Hybridisation and Branding in Chinese Museums: the case of SWCAC, Shenzhen

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ABSTRACT

In China, museums are increasingly adopting "brand collaborations"—a strategic development strategy that uses various combinations of cultural and commercial partnerships in order to build organisational capacity, gain market visibility and entice consumers. As a result, these collaborations encourage a rise in establishing long-term partnerships between international brands and local partners: from joint exhibitions, merchandising opportunities and establishing outposts. Encouraged by China's Museum Boom, the 'museum-mall' building type is also a result of brand collaborations, typically involving hybridised building programmes and partnership with world-renowned cultural institutions. Considering the role of the state in the development of museums in mainland China, museum hybridisation and the museum-mall type are not merely new marketing ploys, but they reflect the need to accommodate broader economic and political shifts, alongside a much-needed upskilling of the Chinese museum profession. However, despite their growing prevalence and popularity, little research has been done to examine them beyond the brand image and spectacle.

This study aims to address this lack of research on hybridised museums. The first objective is to better understand recent museum development in mainland China whereby hybridisation is changing the way museums are designed, marketed, and experienced. A detailed case study of the Sea World Cultural and Arts Center (SWCAC) at Sea World, Shenzhen—a partnership between Design Society and the UK's V&A Museum—offers an alternative window to view broader shifts in China. According to Design Society, this outpost model is marketed as a "totally new way of working in China". This museum-mall type houses the V&A outpost alongside hybrid building programmes: open-plan galleries, multipurpose halls, restaurants, theatres, artist workshops, and curated shops. Superficially, it is designed as a landmark building that thrives off the brand value of the partnership, but its hybrid cultural-commercial building programmes reveal a complex relationship between

the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests.

Through analysing the SWCAC, the second objective of this study centres around branding and hybridisation as theoretical tools to provide new insights into the new roles and functions of hybrid museums in mainland China. This study proposes a new theoretical framework that expands upon the existing concept of "brandscaping" but with added local context. Whilst the brandscape lacked the Chinese context, museum studies in China lacked the critical view of branding and placemaking in their current framework. Branding (notably brandscaping) will be used as the overarching lens that generalises the phenomenon of hybridised museums in China. Meanwhile, hybridisation will be used to examine the invisible and visible drivers that contribute to SWCAC's development, namely: (i) transnational actors, (ii) cultural-commercial building functions, and (iii) place- and city branding. Each theme is concerned with the three different types of hybridisation that are unique to the Chinese context.

Findings show how cultural venues have been hybridising since China's Open Door Policy, making museum partnerships and brand collaborations less novel than they seem. However, the hybridising factors show how these transnational activities visibly impacted the way museums in China are designed for and redefined by local consumption, making it important to the diversity of 'the culture of museum'. Overall, findings based on the SWCAC present a new kind of cultural venue that blurs institutional structures (between the state and private) and yet, retain powerful localising factors. Thus, a new theoretical model is created from multiple and formerly exclusive theories based on the shape of museum development in the Chinese context. Because of the shared localising factors, this study is not limited to museum development in China, but can also other cultural venues, shopping malls, and megaprojects. Future studies ought to reconsider viewing future transnational cultural projects as a process that is beyond its superficial façade and brand value, but also look at the localising forces that shape design and new ideologies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SWCAC	Sea World Cultural and Arts Center
CMG	China Merchants Group
CMSK	China Merchants Shekou Group
V&A	The Victoria and Albert Museum
CCP	The Chinese Communist Party
CPC	Communist Party of China
PRC	The People's Republic of China
BRI	China's Belt and Road Initiative
ICOM	International Committee of Museums
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UCCN	UNESCO Creative City Network
SDPA	Shenzhen City of Design Promotion Association
SACH	State Administration of Cultural Heritage
SASAC	State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics of China
P2P	People-to-people
FCO	The UK's Foreign Commonwealth Office
DIT	The UK's Department of International Trade
DCMS	The UK's Department for Culture, Media and Sport
SOE	China's State-owned Enterprise
SEZ	Special Economic Zone

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION TO PART 1

Containing Chapters 1 and 2, Part 1 is an introductory section that sets the need to examine new museum development in China through a single case study, the Sea World Cultural and Arts Center [SWCAC]. Chapter 1 establishes the local context that the SWCAC operates in, along with the unique traits (branding and hybridising) of the case study with consideration to the varied interests: the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests. Based on key observations, the research gaps are identified. This is followed by establishing the aims of the thesis, the key research questions, the methods used, and key background information that can enrich the study on hybrid museums in China.

Based on the research gaps and lack of theoretical understanding of hybrid museums like the SWCAC, Chapter 2 proposes a theoretical framework that examines the phenomenon of hybridising museums through a combination of branding and hybridising concepts. This will result in the development of a localised application of the 'brandscape' and hybridisation in the creation of new hybrid museums in China.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE THESIS

1.1 Introduction

In China, "brand collaborations" have dominated the fast-changing, consumer market, often involving international brands or cultural institutions with local brands or partners (Content Commerce Insider, 2020). Also known as "crossovers" (kuàjìng [跨界] or kuàquān [跨圈]), this major marketing trend uses extreme tactics or collaborations to draw attention and entice consumers (ibid.). Its popularity sometimes relies on extreme tactics that are sometimes bizarre and unconventional, e.g. KFC's fried-chicken Crocs sandals. Museums in China have also adopted brand collaborations in their marketing strategies. In addition to China's "Museum Boom" (Zhang and Courty, 2021), museum collaborations encourage a rise in establishing long-term partnerships with Chinese brands and partners, including tactics such as joint exhibitions, merchandising opportunities and establishing outposts. The 'museum-mall' building type is also a result of brand collaborations, arguably relying on generating buzz and creating spectacles through signature architecture and hybridised building programmes.

