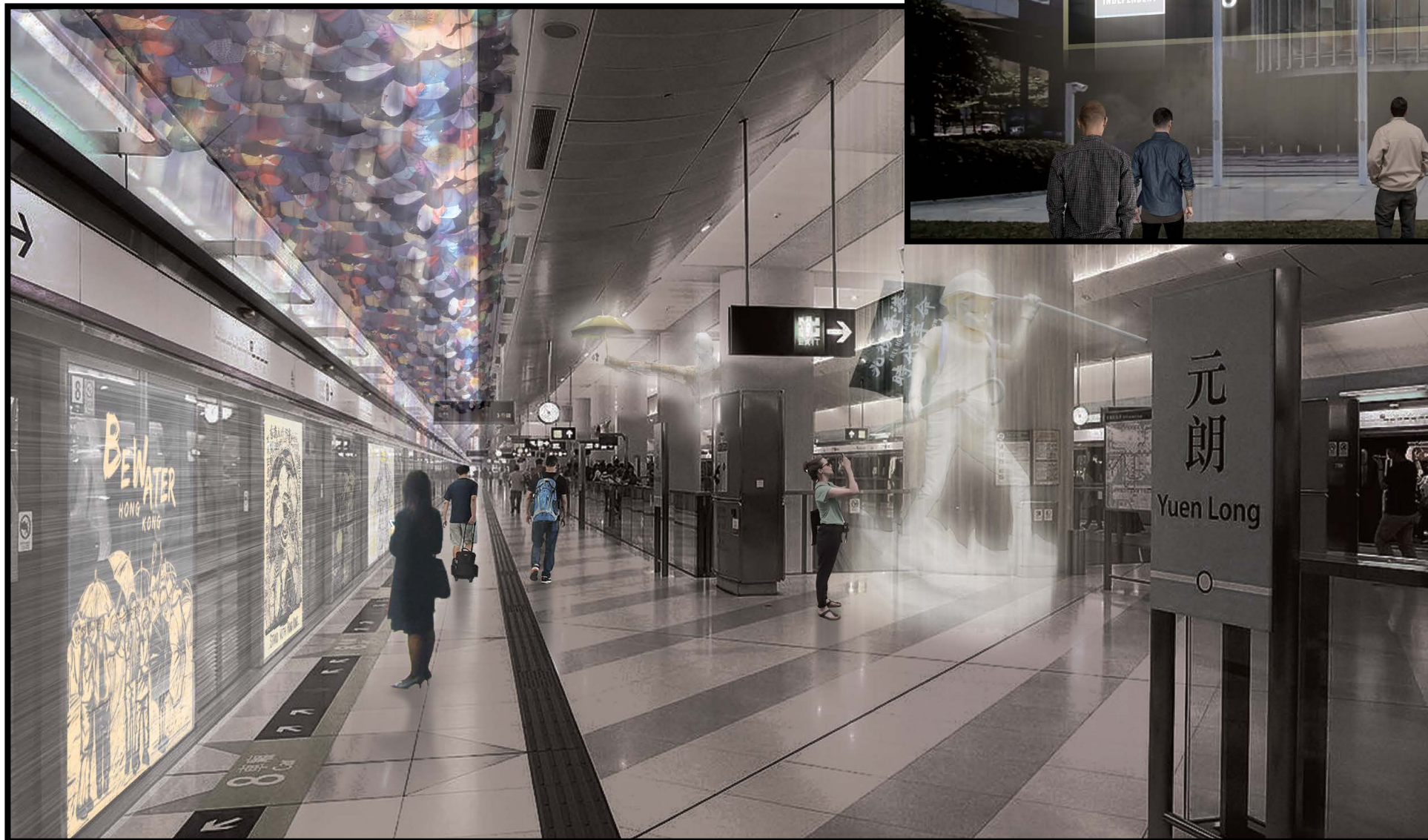
They performed a virtual demonstration projected above Hennessy Road.





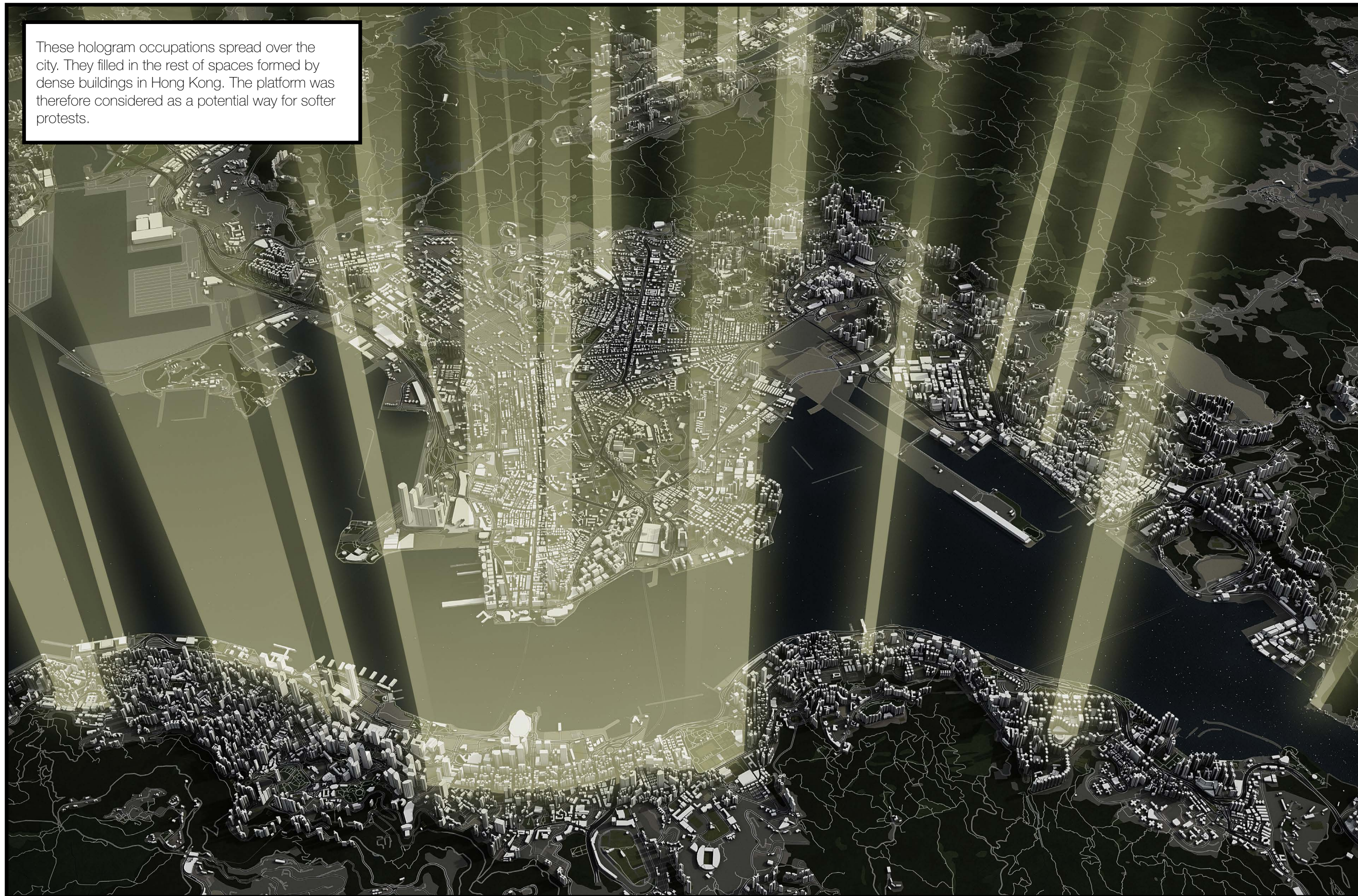
People who wanted to join could participate via the platform with their customized avatars when being in that street commuting, shopping or just passing by.

MTR (subway) stations turned into “museums” where artists presented their works,



The Legislative Council square became a display of political information.

These hologram occupations spread over the city. They filled in the rest of spaces formed by dense buildings in Hong Kong. The platform was therefore considered as a potential way for softer protests.





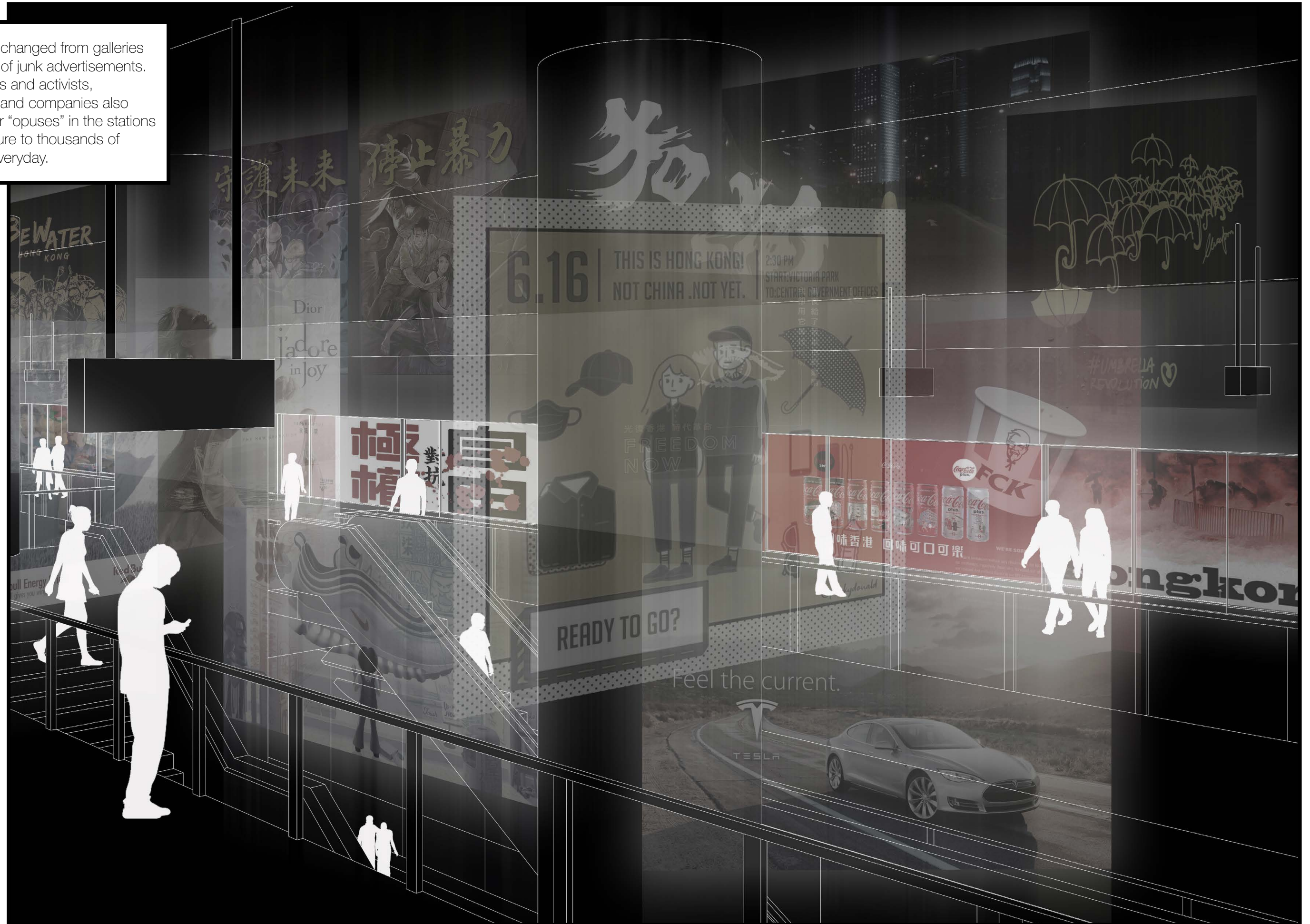
Since the platform was free for uploading and posting, the contents in it became diverse.

Holographic projections over Hennessy Road started to have 3d objects of commercial products and other absurd models, which filled in the gaps between buildings. They had become the residents' new view, but appeared not so pleasant for them.



The floating texts and post-it notes invaded spaces in the mall. The messages represented different emotions of people. Some of them might were not so appropriate to be displayed in public. Conflicts sometimes broke out between radical citizens.

MTR stations changed from galleries to collections of junk advertisements. Not only artists and activists, organizations and companies also projected their “opuses” in the stations for the exposure to thousands of commuters everyday.





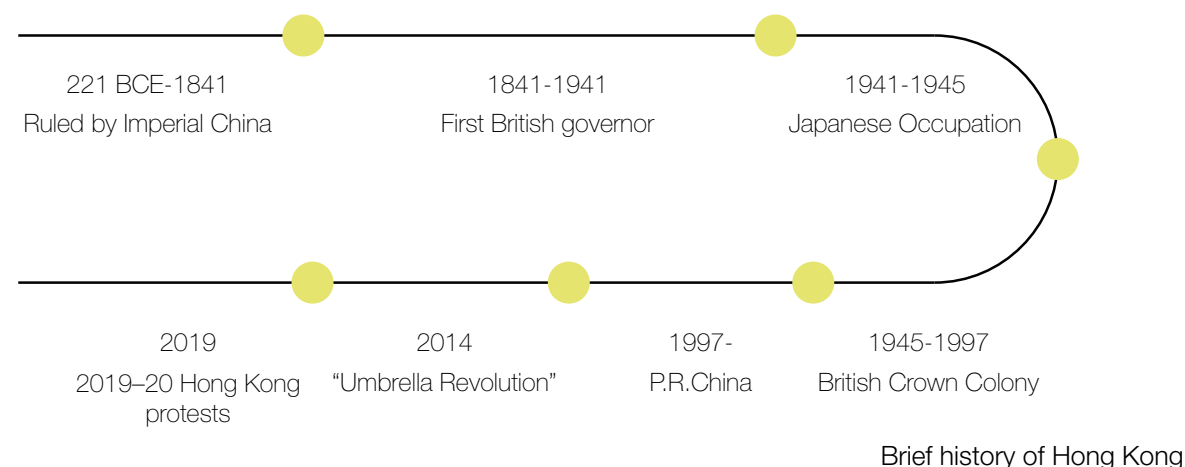
Out of the concern of stability and security of the society, the government forbid those expressions through the platform.