The Sea World Cultural and Arts Center [SWCAC] [海上世界文化艺术中心] in Shekou, Shenzhen (Figure 1) is one such hybrid museum in China, manifested as a museum-mall building type. This "first major museum of design" (V&A Museum, 2014) is the outcome of a high-profile collaboration between the UK's Victoria and Albert Museum [V&A] and Design Society, a cultural hub supported by China Merchant Shekou Group [CMSK]—a subsidiary of a state-owned enterprise [SOE] directly managed by the central government, China Merchants Group [CMG]. This collaboration marks the V&A's first "overseas outpost" (Tsui, 2017) and its "first international gallery" (V&A Museum, no date a; Braidwood, 2017) outside the UK— the V&A Gallery at SWCAC is designed by Sam Jacobs Studio. As the museum-mall type implies, the SWCAC's building programme is also home to open-plan exhibition spaces, multipurpose halls, furniture shops, cafés, restaurants, artist

workshops, and educational institutions. Superficially, it is designed as a landmark building that thrives off the brand value of the partnership, but behind the brand image and spectacle are underlying complexities that reflect how 'the museum' (as a cultural institution and business) reflects broader changes in mainland China.

SWCAC's building type challenges the very definition of the museum, as the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests are intertwined, resulting in a hybrid space that is neither a museum nor a mall. On a superficial level, the partnership provides financial and network opportunities for foreign institutions, a gateway into the Chinese market, merchandising, and much publicity. The reality is that these projects work within a larger urban and city development plan, e.g. The Shekou Model, Shanghai West Bund Cultural Corridor, and more. They typically take the form of signature buildings made by brand-name actors, whose influences are both visible and invisible to the public view. Museums like the SWCAC facilitate a variety of choreographed (and commercial) events within wider city branding practices (McNeill, 2000; Klingmann, 2007; Plaza, Tironi and Haarich, 2009)—permeating urban experiences and public cultures.

However, despite the growing popularity of museum hybridisation, very little research has been done to examine the underlying entanglements that produce these spaces in the context of wider systems. Considering the role of the state in the development of museums in mainland China, hybridised museums and the museum-mall type are not merely new marketing ploys, but reflect broader economic and political shifts (Lu, 2014; Varutti 2014).

Figure 1. The view of the SWCAC from the waterfront route (own photo).
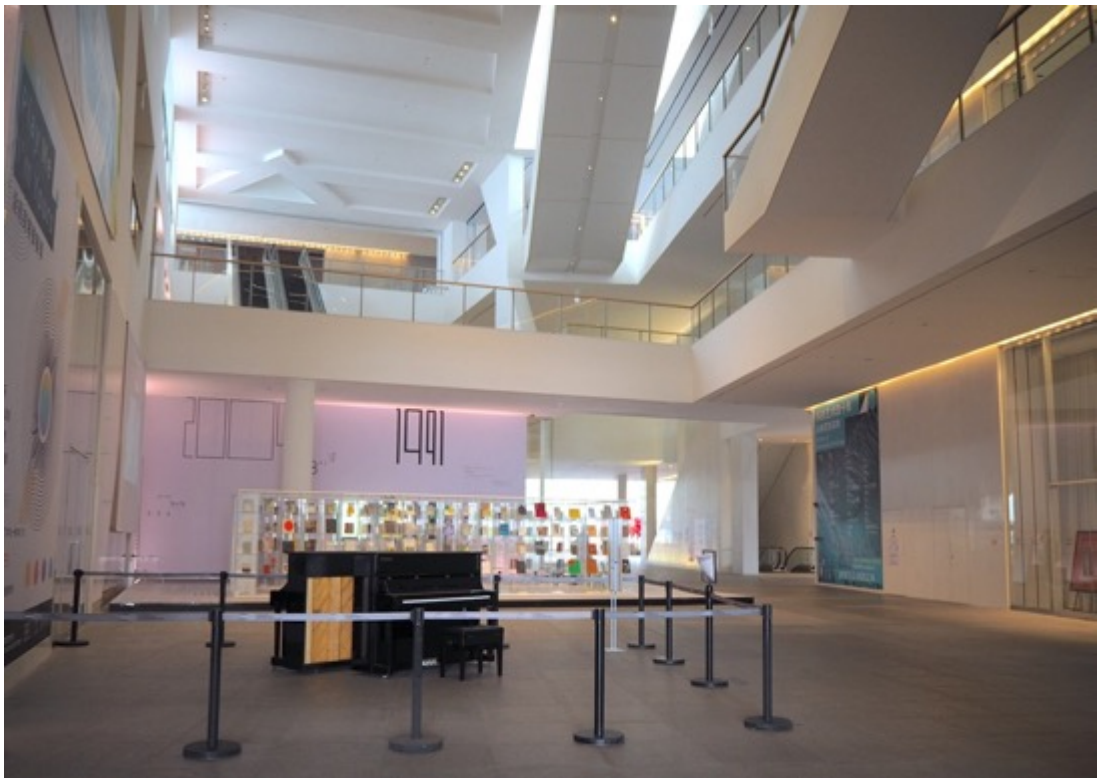
Figure 2. Inside the SWCAC, the Central Plaza (own photo).