Some protesters considered it stopped people's free expression, which provoked their anger against the government, so they walked into the streets again...

CONTEXTS & BACKGROUND

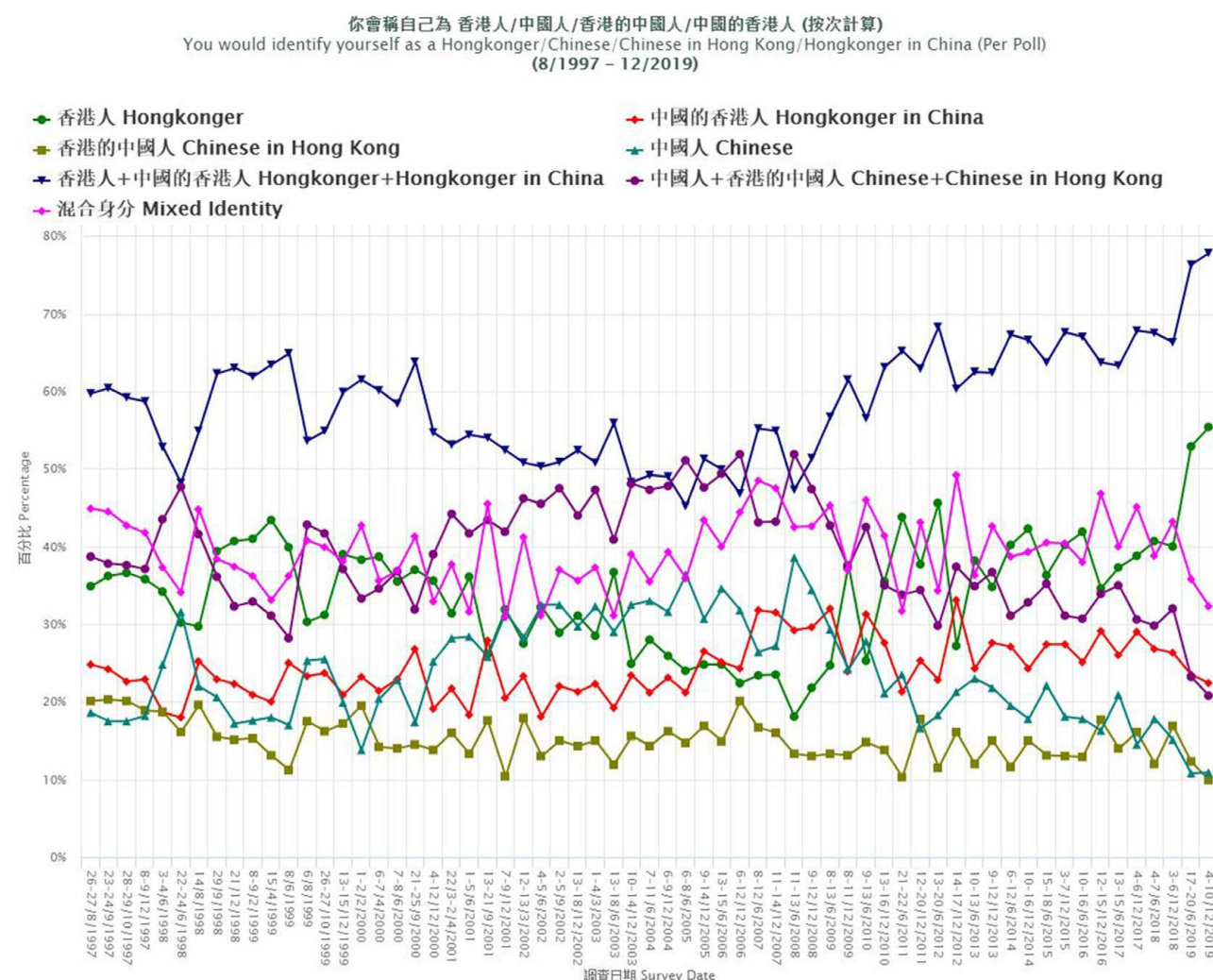
THE CITY OF HONG KONG



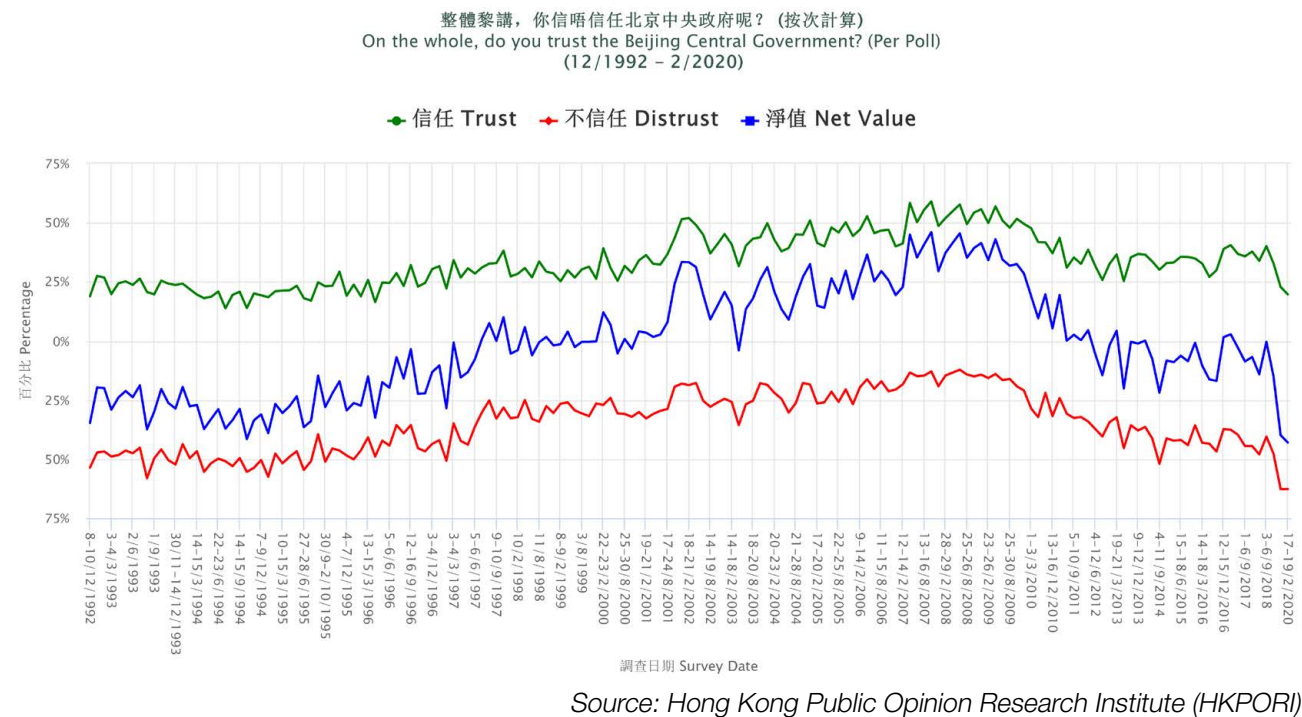
Hong Kong is a city and special administrative region of China in the eastern Pearl River Delta by the South China Sea. It became a colony of the British Empire from 1842 until 1997. As a special administrative region, Hong Kong maintains separate governing and economic systems from that of mainland China under the principle of “one country, two systems”.

“One country, two systems” is a constitutional principle describing the governance of Hong Kong and Macau. In Hong Kong, the system has been implemented through the Basic Law of Hong Kong, which serves as the “mini-constitution” of the region, and consistent with the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Under the Basic Law, Hong Kong has a high degree of autonomy and enjoy executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. Hong Kong formulates its own monetary and financial policies, maintains its own currencies, formulates its own policies on education, culture, sports, social welfare system, etc. within the framework of the Basic Law.

The history makes Hong Kong a special and complex place. First aspect is the identity positioning of its citizens. Hong Kong is a Chinese city but has deep traces of being colonized by Britain. It is obvious that the political, educational and economic systems are more or less “westernized”, while the culture still has a strong Chinese characteristic. With these special features, a large number of the citizens of Hong Kong regard them as a separate group from mainland China. According to the People's Ethnic Identity survey by The Public Opinion Program, Hong Kong University, citizens who recognize them as “Hongkonger + Hongkonger in China” is always more than “Chinese + Chinese in Hong Kong” from 2008.



Source: Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (HKPORI)

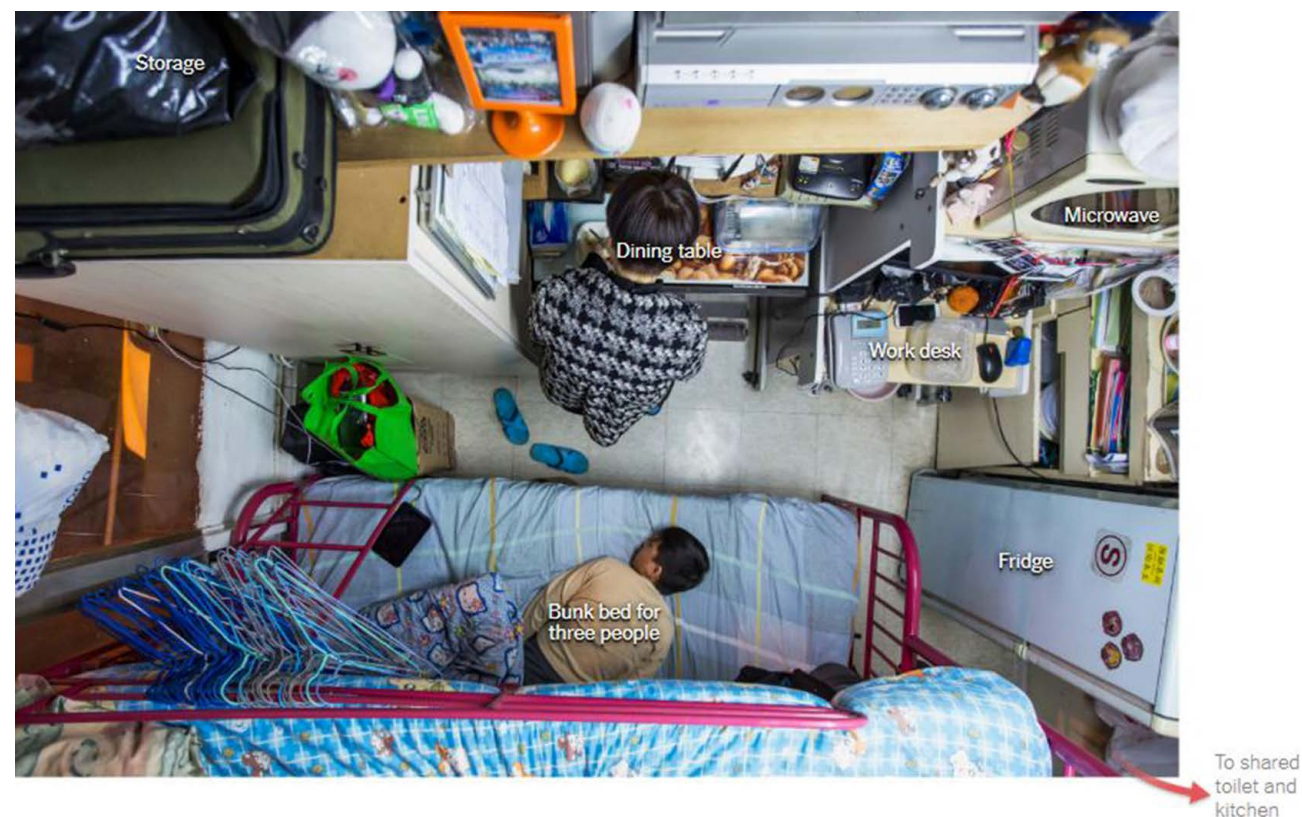


The second is the relationship between Hong Kong and mainland China. After Hong Kong came under the control of the People's Republic of China, the Government of Hong Kong and the pro-Beijing camp cooperated on various Central Government policies and measures, which led to the dissatisfaction of Hong Kong's localist groups. Some Hongkongers started to question the implementation of the policy of "one country, two systems" and to worry that the rights of Hong Kong citizens would become weaker.

As conflicts have increased, some Hongkongers have taken their dissatisfaction with Hong Kong government policies relating to the economy, trade, and culture, and brought these to the constitutional government level, which generates the Umbrella Revolution in 2014 and the 2019-20 protests.

The third aspect is the big differences and gaps within the society of Hong Kong. It is one of the places with the highest human development index in the world, but has the highest Gini coefficient in developed countries/territories; It has the highest quality of higher education resources in the world, but only less than 20% of the penetration rate of it; It is one of the countries/territories whose residents have the highest life expectancy per capita in the world, and also one of the cities with the strongest anxiety index.

The city has become an inspiring subject for studying, with all the contradictions, diversities and the changes in its society.



A typical subdivided flat in Hong Kong.
By Jin Wu/The New York Times; Photograph by Tyrone Siu/Reuters

THE 2019-20 HONG KONG PROTESTS



The 2019–20 Hong Kong protests are ongoing demonstrations in Hong Kong triggered by the introduction of the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill by the Hong Kong government. If enacted, the bill would have allowed the extradition of criminal fugitives who are wanted in territories with which Hong Kong does not currently have extradition agreements, including Taiwan and mainland China.

The bill was proposed by the government of Hong Kong in February 2019 in response to a murder case happened in Taiwan between two Hongkongers. As there is no extradition treaty with Taiwan (because the government of China does not recognize its sovereignty), the Hong Kong government proposed an amendment to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance to establish a mechanism for case-by-case transfers of fugitives to any jurisdiction with which the city lacks a formal extradition treaty. One such jurisdiction would be mainland China.

This led to concerns that the bill would subject Hong Kong residents and visitors to the jurisdiction and legal system of mainland China, thereby undermining the region's autonomy and Hong Kong people's civil liberties. As the protests progressed, the protesters laid out five key demands:

1. The withdrawal of the bill;
2. Investigation into alleged police brutality and misconduct;
3. The release of arrested protesters;
4. A complete retraction of the official characterization of the protests as "riots";
5. Chief Executive Carrie Lam's resignation

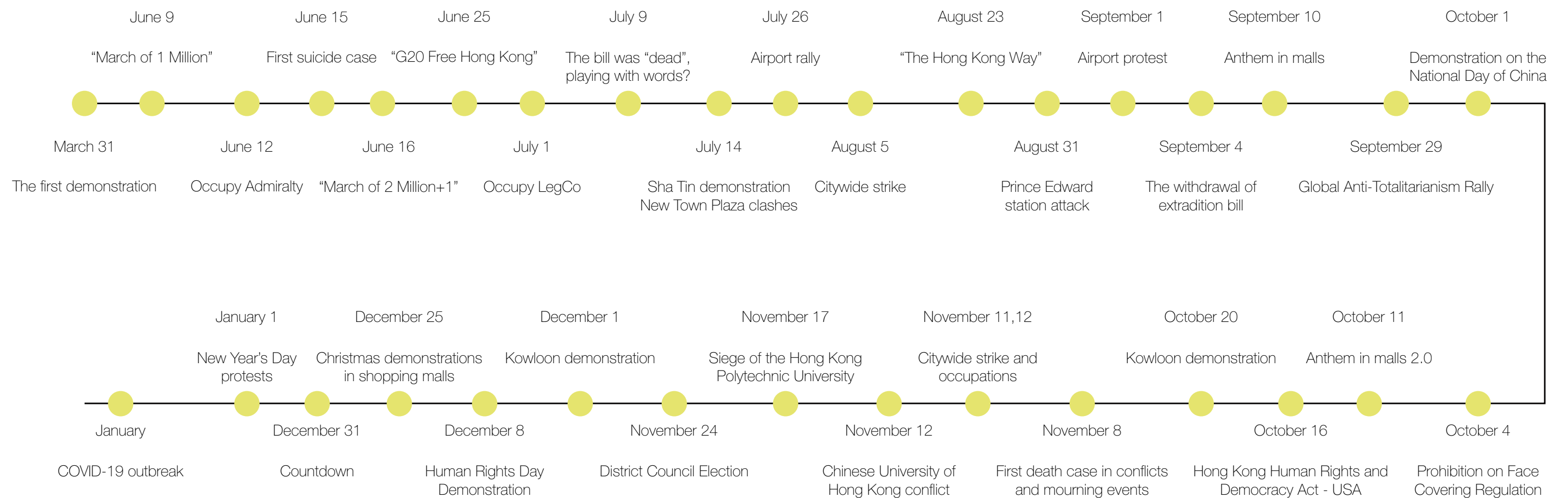
along with the introduction of universal suffrage for election of the Legislative Council and the Chief Executive.

The bill was finally withdrawn on October 23rd, but the government refused to concede on the other four demands. As the protests dragged on, confrontations escalated as both sides became increasingly violent.

The protests have been largely described as "leaderless" and protesters have upheld the fluid "be water" principle (lifted from Bruce Lee's idea of how to overcome what may seem like insurmountable fear) and used various tactics to pressure the government, which, alongside the police, have received the lowest approval ratings since the 1997 handover in public opinion polls. The Central People's Government has indicated that it sees the protests as the "worst crisis in Hong Kong" since the handover in 1997. The protests have resulted in two deaths, and several suicides.

When the movement happens, the urban spaces no longer act as usual. The city converted to a "stage set" of events. People has changed streets, malls, parks, squares, overpasses, the Legislative Council building, the airport, and other spaces into their sites for protesting.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the protests was forced to take a break. But conflicts has kept happening during commemorations of key events and deaths.



Key events in the 2019-20 Hong Kong protests until COVID-19 pandemic's outbreak

OCCUPATIONS



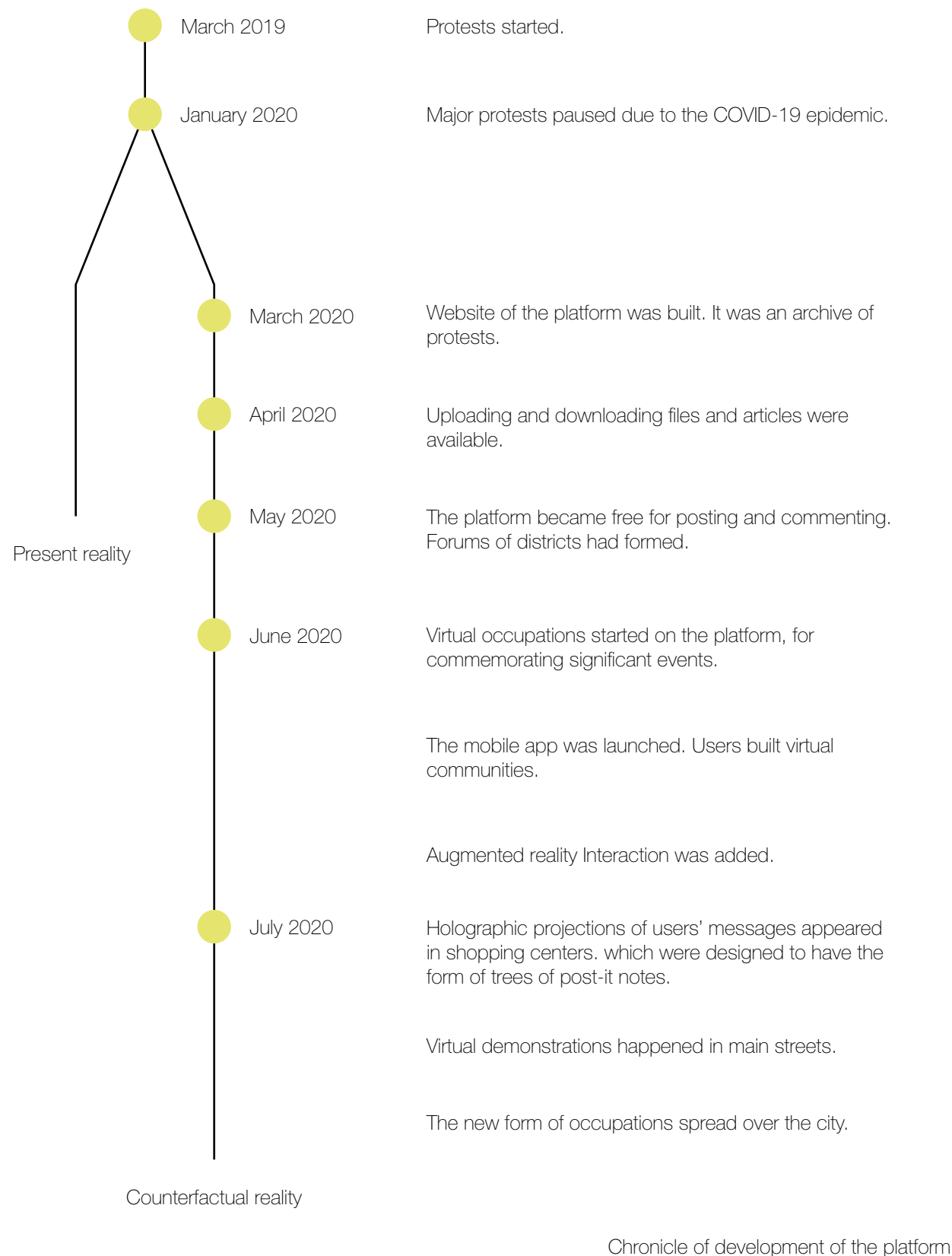
Occupations in the protests

The protests had happened all over the city. Due to Hong Kong's high density and land scarcity, protesters tended to occupy public urban spaces that they had access to. These "public spaces" are all the "rest of the spaces" compared to those that are owned by either the state or private companies. The city converted to a "stage set" of events. People has changed streets, malls, parks, squares, overpasses, the Legislative Council building, the airport, and other spaces into their sites for protesting.

Those spaces were not chosen randomly, but were occupied according to protesters' goals. For example, the shopping malls has been the most popular places where citizens spend a lot of times. So they became ideal sites for gathering and having activities, especially for the protesters living in the neighborhoods; They had occupied the airport and subway stations to try to inform travelers about the protests in order to attract more attention.

The chosen sites of this proposal followed this principle. They are set to be occupied in certain ways regarding to their features that could be traced to previous events.

PROPOSAL



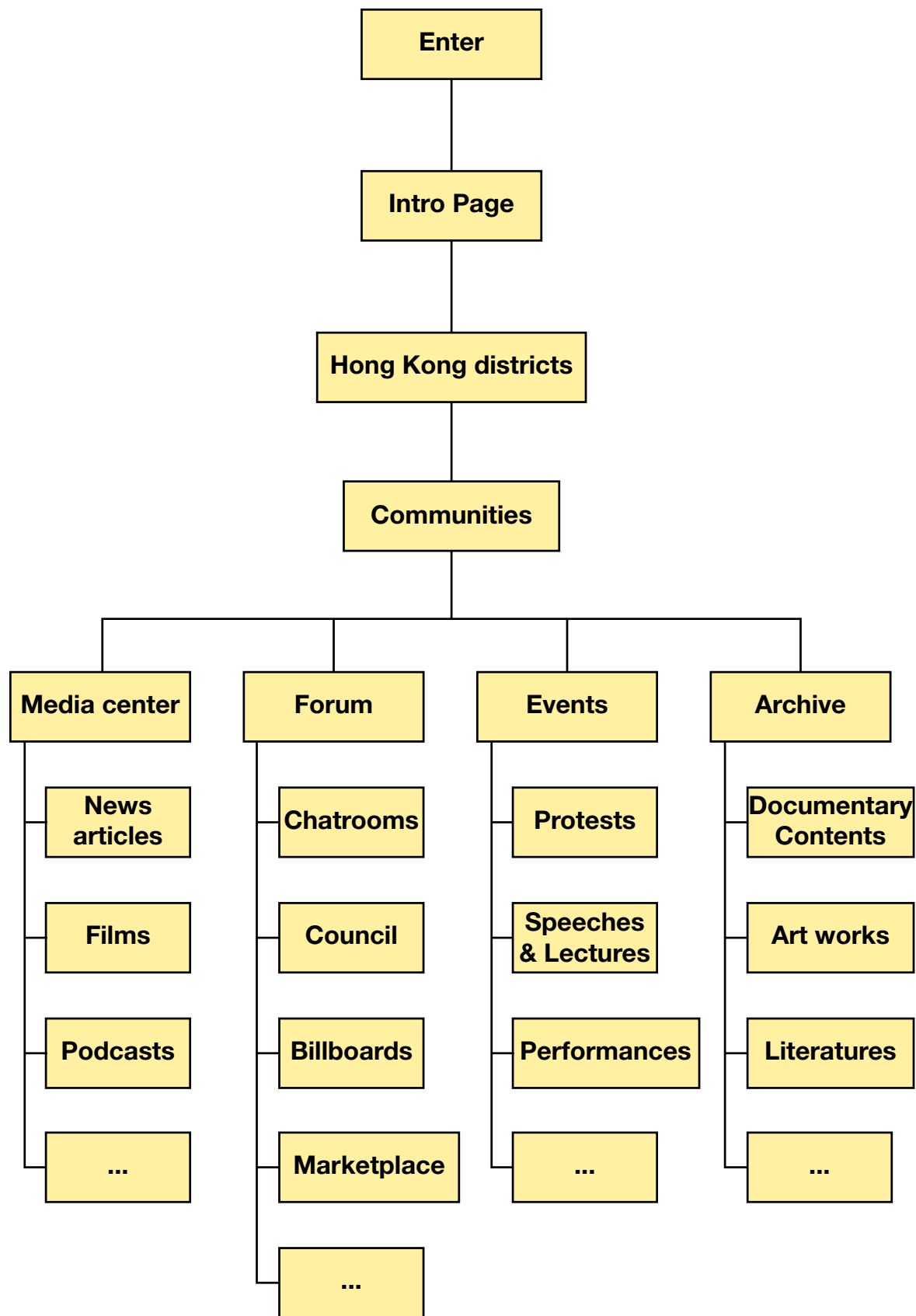
INTRODUCTION

The narrative is counterfactual. It is based on a Hong Kong that is under current time but with more advanced augmented reality technology that allows objects to be projected by hologram.

After seven months protesting, the movement paused because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this circumstance when everyone has to stay home, the Internet has become the most important tool for building the connection between individuals and the rest of the world. People started to spend more time in social media, online games and video calls; Exhibitions and live performances went online. These have shown how the technology can change our ways of living. But under a usual circumstance, the virtual world is not just a replacement of the physical one but another layer of the reality.

What if the protests become virtual too? In this counterfact, protesters can execute their protests on Internet, which has the potential to create impact in the city,too. If the impact to the city is strong enough, it could mitigate the problem that the physical demonstrations interrupt the city from operating and may avoid the violences. As for the impact itself, from the other hand, can be achieved by projecting the virtual events on the physical environment, based on the counterfactual setting.

The virtual occupations values and records people's power regardless one's background, and are not traceable, which resonates a slogan of the protests -"Be water".