Figure 3. The view from the SWCAC's rooftop where Sea World Plaza can be seen across the road (own photo).

As a hybrid museum, the commercial nature of the SWCAC utilises local and international brand-name actors to develop its added value. Designed by world-renowned Japanese architect Maki and Associates, this cultural hub is developed as part of a large-scale, multi-use development at Sea World [海上世界]. Both the SWCAC and the nearby Sea World Plaza—an outdoor entertainment and shopping area designed by US architecture firm CallisonRTKL—as two of Shenzhen's popular tourist attractions (Figure 3). Together, they form the place brand of Sea World—a symbolically and historically important site for CMG's Shekou Model and Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Open Door Policy.

Meanwhile, the partnership between Design Society and the V&A has three, less visible hybrid functions. First, the V&A outpost is marketed as a "totally new way of working in China" (Design Society, 2017a, p.17). As one of the products of the "golden era of UK-China partnership" (First Strategic Insight, 2015), the V&A outpost functions as a cultural tool for national-level diplomacy and global city production. This suggests that SWCAC is conceived through a dominantly top-down approach; however, closer inspection of other key actors involved, reveals an ambiguous relationship between the state and non-state, the local and global, and private and public interests. Like the establishment of satellite museums (e.g. the

Guggenheim Bilbao), the outpost model is "driven by different motivations than the traditional art exchange and involves a different constellation of actors" (Goff, 2017). It shares the ability to exercise political, cultural, and commercial power. In this view, museums like the SWCAC resemble a transnational actor (Welsch, 1999; Saunier, 2013; Goff, 2017). This observation suggests a more flexible approach is needed to view high-profile hybrid museums in China.

Second, the SWCAC's museum-mall building type is a result of the partnership between Design Society and the V&A Museum (although this type is not exclusive to the outpost model). Outwardly, the landmark building contributes to the place brand of Shekou, but underlying complexities are revealed through its hybrid building programme. The SWCAC is designed to incorporate cultural and commercial programmes within the museum space, thus challenging traditional museum types. Labelled as a "Museum-Theatre-Retail" (Maki and Associates, 2012), the SWCAC's building programme is designed as a kind of "fluid architecture" (Klingmann, 2007) that has dominant elements of a museum and a mall (with a minor theatre component), cultural and commercial functions, and local and global interests. Based on site observations made in December 2019, each store is carefully curated with intentions "to promote our design spirit and encourage the public to make, create and connect with design" (Design Society, 2020b, p.68). Given the cultural-commercial programmes, the SWCAC's exhibition spaces simply become one of many attractions rather than the main attraction. Although the SWCAC's building programme is not novel, the growing luxury market and brand collaborations in China coincide with an increased interest in 'market-driven' museums (Marstine, 2006).

Thirdly, the brand of SWCAC is integrated into wider place- and city branding strategies, in ways that are only possible because it is supported by an SOE and the local municipal government. Studies do historicise Chinese museums within the general political and economic framework, but they do not take into account

specific local contexts that also affect their design processes and production. In the Shenzhen context, the SWCAC is designed with the intention of complementing the city-brand—known for its miraculous urban transformation from a fishing village, to post-Mao's experimental Special Economic Zone [SEZ], then to a "model city" (O'Donnell, Wong and Bach, 2017) and, more recently, its designation as UNESCO Creative City Network's [UCCN] City of Design—all in a span of forty years. The contrast with the nearby Sea World Plaza shows the relationship between museum architecture production and the city with that of wider economic and global systems (Lefebvre, 1991; Sassen, 2001; Wu F., 2005; Ren, 2011). Both cultural venues (i.e. the SWCAC) and commercial areas (i.e. Sea World Plaza) function as signs synonymous with the growth of urbanising and globalising Chinese cities (Friedmann, 2005; Giebelhausen, 2006; Campanella, 2008; Lu, 2014). With Shenzhen being regarded as China's "poster city" (O'Donnell, Wong and Bach, 2017, p.3). The SWCAC at Sea World is a pivotal case study that sets the trend for similar outpost models or hybrid museums in other Chinese cities.

The study is intrigued by the various hybrid factors that shape much of SWCAC's production process, spatial experience and overall brand image. There is currently no single framework that can best express the process of hybridisation observed at the SWCAC. It can be framed through the lens of branding, museum studies, placemaking, etc., but they tend to be mutually exclusive. In order to better understand the process of hybridisation in Chinese museums, a new theoretical framework is needed to reposition these collaborations beyond their impressive facades and brand value. National identity, legitimisation of the past, and associated urban memories would all play a role in contributing to the hybrid museum narrative.