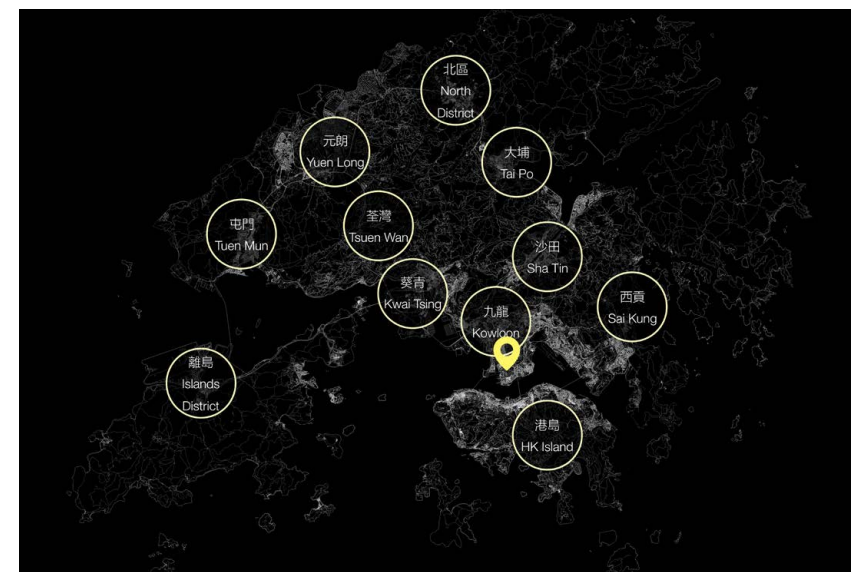


Structure of the platform

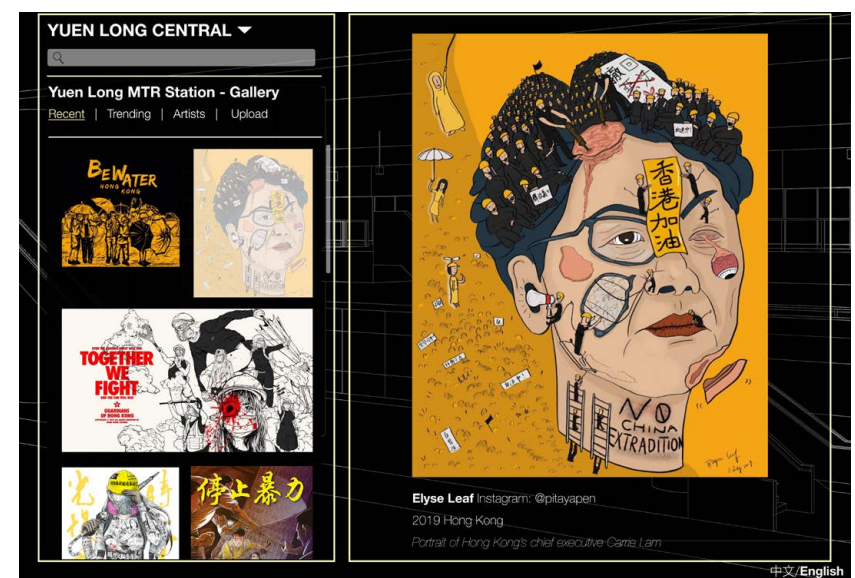
THE PLATFORM



Page example:
Entry page



Page example:
Select districts



Page example:
Art work archive

VIRTUAL OCCUPATIONS FROM THE PLATFORM

1. New Town Plaza, Sha Tin

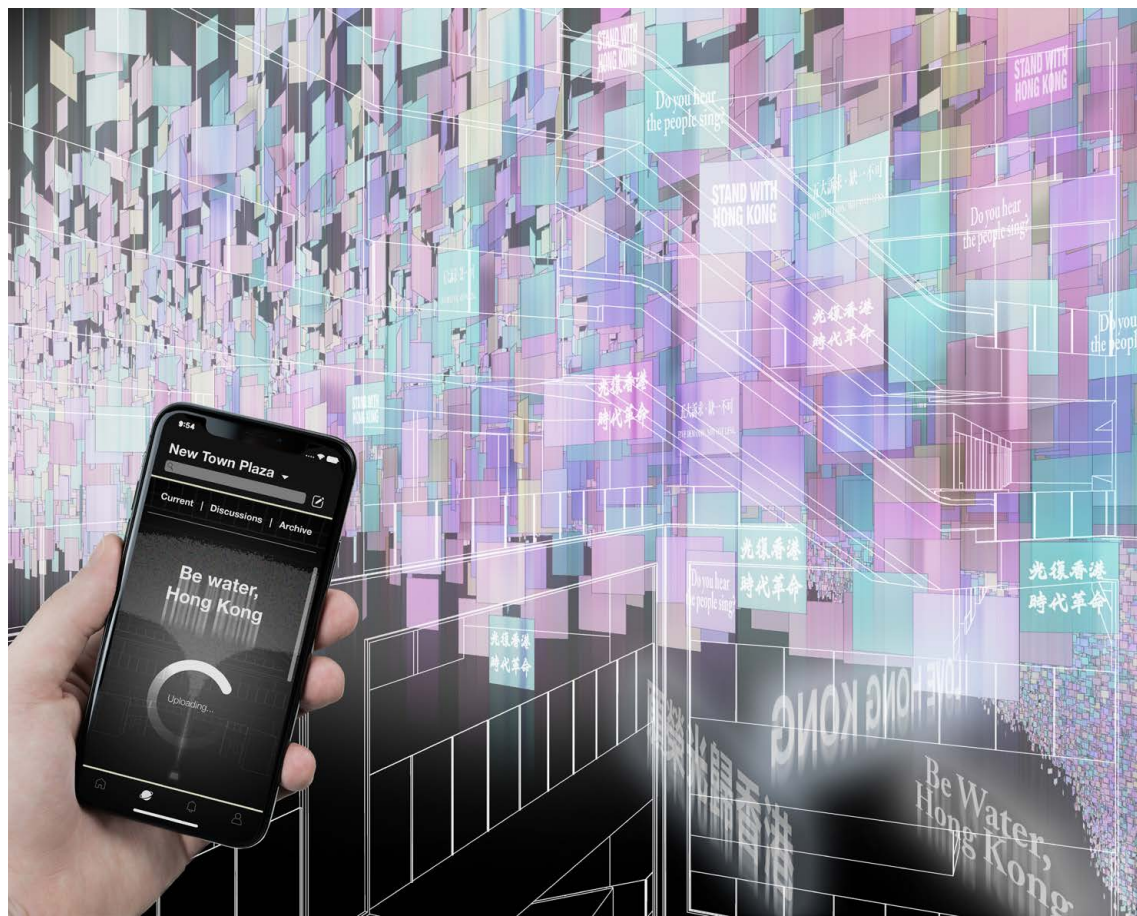
Malls are the most popular places in Hong Kong. Citizens tend to spend a lot of time in malls where most of their living supplies are, and all of the big malls are easy to reach with transportation attached to them.

New Town Plaza has been a lot of Hongkongers' memory. "I grew up here. Me and my parents used to come here every weekend. We have meals, watch movies, or just wander around in here." says Guo, a local resident. The government has built the town hall, parks, sports halls, courts and other other facilities in this area, which make this mall has become the center of the community.

However, when being called as a "Plaza", New Town Plaza is still a shopping mall owned by real estate company, which makes it never really "public". The main program of a "shopping mall" is "shopping", which is totally driven by consumerism.

But during the protests, different public events has happened in the mall, especially in the atrium, which can be seen as a behavior of winning the publicity.





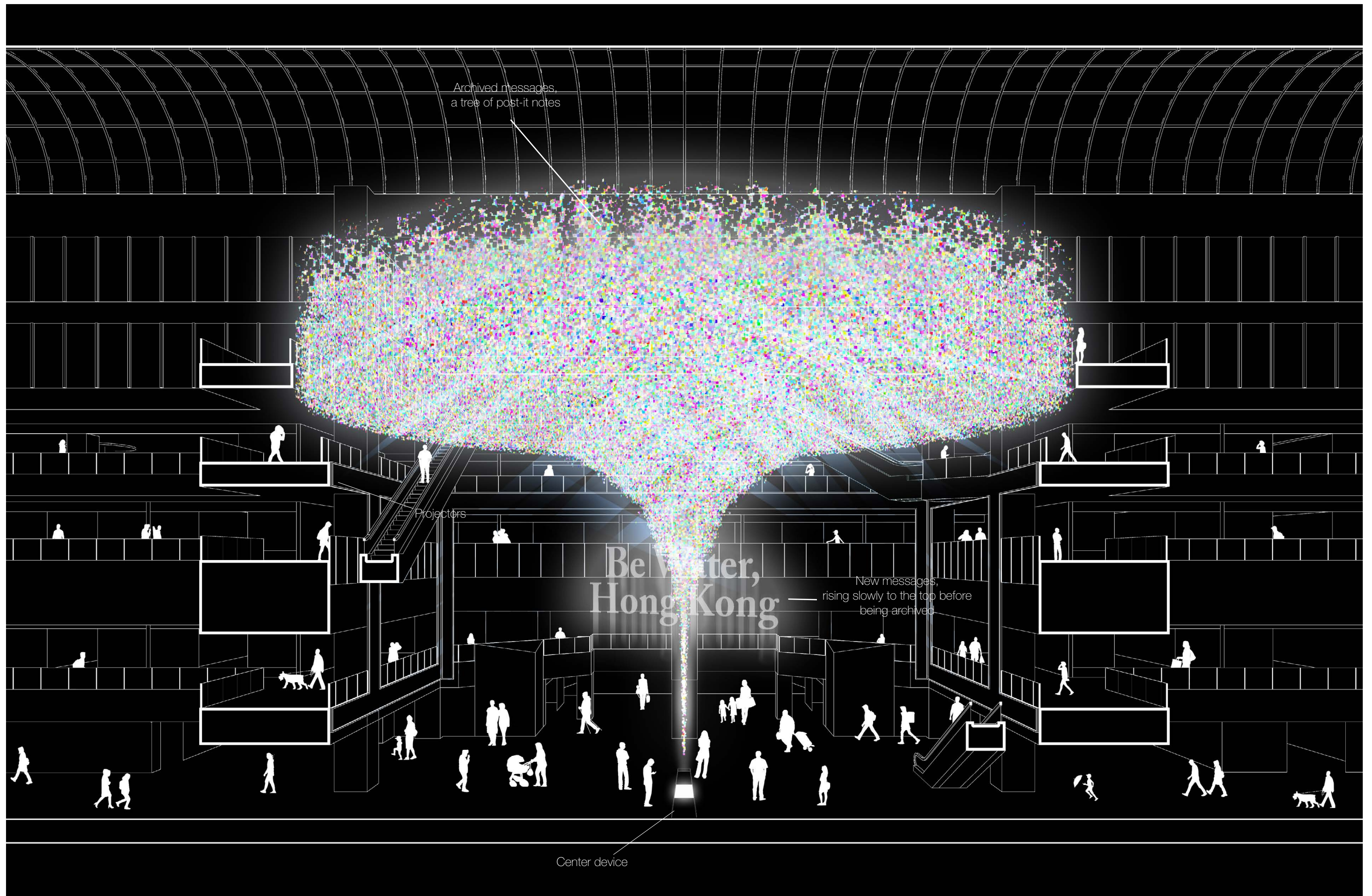
Posting messages in the atrium

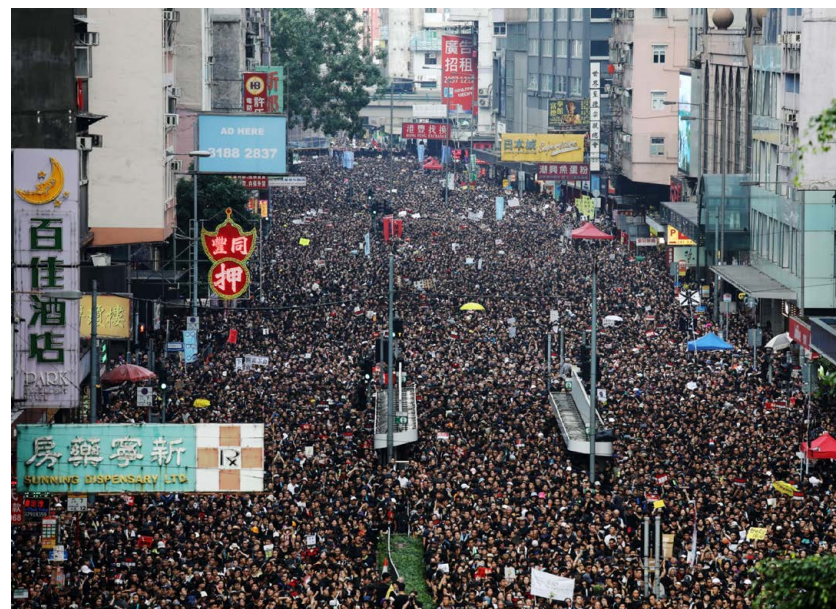
The atrium in New Town Plaza has been an important place for the protesters to hold events.

It can be a space for the new “ecclesia”, which was the principal assembly of the democracy of ancient Athens. When the citizens gathered more and more in the space, it gradually turn into a place for exchanging opinions and thoughts, where discussions and debates will take place.

Through the platform, citizens are allowed to communicate in the virtual space. But furthermore, the messages they post publicly regarding the neighborhood around New Town Plaza can be stored in the atrium thanks to the AR.

People are free to express any thoughts that they want to share to their neighbors and post them via the platform. The messages will be displayed in the air, rising up, and finally be stored as the form of a post-it note, which is an object much used for free expression on “Lennon Walls” during the protests. When the messages become more, the post-it notes will become a shape of a tree, which indicates the space’s use for “ecclesia”. The citizens occupied a commercial space by their expressions.