The initial research interests stemmed from a different starting point; early findings were centred around the copycat or "duplitecture" culture (Bosker, 2007) based on previous research done during undergraduate and masters levels at University College London [UCL]. Whilst architecture replication is not uniquely Chinese, the extent in which entire landmarks or townships are replicated have blurred the 'real'

with the simulated "alien" experiences (Bosker, 2013). At the same time, they have been readapted and redefined by local factors, giving them new symbolic values. The notorious examples range from a knockoff Zaha Hadid Wangjing SOHO building (Platt, 2012) to a replica of a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] heritage town of Hallstatt, Austria (Spiegel, 2011). My previous research looked beyond the copycat trends and argued that China's different idea of 'the copy' and, the social, political and economic factors are enablers of the trend. Whilst recent policies had discouraged these "weird" architecture from expanding (Bosker, 2016; Li, 2016), this seemed to have opened new avenues for brand collaborations and museum partnerships to engage in the import and export of cultural products, in credible and legitimate ways. Recent projects like the replica of Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon at San Weng in Fuzhou (a partnership celebrated by the UK's Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust and Fuzhou Municipal Government) is another copycat town, but is legitimised by the involvement of the UK's cultural institution (Morris, 2016).

Early research examined copyright issues on the protection of architecture in China, but it had limitations, a subjective nature, and legal complications in the field. However, early research maintained interests in the involvement of the transnational actors or international cultural institutions in some of these high-profile projects, giving them brand value. What diverted this research's attention towards the SWCAC were the same localised conditions (economic and political) that made these hybridised museums possible. With branding as a constant factor, attention was paid towards a new model of museum drawn from the Chinese context, and in the process of importing and exporting cultures, is expected to impact the way museums are designed in the future. Hence, the need to create a new framework that is formed by multiple theories against the localising factors to better explain the shape of museum development in China.
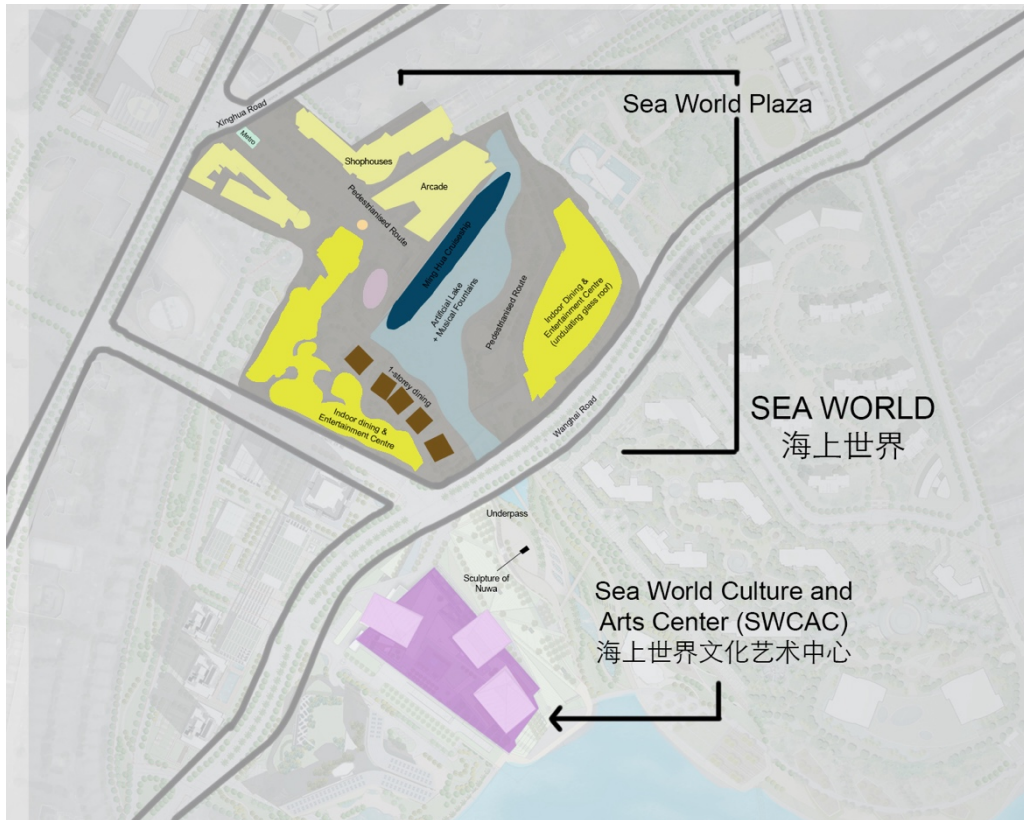
Figure 4. Own annotated plan of Sea World (including Sea World Plaza and the SWCAC).

i.   The aims of the thesis

The main aim of this study is to look beyond the façade of these hybridised museums in China, namely through various types of hybridisation that are redefining the expectations of the 'museum' itself. The hybrid museum in this context is more than a 'museum': it is a malleable tool that has flexibility and connectivity to the history of the 'place', the city, and to the rest of the world. This suggests that a new framework is required to reconsider the new functions of museums within a localised setting. Currently, there are no suitable frameworks capable of situating the phenomenon of hybridising museums in the Chinese context.

To achieve this, this study combines Anna Klingmann's concept of the "brandscape" (2007), with studies that look into the origins and development of museums in mainland China. In offering new insights, this study finds the concept (a combination of branding practices and placemaking) appropriate in conveying the increasing importance of branding practices and hybridisation in recently-opened museums. Although Klingmann cites many examples of brandscapes in her book, it lacks historicisation of cases, a clear theoretical framework and examples of brandscapes in Asia. Moreover, as a book published in 2007, Klingmann's ideas cannot fully comprehend current museum trends in mainland China (the SWCAC was completed in 2017).

In line with Tracey L-D Lu (2014) and Marzia Varutti (2014)—scholars who examine the different phases of museum development in China using a historical and anthropological framework—the increasing popularity of hybrid museums, cultural collaborations and the museum-mall building type point towards a transitional phase reflecting economic and political changes. Studies on the establishment and development of museums in mainland China tend to focus on stylistic changes, formation of national identity, preserving cultural heritage, new technologies and political representation, but increasing branding and placemaking practices are barely seen beyond superficial value. Whilst Klingmann's brandscape lacked the

Chinese context, current museum studies in China lacked the critical view of branding and placemaking in its current framework. Combining the two will add to the limited research on current museum partnerships in China and achieve both aims of this study through better understanding of the process of hybridisation between the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests. The result is possibly a localised brandscape that works for China.

The secondary aim of this study sees that the museum "is no longer a 'museum' but something new, yet related to the 'museum'" (Marstine, 2006, p.19). The multifunctional building programme at SWCAC is one of such examples. Where Covid-19 has upended many museums' established business models around the world (Garlandini, 2021; Pasqualci, 2021), finding a "totally new way of working in China" (Design Society, 2017a, p.17) can support museum partnerships, cultural collaborations and new networks through hybrid museums. Through the case of the SWCAC, the result of the partnership looks like another megaproject, but its raison d'être proposes new ways to thrive in the Chinese market and interests by utilising the international cultural brand names and non-local actors to develop its added value.

Following Lu's (2014) and Varutti's (2014) historical framework of museums, the study observes that museums in China are evolving and responding to suit current economic and political changes. The museum is reflective of these new meanings and underlying value systems. The hybrid museum described at SWCAC could be seen in light of the "post-museum" (as a part of new museum theory) that acknowledges clear articulation of "its agendas, strategies and decision-making processes and continually re-evaluates them in a way that acknowledges the politics of representation" (Marstine, 2006, p.19). The 'post-museum' listens and responds to diverse needs; it locates itself in the Chinese context whereby the shape of museum development is focused on the economic benefits, commercial opportunities and publicity over the need to develop critical voices in museology (Macleod et al., 2018).

Thus far, section 1.1 established a need to better understand recent museum hybridisation and museum collaboration in mainland China, based on initial observations at the SWCAC. This case study can be used as a mirror to understand broader changes in mainland China. In observing increasing high-profile collaborations with international brands and development of museum-mall building types, the subsection, *i. The aims of the thesis,* establishes another need to establish a localised brandscape for the Chinese context and to reconsider the process of hybridisation from multiple sources, since current frameworks cannot fully express the underlying complexities beneath the market-driven façade of the hybrid museum.

The following research questions consider the initial site observations and research gaps. With (i) the SWCAC as the main case study, and (ii) branding and hybridisation as tools to view broader changes in China, the study can be made niche:

1. How and to what extent do hybridisation and branding practices at SWCAC add to the limited studies of hybrid museums in mainland China, particularly through high-profile transnational collaborations?

2. In the process of manifesting brand-name actors' interests, what can the different modes of hybridisation (transnational organisational collaboration; overlapping cultural and commercial activities; and the local and global interests) at and around SWCAC reveal about the new roles and functions of museums in mainland China?

Firstly, to clarify, different modes of hybridisation can be used to comprehend the phenomena at SWCAC, but the main inspiration is partly inspired by postcolonial theory. The use of the term "hybrid" mainly draws upon Homi Bhabha's seminal book, *The Location of Culture* (2004), as main inspiration. The concept of "hybridity" is mentioned in a brief autobiographical account of Bhabha's experiences as a

migrant in the UK. Ethnically Parsi, neither Hindu nor Muslim, Bhabha argues that the Parsis have been "hybridised" over the centuries, adopting British traditions as colonised subjects of the British empire. He stresses that culture is varied and dynamic but despite adopting British traditions and education, they are still "neither here, nor there" (Hernández, 2010, p.10). Whilst Bhabha's ideas from this postcolonial discourse seem relevant—e.g. the ambivalence, the cultural hybrid, inclusion and exclusion—this study does not examine the architectural production based on the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser. The use of 'hybrid' in this study does not focus on the interrogation of colonial authority and marginalised voices. Instead, its main interests lie in the interaction of cultures comprised of multiple histories and subjective positions, to develop better understanding of non-western architecture.

Architecture, including building produced by non-Western architects, has always been historicised and theorised in relation to the Western canon of architecture history. Bhabha's ideas of cultural hybridity dismisses the traditional binary structure (e.g. East-West) or framework, and sees hybridisation as a means for the agents in power to give culture renewed meanings. In this study, the process of hybridisation at SWCAC can be seen as mutation—a hybrid space "that represents the constant, never-ending process of cultural interaction through which cultures continue to exist" (Hernandez, 2010, p.58). As advocated by Bhabha, the idea of hybridisation "opens up a 'space' of cultural negotiation where power continues to be unequal", but it creates conditions for other voices to emerge and to be heard (ibid., p.761).