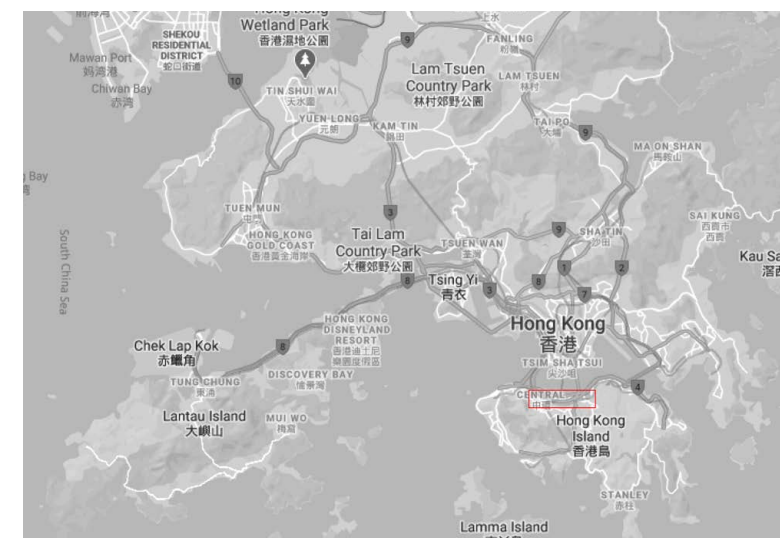


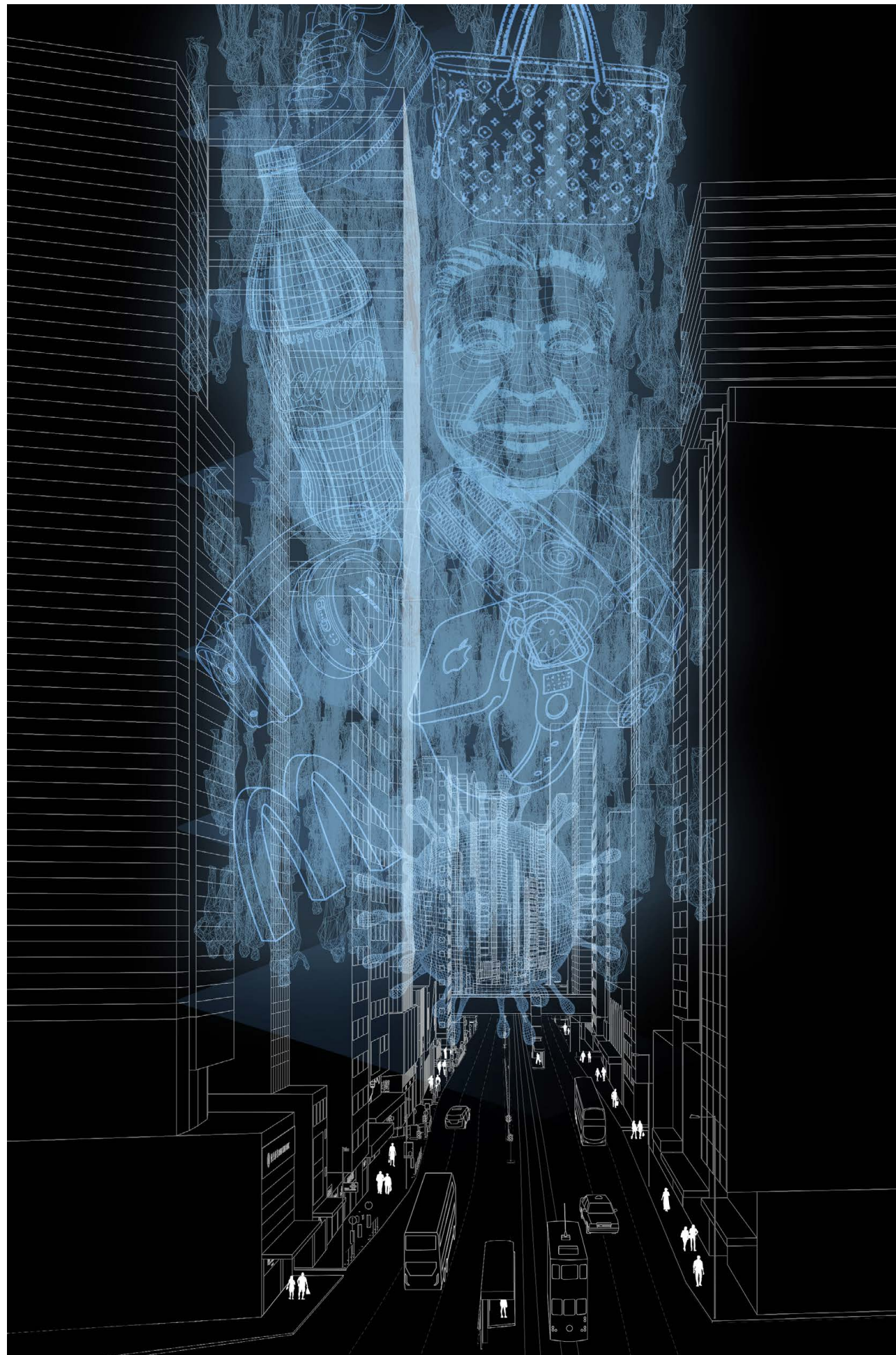
2. Hennessy Road, Hong Kong Island

Hennessy Road is a thoroughfare on Hong Kong Island. It connects Yee Wo Street on the east in Causeway Bay, and Queensway on the western end in Wan Chai. It is a two-way road with two to three lanes of traffic on each side. Trams travel along parts of the road.

Being one of the busiest roads in Hong Kong, it has played an important role during protests. The portion of the road passing through Causeway Bay, which is a main commercial area in Hong Kong, was one of the locations occupied during the 2014 protests. In the 2019-20 protests, all the largest demonstrations have taken place here.

The demonstrations and marches were meant to interrupt this busy road from functioning and show the power of the masses, in order to put pressure on the authority. But inevitably it had gone too far. Radical protesters put barricades to prevent the road functioning even when no demonstration is arranged, which caused a lot of conflicts. They also had broken shops, restaurants, subway stations and even banks along the road when demonstrating, because those were suspected to be pro-china companies.

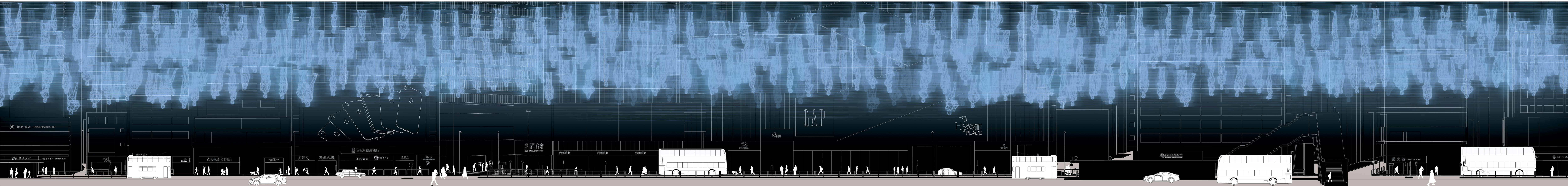




The demonstrations and marches in the road was overwhelming. They showed the power of the masses. The masses consists of every individuals who participated. Their body formed another surface of the urban space.

When the protests happened in the road, the people's flow replaced the flow of vehicles. What was also replaced was the diversity of the space and the daily lives. The protests interrupted the operation of this road, but also created troubles. This kind of violence to urban spaces (not only the destructive behaviors of protesters, but also in the way that the protests violently transformed the urban spaces) showed power yet left wounds to the city.

With the help of the platform, virtual demonstration can be executed. Protesters can use their devices to 3d scan their bodies and upload the model to the platform. The figure is then connected to one's profile. When one is in Hennessy Road, he/she can participate the demonstration via their mobile device. The 3 times enlarged figure of this person will be projected upside down above the road, like a mirrored world. If this person kept coming to Hennessy Road, his/her figure will stay in the demonstration. In this way, the "bodies" stays as a unique layer of the urban space, showing the power of perople.





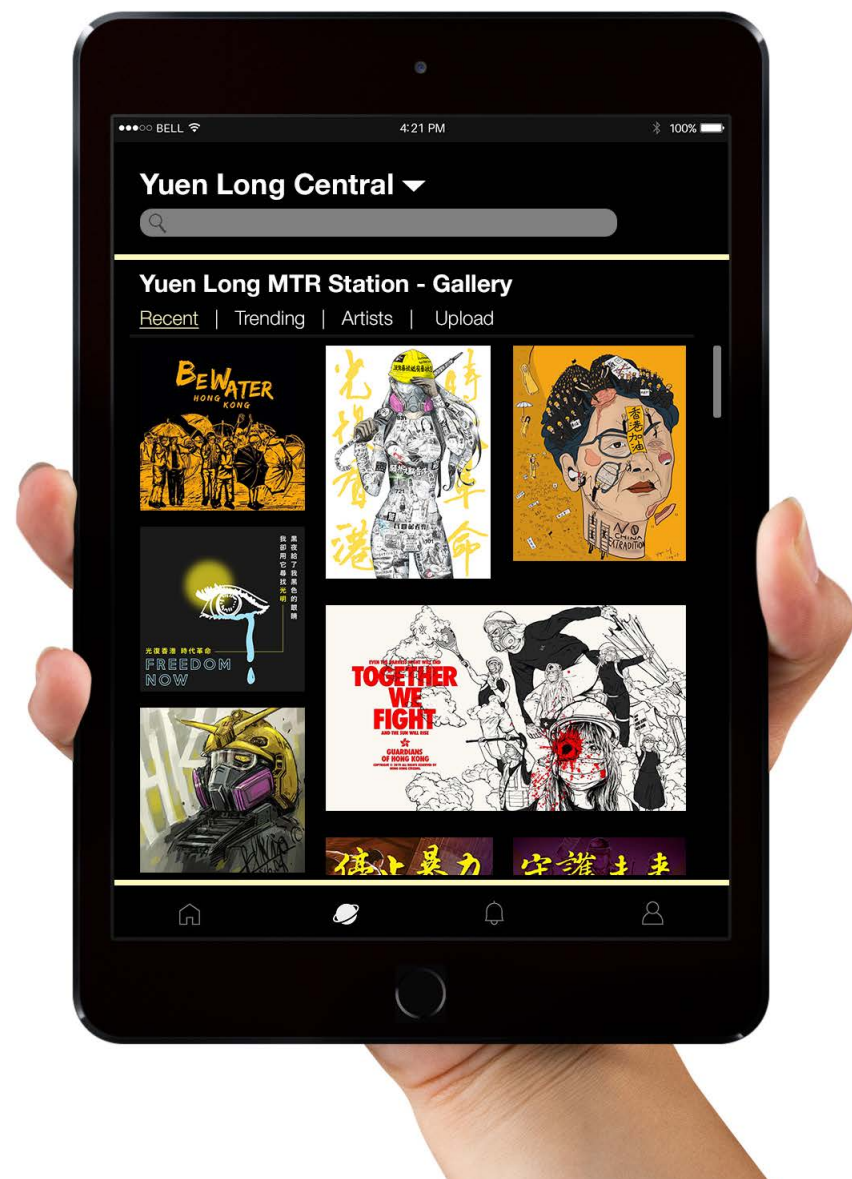
2. MTR station (Yuen Long station)

The MTR is a major public transport network serving Hong Kong. Under the government's rail-led transport policy, the system is a common mode of public transport in Hong Kong, with over five million trips made in an average weekday. It consistently achieves a 99.9 per cent on-time rate on its train journeys.

Yuen Long station supports metro and light rail transport. It is a main transportation hub in that district. On 21st to 22nd July 2019, An armed mob of triad societies, over 400 men dressed in white indiscriminately attacked civilians on streets with steel rods and rattan canes and attacked passengers in the Yuen Long station including the elderly, children, protesters and journalists. At least 45 people were injured in the incident, including a pregnant woman. The attack happened following an anti-extradition bill protest in Sheung Wan, Hong Kong.

This incident caused several sit-ins in the station and protests, against the mob, the MTR and the police, for their inaction as well as mounting evidence of corruption and misconduct.

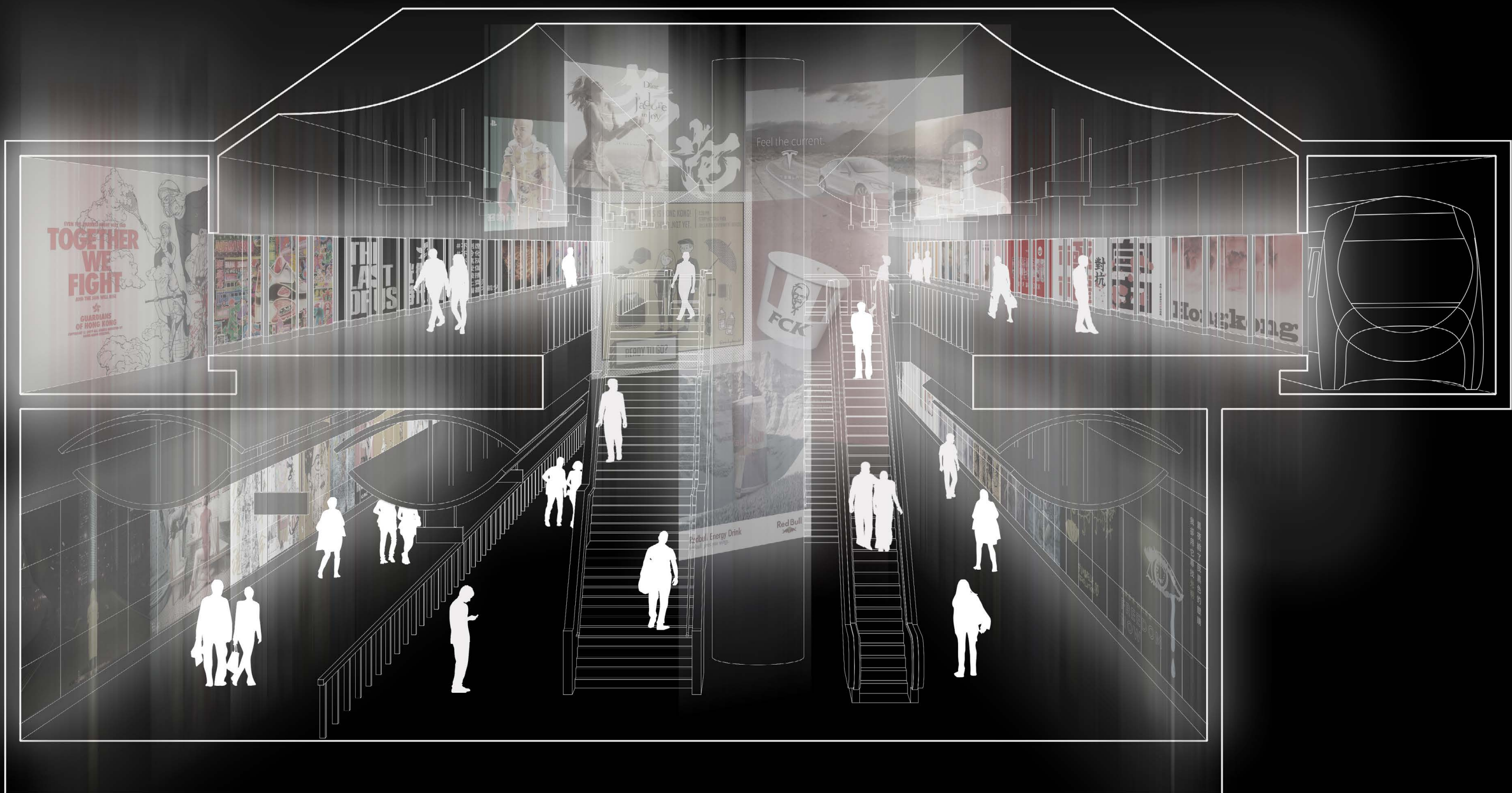




With the large flow of people, MTR stations became ideal places for spreading information. During the sit-in protests, protesters chose to sit or stand in the station holding signs or images, without blocking passengers' ways. This potential of transport hubs had been already discovered by commercial companies and they have been used for advertising.