The types of hybridisation (transnational organisational collaboration, overlapping cultural and commercial activities, and local and global interests) have been identified and embedded in research question 2. They would later become important to the overall thesis structure and theoretical framework. The biggest difference is that the study is conscious of the presence of 'the brand' at every stage of production—as observed from the convening of transnational actors, to the construction of hybrid museum architecture and transformation of 'place'.

Because the overarching theme of branding strings together the various hybridisations, branding will be used as the constant variable that answers the research questions and achieve the research aims.

1.2 Thesis structure

The thesis structure supports the need to create a new framework to better understand the hybrid museums in China. To fulfil the research aims, the single case study of the SWCAC at Sea World will be used to define and generalise hybrid museums, and their relationship to broader changes in mainland China. However, as China's "first major museum of design" (V&A Museum, 2014) and the V&A's "first overseas outpost" (Tsui, 2017), the SWCAC is marketed as a new idea that challenges the traditional expectations of a 'museum'.

There are three Parts to this thesis: Part 1 contains this *Chapter 1: Introducing the Thesis* and *Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework*; Part 2 is catered to the three levels of hybridisation: *Chapter 3: The Transnational Actors, Chapter 4: The Cultural-commercial Hybrid* and *Chapter 5: Place branding Sea World and 'Shekou's Story'*; Part 3 contains *Chapter 6: Discussion* and *Chapter 7: Conclusion*, and *Bibliography*. The main body of the thesis is split into two key areas: (i) The proposed theoretical framework of Chaper 2 of Part 1 centres around brandscaping and hybridisation, and (ii) Part 2's analysis of the SWCAC (containing Chapters 3, 4 and 5), where the framework is applied. Specific to research question 2, Part 2 is based on the three different levels of hybridisation found at SWCAC.

The following flow diagram shows (i) how each Part is divided and structured, (ii) the order in which this study is read, and (iii) how the three themes of hybridisation are mirrored in Part 2's three chapters:

PART 1
Hybridisation and Branding in Chinese Museums

Chapter 1: Introducing the Thesis

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Brandscaping + History of Museum Development in China

Three Levels of Hybridisation

PART 2
SWCAC through Three Levels of Hybridisation

Transnational Actors

Chapter 3: Transnational Actors

Cultural-commercial Building Functions

Chapter 4: The Cultural-commercial Hybrid

Place- and City-branding

Chapter 5: Place-branding Sea World and "Shekou's Story"

PART 3
Final Discussion

Chapter 6: Discussion

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Figure 5. Thesis structure.

Part 1's Chapter 1 serves as an introductory chapter that sets the context; it identifies its aims, research gaps, research questions, thesis structure, methods, background and site context. The most important chapter to Part 1 is *Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework*, which sets the structural basis of this study and develops a new framework to analyse hybrid museums and museum collaborations in China.

Through early observations of the SWCAC, branding and hybridisation stand out as two distinctive traits in a high-profile hybrid museum. Chapter 2 will review both Klingmann's concept of the 'brandscape' (2007) and studies that look at the current "phase of museum development" in mainland China (Lu, 2014; Varutti, 2014). The former lacks the inclusion of brandscaping in the Chinese context, whilst the latter lacks a critical view of branding practices innate in hybrid museums. This chapter identifies their individual research gaps. Considering the unique state and political context of China, the combination is based on the premise that museums in China share the same economic and political factors, and subsequently process of

developing museums. Here, a localised form of brandscaping is the constant variable used to examine museums like the SWCAC.

Meanwhile, the latter half of Chapter 2 will focus on the three types of hybridisation, which is where the main structure of Part 2 takes after. If the development of the museum brand is seen as the constant variable, then hybridisation can be seen as different variables that will differ according to each hybrid museum. Chapter 2 further breaks down the process of hybridisation in hybrid museums in three ways: (i) transnational actors, (ii) cultural-commercial building functions, and (iii) place- and city branding. Each one has their own key texts but together, they can be used to examine the complexities and invisible layers behind museums like the SWCAC. And finally, to justify a need for this overall framework, descriptions of early museum-mall building types in China prove how SWCAC's hybridisation is not an anomaly.

The above three-part sequence will serve as the main structure for Part 2. Part 2, *Chapter 3*: *The Transnational Actors,* presents the SWCAC as a hybrid museum and a transnational actor in its own right (Goff, 2017). Because of the Design Society and V&A partnership, the hybrid museum is designed to facilitate interactions between the state and non-state, the local and global, and private and public interests. It argues for a "totally new way of working in China" (Design Society, 2017a, p.17) but the chapter challenges this statement to see if the hybrid museum (represented by the SWCAC) is truly something new or a variation of the same kind of museum conceived from China's dominantly state-led museum development. The chapter's key interest lies the way the partnership and SWCAC are represented in official publications by the following key actors: CMG, Design Society and the V&A Museum partnership, and Maki and Associates. Through understanding the underlying narratives behind the brand image of the SWCAC, the chapter will investigate how local and transnational actors may exercise political, cultural and commercial power (if at all).