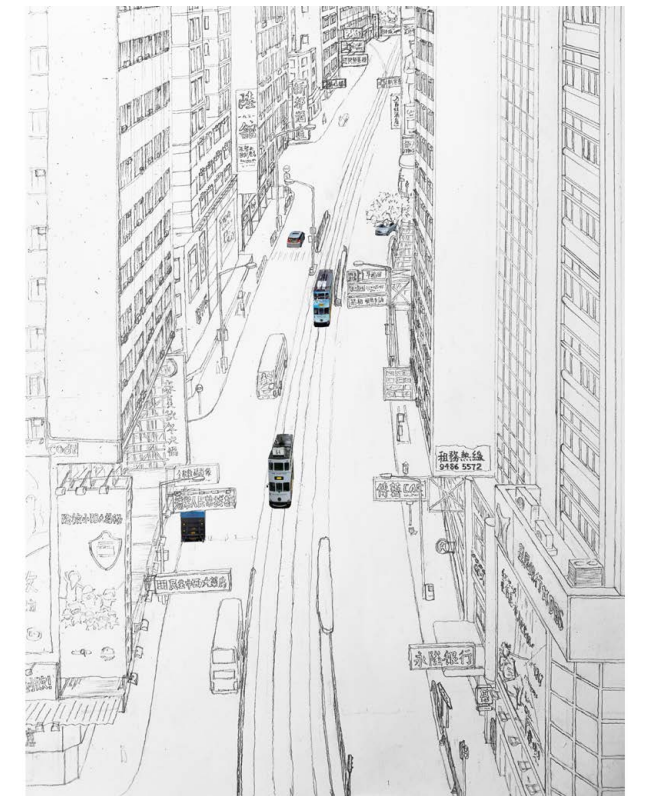
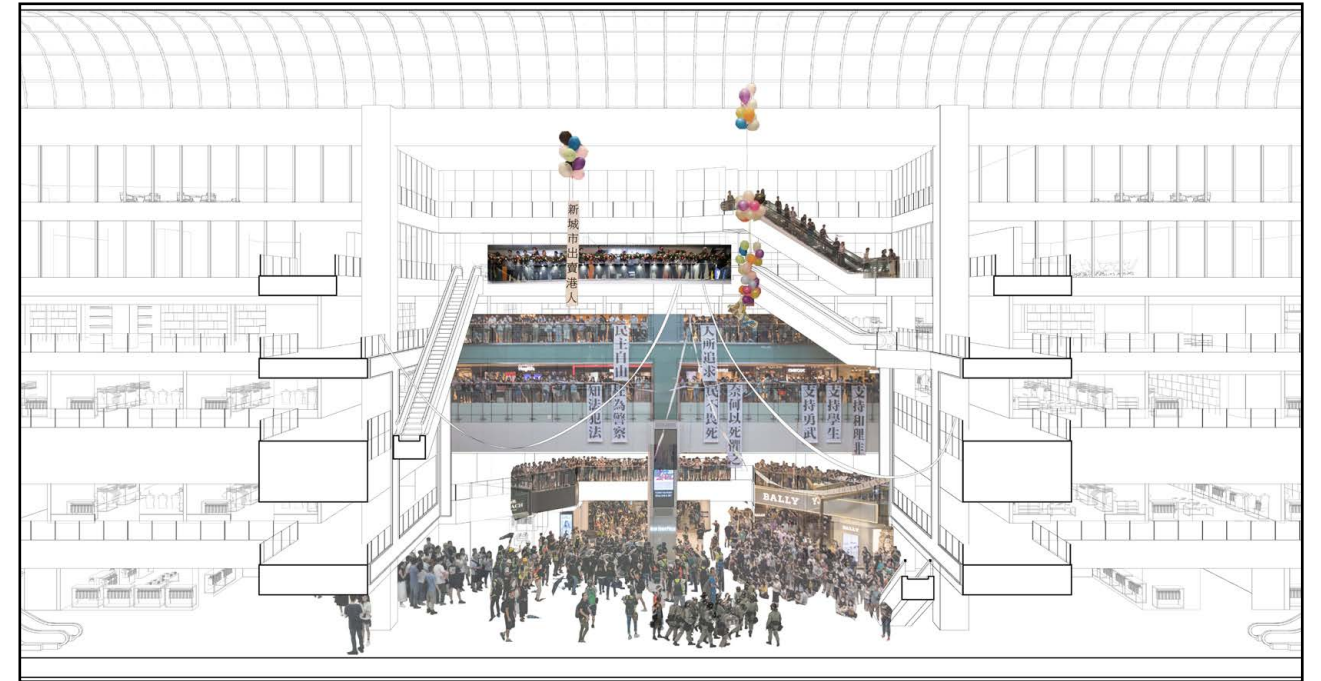
Like other social movements, a lot of art works were done during the protests. Protest art acts as an important tool to form social consciousness, create networks, operate accessibly, and be cost-effective. Social movements produce such works as the signs, banners, posters, and other printed materials used to convey a particular cause or message.

On this platform, artists are allowed to upload their work to the virtual spaces in MTR stations, and the works will be projected onto different surfaces as well as in midair. Passengers are able to download and comment on certain works while traveling. Hence the stations became "galleries". They are occupied by protest art works.



PROCESS & DISCUSSION

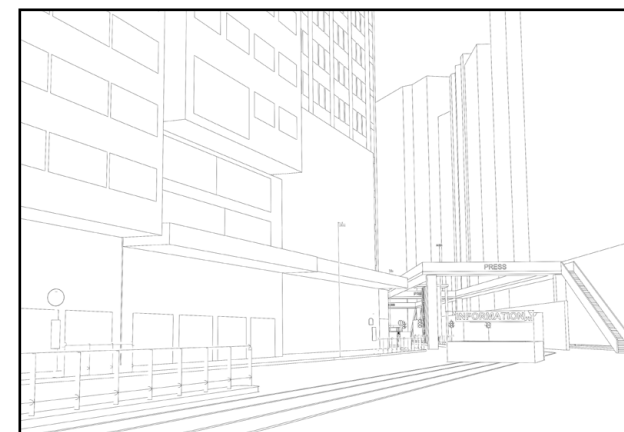
EARLY PROCESS & THESIS ORIENTATION



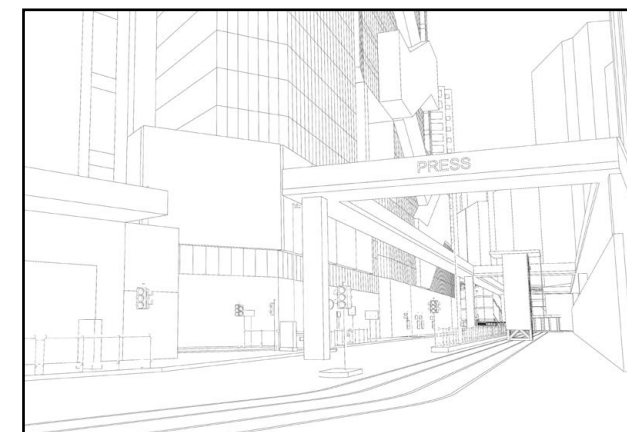
In the first weeks the focus was on studying the events that happened and how did they change urban spaces. Collage with key elements was made, to investigate features of different sites.



Collages exploring some “what if” scenarios when the demonstration reaches to an extreme. Hennessy road was taken as an example. In these situations people reclaimed the “right to the city”. The occupations of the road became “daily events”. The protest activities were mixed with citizens’ usual activities such as exercises and dining.



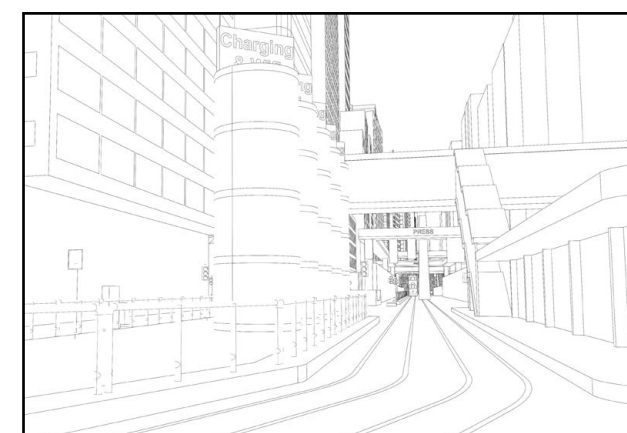
Information booth



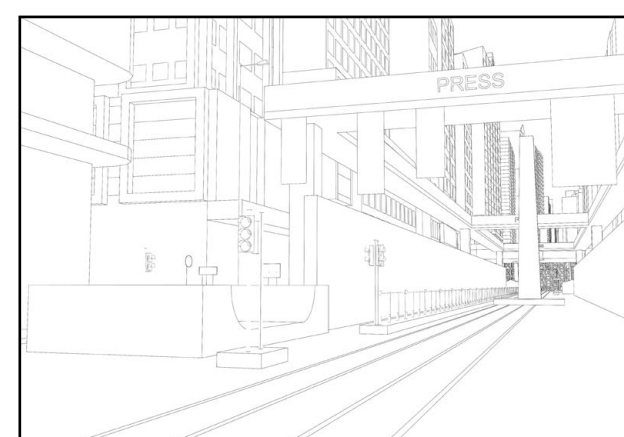
Press overpass and podium



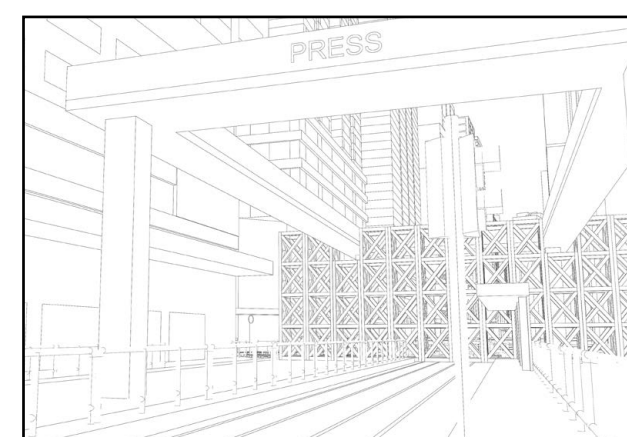
Street food



Charging towers for mobile devices



Sport square



Barricade wall

Elements were added into the street to support the extreme situations, where the road lost its function as a thoroughfare but a big public square for protesting. However, these interventions are essentially the same as what had taken place. The occupations should be more organic, dynamic and fluid.

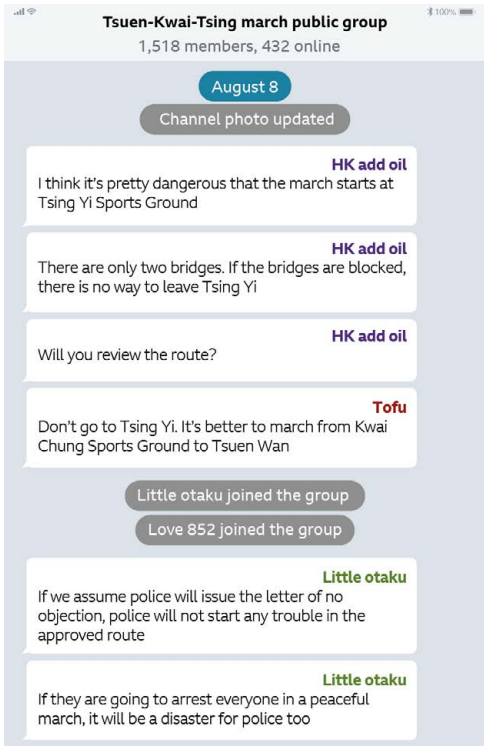
The globalisation of protests in 2019



World map showing the main types of protests in 2019.
Source from AFP.

In June 2019, some strangers connected via the encrypted messaging app Telegram organized the Tsuen Wan-Kwai Tsing protest on August 25th 2019.

Telegram chat has been translated and edited. Names have been changed. By BBC.



The social movements and resistances have taken place in every continents in recent years, especially in 2019. The protests in Hong Kong is one instance among them. Citizens walked into urban spaces to address their appeals, protesting against inequality, corruption, climate change and for liberty, such as 2019 Catalan protests, Yellow vests movement, Gezi Park protests, Me Too, Black Lives Matter, etc.

The movements have influenced and reciprocated each other, thanks to the Internet. For example, protesters in Barcelona resembled in El Prat airport, mimicking a tactic used by Hong Kong protesters. Brahim Oumansour, a Paris-based researcher at the Institute of International and Strategic Relations (IRIS) commented on 2019–2020 Algerian protests, “The Internet has allowed Algerian youth to see what is happening in other countries culturally, economically, politically, as well as seeing younger presidents compared to theirs”.

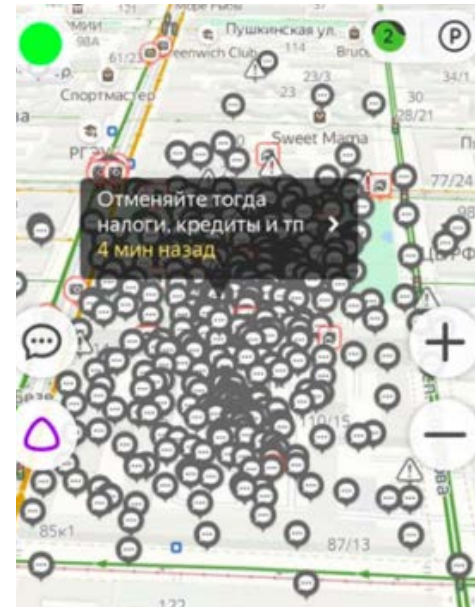
In the Hong Kong protests, social media played a big role for mobilizing and organizing protesters. In June 2019, some strangers connected via the encrypted messaging app Telegram organized the Tsuen Wan-Kwai Tsing protest on August 25th 2019. On this app there are dozens of groups dedicated to ensuring the protest movement stays alive, stays strategic, well organized and supplied. Some groups - with tens of thousands of members - discuss strategy. Smaller channels organise protest logistics and provide live updates about marches, while individual channels coordinate supplies, first aid, and even offer to make posters.