Chapter 4: The Cultural-commercial Hybrid, will examine the SWCAC through analysis of its hybrid cultural-commercial programmes, or in its form as a museum-mall. As high-profile museum collaborations indicate a growing interest in China's museum sector, the market-driven environment has encouraged a growth of highly choreographed and curated cultural-commercial spaces: open venue spaces, ballrooms, dining, merchandise store. The museum-mall type at SWCAC highlights the conflicts between the 'shrine-like' museum (traditional Foucauldian concept) with 'market-driven' museum (Marstine, 2006). This chapter's key interests lie in the rationale behind its multifunctionality and the museum-mall type as answer "to promote our design spirit and encourage the public to make, create and connect with design" (Design Society, 2020b, p.68). It investigates the overlapping interests of the key actors manifest in a "new oxymoron that erase former incompatibilities" (Koolhaas, 2002, cited in Klingmann 2007, p.124).

Chapter 5: Place branding Sea World and 'Shekou's Story', is set in contrast to the curated and orderly SWCAC. Arguably an extension of the museum, Sea World Plaza consists of multiple "spectacles" (Eco, 1986; Baudrillard, 1994) and "signs" (Venturi, Brown and Izenour, 1997) that CMG uses to project Shekou's Story and the Shekou Model. This chapter observes the phases of urban development at Sea World over the decades, documented in CMG's publications and exhibited at Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening, SWCAC. It also draws attention towards the museum's relationship with 'place' and the city. The chapter is especially interested in the conflicting images of faux-Western shopfronts, global brands and urban amenities used as a part of a "showcase window" (Xin and Leng, 2020) to promote the wider place association with Deng's Reform and CMG's Shekou Model.

And finally, this study's closes with Part 3. It contains *Chapter 6: Discussion* and *Chapter 7: Conclusion*. Since the SWCAC is split into three distinctive levels of hybridisation, *Chapter 6* is a chapter that discusses these themes as overlapping traits. Based on key findings in Part 2, the chapter returns to the main aims and research questions of the study by addressing (i) how the localised brandscape

contributes to current museum frameworks and, (ii) what new insights have been discovered from the three levels of hybridisation at SWCAC. And finally, *Chapter 7: Conclusion* would briefly summarise the thesis, the study's limitations and speculation for future research. Part 3 will end with a *Bibliography*.

1.3 Methodology

The following justifies the research methodology best suited for Part 2, where Chapter 2's proposed framework is applied to examine the SWCAC. It is examined through qualitative and case study-based methods. This study extends across various disciplines but the focus is on architecture, museum and cultural studies. Because the highlight of this study includes a new theoretical framework to understand hybrid museums in China, the subjective and flexible nature of qualitative research is most suitable for this interdisciplinary research. It also allows findings to be contested and challenged by other future research. In contrast, quantitative methods cannot fully express the visible, experiential and real-life events at the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza.

This study establishes the importance of branding—Klingmann's concept of the brandscape (2007)—in the theoretical framework and also site analysis. To support this brand-centred study, semiotic theory (the study of signs) will be used to analyse the denotation and connotation, functional and symbolic meanings present in the architectural forms at the SWCAC and Sea World.

It is clear that this is a case study research project. The case study approach also has the ability to utilise a variety of sources including first-hand site observations, photographic documentation, and architectural drawings. The detailed examination of the SWCAC can provide useful information about hybrid museums and museum collaborations in general, and the local context they operate in. SWCAC's museum-mall building type will be the main object of study, as the museum is used as mediating tool between a local state actor and an international cultural institution. Although this study will occasionally compare the SWCAC with similar cases, the main text will only focus on a single case study rather than multiple samples since the aim is to create a new theoretical framework rather than finding a frequency or pattern.

In Bent Flyvbjerg's *Five Misunderstandings About Case Study Research* (2010), problems about case study research can be summarised into five misunderstandings. Conventional views of the case study method seem to provide an oversimplified and grossly misleading idea that it only has value during preliminary stages of an investigation or pilot studies. He argued that a well-chosen case can provide a nuanced view of reality, a closeness to real-life situations and better understanding of the human behaviour or a group of people.

The other misunderstanding of the case study method is the view that "one cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development" (Flyvbjerg, 2010). To an extent, this study does generalise hybrid museums and high-profile museum collaborations in mainland China through the SWCAC. Branding (namely brandscaping) practices will be the constant variable of the framework, whereby the process of hybridisation in recently-opened museums can be generalised since historical frameworks of museums in China suggest that they operate the same social, economic and political system (Lu, 2014; Varutti, 2014). In expanding this misunderstanding, Flybjerg (2010) argues that a single case study can be useful for scientific

development via generalisation as supplement or alternative to other methods. It can be used as an alternate means to test, to generate verification or falsification of a theory. Findings may also provide a new hypothesis. The other is maximising the information from a single critical case, based on the premise that the same concerns are likely to exist at other museums.

However, the SWCAC is marketed as a unique partnership and early example of an outpost model, therefore cannot be used as a representative sample for all museums in China. The collaboration at the SWCAC can be described as a "least likely" case best suited "to test for verification" (Flyvbjerg, 2010, p. 233). It suggests testing and verifying my proposed theoretical framework with an objective to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on the museum phenomenon. Atypical and unique cases like the SWCAC can reveal much more information instead of using typical or average cases. In short, this study will maximise both its generalising and unique qualities that single case study methods can provide.