It showed how simple and quick to organize movements by using digital tools. However, as Zeynep Tufekci pointed in her book *Twitter and Tear Gas*, these networked movements would often devise initial innovative tactics and pull off a spectacular action, but they were unable to change tactics along the way. The digital tools helped to mobilize movements but seems weak when supporting them to continue.

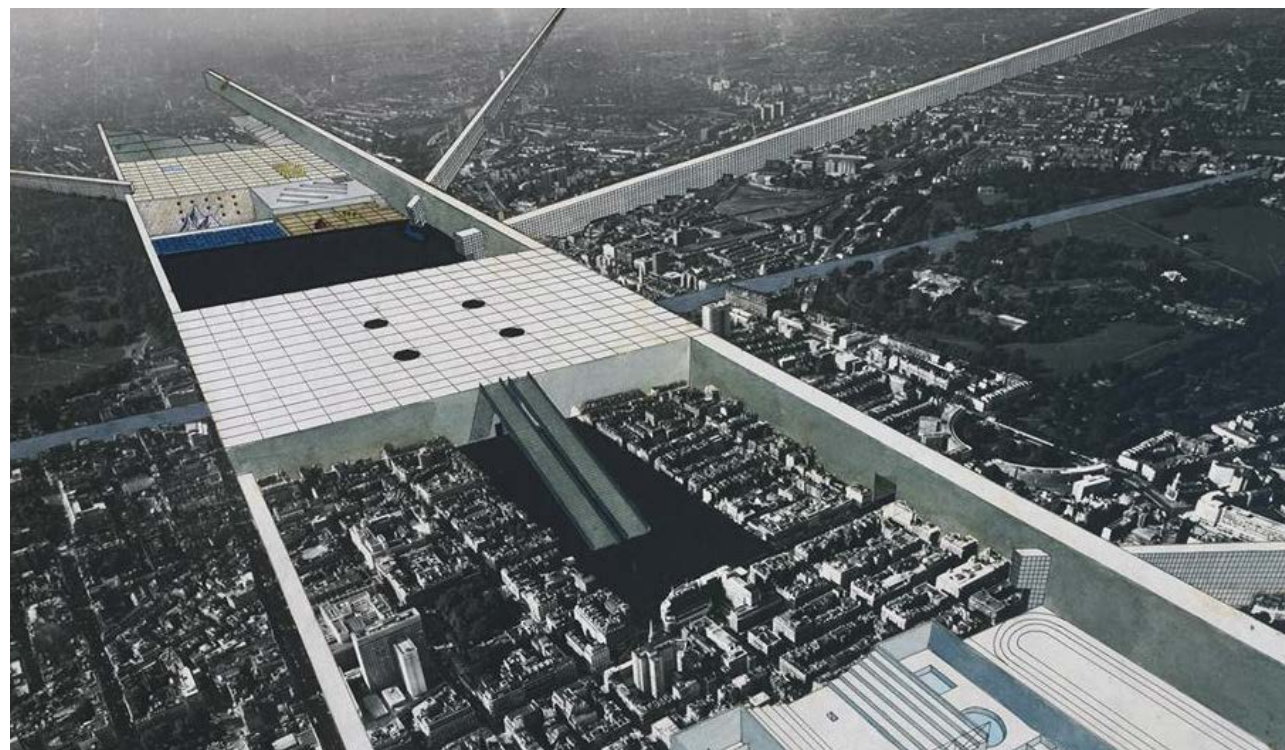
VIRTUAL PROTESTS & COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING



Spain's hologram protest: Thousands join virtual march in Madrid against new gag law in 2015.



Virtual protest in Rostov-on-Don, Russia via Yandex.Navigator on April 20, 2020.



Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture proposes a walled city in a long strip, with tall barriers that cut through London's urban fabric—an intervention designed to create a new urban culture invigorated by architectural innovation and political subversion.

The Internet doesn't have to only be a tool for organizing movements. Internet itself is a space. They can also take place in this virtual space, and create effects in the physical world.

Coincidentally, a virtual/digital protest similar to which was shown in the thesis occurred on April 20th 2020. Residents of the southern city of Rostov-on-Don, Russia “gathered” outside the local government building to protest the strict self-isolation regime. The protest was conducted through Yandex.Navigator, an application run by one of Russia's biggest digital giants. The popular SatNav tool allows drivers themselves to report on the traffic situation on roads in real time. That feature has allowed users with an axe to grind to tag themselves in politically symbolic locations and write protest slogans in their comments.

The online movements could create more discussions and attentions. Compared with those in reality, they are easier to spread since they already exists on the mostly-used medium - Internet. When a movement goes viral, it may become a trend and attracts more people to participate in regardless one's location.

It can also make actual difference in physical world. The Spanish government passed a law in 2015 that set extreme fines for protesters convening outside of government buildings. In response, Spanish activists have staged the world's first ever virtual political demonstration by holograms projected on screen.

So what if the Hong Kong protests continued on a virtual platform in the plateau under

the COVID-19 situation? The thesis used counterfactual thinking when formulating this concept.

Counterfactual thinking is a concept in psychology that involves the human tendency to create possible alternatives to life events that have already occurred; something that is contrary to what actually happened.

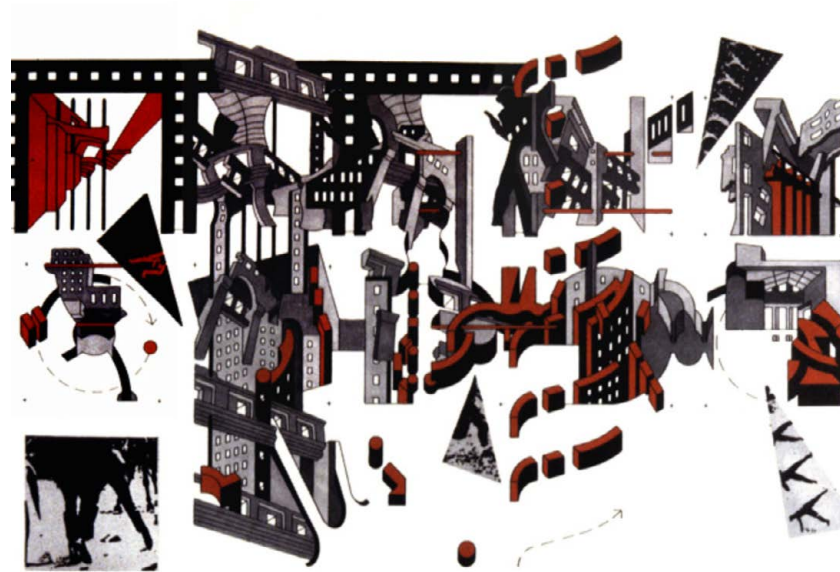
Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture is an outcome of counterfactual thinking. It proposes a walled city in a long strip, with tall barriers that cut through London's urban fabric—an intervention designed to create a new urban culture invigorated by architectural innovation and political subversion.

In this thesis, the narrative was based on a counterfact whose timeline altered from January 2020. In this alternative Hong Kong, an Internet platform gradually grew from an archive of the protests into a station of virtual movements.

With counterfactual thinking, the thesis is not about having a perfect solution to a specific problem, but about initiating a discourse about an alternative, to keep the study critical and potentially to provide further provoking discussions.

THEORY

ARCHITECTURE & NARRATIVE



Manhattan transcripts
Bernard Tschumi

“...From the Incas of pre-Columbian America to the indigenous Ainu of Japan, from New York to New Delhi, from Dublin to Dubai, every culture looks to architecture for enduring messages, and to a certain articulation of life itself...the built environment inevitably ‘communicates’- it cannot avoid doing so.” (Nigel Coates, 2012) Besides being a “living machine”, architecture also possesses information, thanks to the contexts. There are always a story behind every built structure. It is fiction behind the reality, from which one could understand and explain the reality that related to the architecture.

Nigel Coates wrote in his book *Narrative Architecture*: “The term(narrative) has been absorbed in everyday culture,... But in architecture I think it has a particular meaning beyond an overarching theme. It denotes a sensibility and a way of working that sets out to incorporate human nature into its method. In pursuit of meaning rather than performance, it frames an architecture that takes account of human experiences and the need to shape them into stories. It starts and ends with how people interact first and foremost with their environment, and in the process of responding to it and yielding to it, map their experiences in a mental space that architects need to understand, and possibly make use of.” When talking about the narrative of architecture, interaction and experience is the key. It is the only way that one can have the access to the information architecture possesses, through which the purpose of architecture can be accomplished.

Therefore built environment, including architecture, is vessel. It provides space for occurrences to take place, allows people to

interact with and experience it. Focusing on the occurrences, or how does the vessel work hence becomes essential. It determines where the story goes.

What take place in the vessel depends on the people, and the variety of people gives the situation diversity. It makes architecture consist complexity and rich possibility of narrating.

“Architecture is not simply about space and form, but also about event, action, and what happens in space.” (Bernard Tschumi, 1979) *The Manhattan Transcripts* by Bernard Tschumi aimed to offer a different reading of architecture in which space, movement and events are independent, yet stand in a new relation to one another, so that the conventional components of architecture are broken down and rebuilt along different axes. This exploration shows that space, event and action could exist separately, even when the spaces, or architecture, are usually programed. In this way, architecture is defined by what happens.

For architects, it is important to have the ability to draw the physical reality and render it in order to create possibility for imagination. Architecture is not only structure with form, a functional machine, or a product of capital. It focuses on people, situations, the society and the context. This is what behind the term “architecture narrative”. Architectural narrative is not only about storytelling, but also that stimulates an awareness of living in the moment, coalesces experience, place and purpose. It's playful, pragmatic and multi-layered. (Nigel Coates, 2019)

URBAN SPACES & PROTEST MOVEMENTS

Right to the city

The movements and activities, including the ones have taken place in other places in the world than Hong Kong, are mostly uprisings against the authorities and/or capitalism, whose approach is using urban spaces to address the appeals. Some examples are the protests of 1968, Occupy Wall Street, Gezi Park protests and which happened in the same city, 2014 Hong Kong protests.

They can be seen as claims of the “right to the city”. It is an idea and a slogan that was first proposed by Henri Lefebvre in his 1968 book *Le Droit à la ville*. Lefebvre summarizes the idea as a “demand...[for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life”. David Harvey described it in *The Right to the City*, as follows:

The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights. (Harvey, 2008)

The concept evokes citizenship. For the situation in Hong Kong from a urban perspective, people have been trying to apply the concept to intervene and regulate the control from real estate capital and authority, and to transform the spaces into a status which synchronizes with the people's will (even when sometimes unconsciously). To some extent, this situation realizes the idea of “right to the city”.

The situation in Hong Kong protests

Urban spaces, especially public spaces have historically been the site of resistance and political struggles. They are spaces of mobilization and demonstration. They enable movements to take shape and become visible. (Hou, 2019)

However, Hong Kong is known for its hyper-density and land scarcity, which resulted in limited access to sanctioned public spaces for protesters. Therefore they have converted spaces of ordinary functions and activities, such as streets, shopping malls, the airport, foot bridges, underpasses, and even the LegCo chamber to the sites of resistance.

These conversions reflect creativity. Besides these “creation of ‘new’ spaces”, people have also created a sense of community. French anthropologist Marc Augé coined a neologism “non-place”, to refer to anthropological spaces of transience where the human beings remain anonymous and that do not hold enough significance to be regarded as “places”. Those spaces mentioned above can mostly be categorized as non-places. While during the movement, the behaviors of protesters as well as other citizens redefined them. For instance, they have made use of foot bridges as well as underpasses and changed them into places for exchanging opinions and making announcements, by posting informations on the walls. This communication is one of the ways of building community, which made the spaces no longer “non-places”.



Encampment at Zuccotti Park and “People's Library” with over 5,000 books, wi-fi Internet, and a reference service, often staffed by professional librarians, procuring material through the interlibrary loan system.



A sky bridge in Causeway Bay transformed by a Lennon Wall into a political space.

HETEROTOPIA



"...it is that the theater brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another;..."



"I believe that between utopias and these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place.... But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy.... The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there."

Heterotopia is a concept elaborated by philosopher Michel Foucault to describe certain cultural, institutional and discursive spaces that are somehow 'other'. In his speech *Of Other Spaces*, Foucault defined the space that we live in is "a sets of relations". No space can exist on its own, but every space exist by depending on the relation with the others. However there are some special sites which are in relation with all the others, but "in such a way as to suspend, neutralize, or invert the set of relations designated, mirrored, or reflected by them." (Foucault, 1971)

There are two main types of such spaces. One is utopia which is unreal space. It is society itself perfected, or else it is society turned upside down. The other one is heterotopia. It is realized utopia in which one can find other real spaces in the culture, but they are represented, contested and inverted. Foucault stated 6 principles of heterotopia.

1. Heterotopias exist in all cultures, and there is no universal form for them. But they can be classified in two major types: heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of deviation. The former are those that are privileged or sacred or forbidden places reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis in their societies, for instance, adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc. These heterotopias are disappearing today and are being replaced by the latter, heterotopias of deviation, in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the mean or required norm are placed. For example, rest homes, psychiatric hospitals and prisons.

2. A society can make a heterotopia that

exists function in a very different way. Each heterotopia has its function within certain society, and can alter according to the synchrony of the culture in the society.

3. The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible. A case is cinema, where on a two-dimensional screen one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space.

4. Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time—which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. Foucault took the example of cemetery, "...for the individual, the cemetery begins with this strange heterochrony, the loss of life, and with this quasi-eternity in which he incessantly dissolves and fades away. There are ones that accumulates indefinitely, like museums and libraries, and there are also ones that are transitory, precarious and flowing, such as fairgrounds and vacation villages.

5. Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable.

6. In relation to the rest of space, heterotopias have a function. This function is either creating a space of illusion that exposes and reflects all real space, or on the contrary creating another real space, as a sort of compensation.

Besides the principles stated, there is a fact discovered in this thesis, which is that one cannot recognize a heterotopia's existence when he/she is in it, but only when being outside. It is when the feature of being "other" could be perceive.

REFERENCES & CASE STUDY

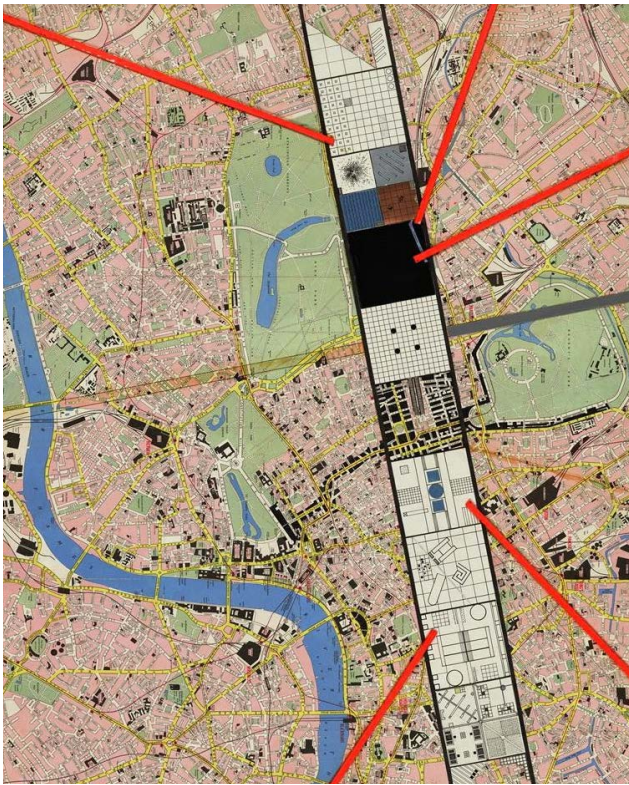
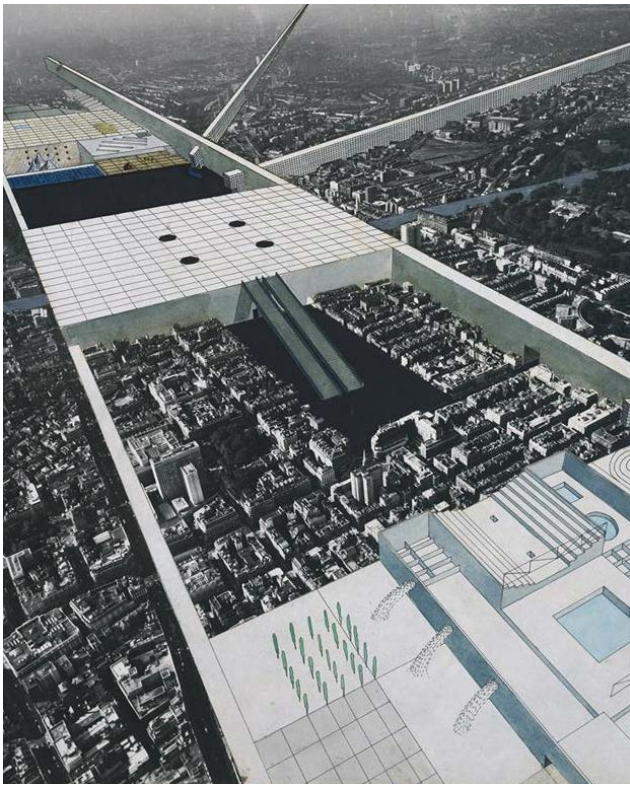
Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture

Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, Madelon Vriesendorp, Zoe Zenghelis

Intervening the society by architectural approaches and counterfactual thinking.

The thesis project at the AA School pictures a walled city within the city of London. Tall barriers cut through the urban fabric, an intervention designed to create a new urban culture invigorated by architectural innovation and political subversion. The title of the project

alludes to West Berlin's situation during the Cold War as a restricted enclave within East Germany, encircled by a forbidding wall—in effect, a prison on the scale of a metropolis, in which people sought refuge voluntarily.



Robots of Brixton

Kibwe Tavares

Studying the city by creating a story that transcribing an event.

Robots of Brixton is an architectural film project that explores the relationship between architecture, class and race. Using Brixton, (or an augmented Brixton) as backdrop, the project uses robots as metaphors for a

future intake of migrants to the UK. It acts as a commentary on the cyclical nature of the working class in areas with diverse populations such as Brixton.



David Hoffman Original Photographs 10th April 1981



Robots of Brixton 2011



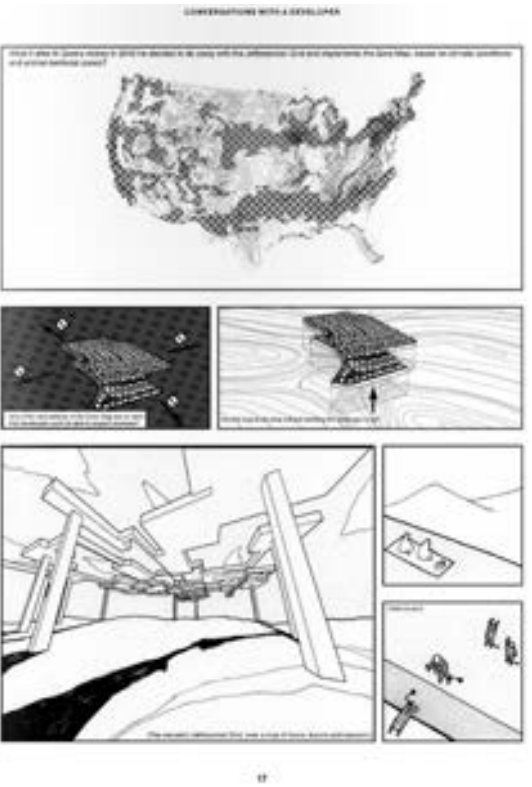
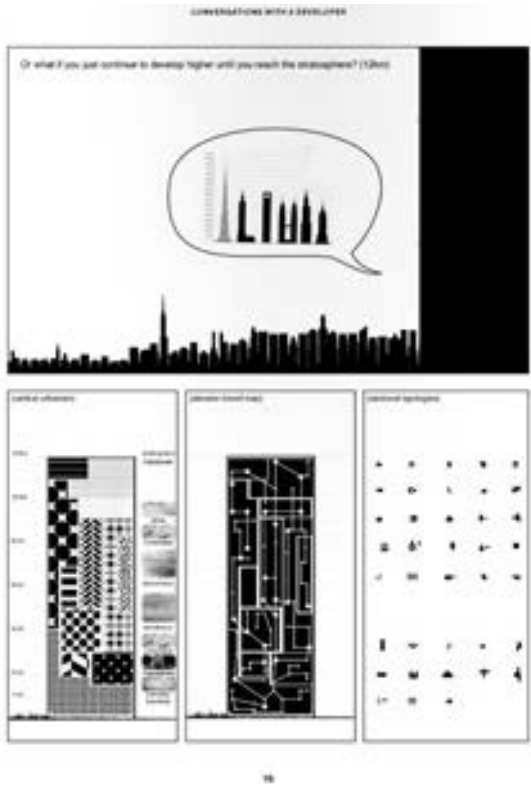
police robots face a barrage of bricks and stones on Railton road.

Citizens of no place - An architectural graphic novel
Jimenez Lai

Graphic novel on architecture and urbanism.

Inspired by the theoretical drawings of paper architects, Lai uses manga-style storyboards to explore the role of fantasy and storytelling in architecture, and in the process ushers in the next generation of theory and criticism. A

key reference for representational techniques, Citizens of No Place showcases provocative design examples for architecture studio courses at all levels.

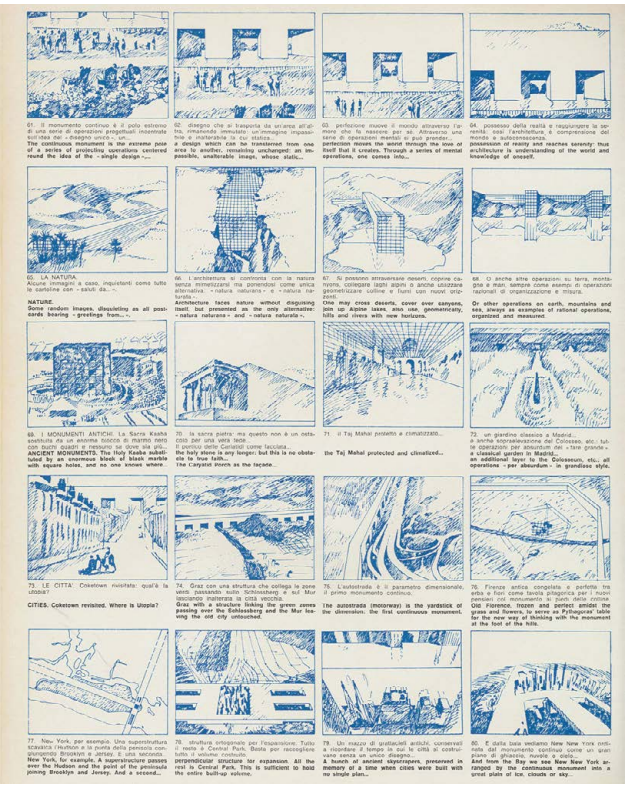
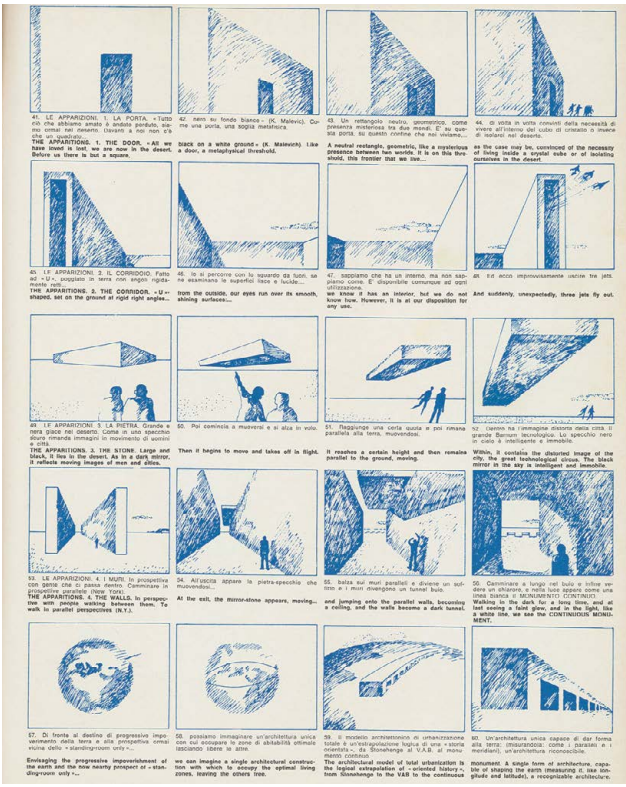


Storyboard for Audio-slideshow *The Continuous Monument*
Superstudio

Storyboarding for an architecture project

Full original title “Storyboard for a film for an American television company, MCW”), composed of a series of drawings that describe the many ways humans have applied order to their environment, the

different monuments that have resulted—from Stonehenge to modern expressways—and a story of the discovery of the Continuous Monument, a single architectural model for the total urbanization of the world.



Ghost in the Shell

Displaying a fictional city based on Hong Kong

“...In terms of street scenes and general atmosphere, it is obvious that Hong Kong is the model (Of the film). Such a choice has, of course, something to do with the theme: on the streets there flows an excess or a flood of information, along with everything this excess brings out. The modern city is swamped

with billboards, neon lights and symbols.... As people live in this information deluge, the streets will have to be depicted accordingly as being flooded.... There is a sharp contrast between old streets and new ones on which skyscrapers are built.” -Atsushi Takeuchi, Mechanical Designer of Ghost in the Shell



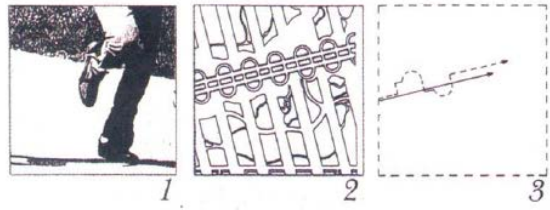
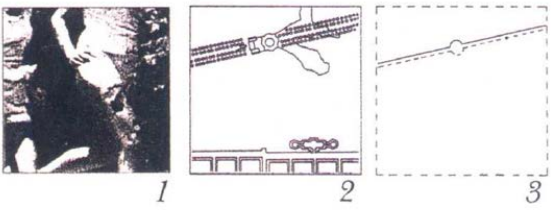
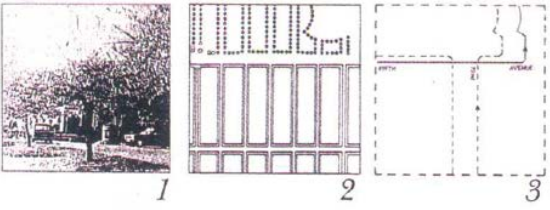
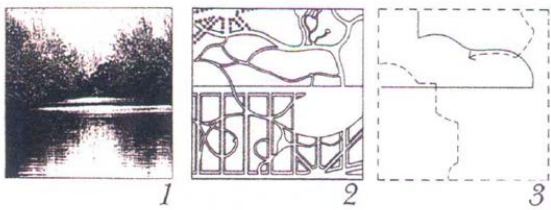
Manhattan transcript

Bernard Tschumi

Study on the relationship among space and event

The dominant theme of The Transcripts is a set of disjunctions among use, form, and social values; the non-coincidence between meaning and being, movement and space, man and object was the starting condition of the work. Yet the inevitable confrontation of these terms produced effects of far-ranging consequence.

The Transcripts aimed to offer a different reading of architecture in which space, movement and events are independent, yet stand in a new relation to one another, so that the conventional components of architecture are broken down and rebuilt along different axes.



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