However, there is a limit to the data that I can obtain for the SWCAC. This study is based on personal experience and photographic documentation from a site visit in December 2019. Due to Covid-19, I have not returned to China since leaving the country in February 2020. Because of this limitation, I am not able to conduct ethnographic type studies, engage with visitors, or conduct fieldwork that requires a longer period of time. However, this study benefits from sufficient online texts published on key actors' websites: exhibition catalogues, book publications, annual reports, government reports, press releases, and more.

ii.   Architectural drawings and plans

As described by Simon Unwin in *20 Buildings Every Architecture Understand* (2010, p.3), "the only way to understand architecture is through the medium used in its creation—drawing." On a practical level, architectural drawing (whether on paper or computer screen) is a medium of communication with clients, construction workers, collaborators, and so forth. Architectural drawings and plans will enable a better understanding of the building and thought processes behind their conception—"it puts the reader in the position of the architect" (ibid., p.4). In an article on architectural drawing as a medium for analysis, Unwin (2007, p.101) describes the architect as "the mind that gives intellectual structure to a building"; therefore, architectural drawings can be used for communicative and analytical purposes. As a form of intellectual activity, architectural drawings can provide insight into the actors that conceive them.

Because of the high-profile nature of the Design Society and V&A collaboration, architectural drawings (including floor plans and sections) are uploaded on Maki and Associate's and Design Society's websites. Together with my own photos and maps available online, the drawings are given better context in relation to the case study method. To support certain observations of the museum and 'place', some architectural drawings and maps will be annotated, colour-coded and customised (where necessary).

The process of developing the SWCAC offers a wide range of materials for study: from the planning stages, joint missions, design, brand development, and more. Text (in general) serves as an important source to evaluate SWCAC's brand image and Sea World's place brand. Branding as marketing device is primarily seen as two-dimensional, but as argued in Klingmann's *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy* (2007), architecture and urban planning increasingly employ branding as part of a larger marketing strategy and to adapt to a market-driven environment. Therefore, how hybrid museums in China are promoted may provide new insights into the museum's changing roles and functions.

As a high-profile museum collaboration, the SWCAC benefits from many online text sources, photographic images, and architecture drawings. Websites (as a research method) often provide basic information and may "offer a glimpse into the museum's inner workings, including mission or director's statements, conservation efforts and even curators' journal or books for specific projects" (Marstine, 2006, p.30). Since branding (i.e. SWCAC's brand development, brand image, marketing texts, and place branding) will be used as a lens to examine hybridised museums in China, the way the project is marketed and promoted by key actors also reveals much information regarding the invisible, underlying layers of hybridisation. Attention is paid towards certain keywords and the overall narrative of key marketing texts. In doing so, it reveals the shared patterns and different aims of the key actors, namely CMG, Design Society, V&A Museum, Maki and Associates, and the Nanshan District Government.

The SWCAC is a UK-China collaboration based in China; therefore, both English and Chinese sources are part of the text analysis. However, the focus leans towards English or bilingual texts because my Chinese level is not competent for reading difficult and specialised texts (e.g. government reports, newspaper articles, history books, and more). Although this could be considered as a limitation at first, the high-profile nature of the SWCAC encourages that online publications and

information be available in English as well. Therefore, obtaining information on the SWCAC is not limited in anyway.

When the study introduces relevant street names, sites, and places, this study will include the official English name, as well as the simplified Chinese characters in […], when relevant. The study also includes hànyǔ pīnyīn [汉语拼音], which is the official romanisation system for Standard Mandarin Chinese in mainland China. However, this research is primarily focused on English-readers so this study will ensure that some Chinese names and characters are explained based on the presumption that readers do not understand the language. When English titles and texts are not available, the official Chinese title or quote will be loosely translated into English. That way a distinction can be made between a Chinese text over an English text. This approach will allow some flexibility in language, as street or building names in China also have English names that do not necessarily match in pīnyīn or meaning.

a. Semiotic Theory

To supplement the case study method and texts, semiotic theory is considered. Semiotics is viewed as "a system of signs that makes up a text" (Berger, 2004, p.6). At a surface value, 'signs' can take different forms: material culture, performances, music, etc., and, fundamentally, convey meaning. This concept is later extended in Jean Baudrillard's (1994) and Umberto Eco's (1986) studies of hyperreality, and extended to encompass architecture and the built environment. Disneyland and Las Vegas would be two of the most famous examples.

Although this will not be a dominant mode of analysis, semiotics analysis complements this study's interest in the role of SWCAC's brand image and branding practices for the collaboration. As the brand is a 'sign', the search for its underlying meanings (developed by key actors) is crucial to museum collaborations in China. In *Function and Sign: Semiotics of Architecture* (2014), Eco applies his understanding of semiotics theory to architecture and the built environment. Eco (ibid., p.182)

argues that architecture "is subject to a variety of readings, to the vicissitudes of communication, by designing for variable primary functions and open secondary functions". Simply put, architecture (in general) is primarily a functional object that houses and shelters, but its secondary functions work as symbolic objects. However, the symbolic meaning of architecture varies since no individual and no culture see it the same way. An example is the 'seat' and the 'throne' analogy: both serves the same function 'to sit'; however, the throne serves a symbolic function that connotes seating a person of a certain dignity.

In *Elements of Semiology* (Barthes, 1967, cited in Moustafa, 1988), architecture is seen as a cultural product "and its meaning is understood when we study architecture as a cultural system, a system of signs, through which people identify with their environment". With this in mind, the study acknowledges that the museum (as a sign) will have different meanings ascribed to it depending on geographical context. This supports the need for developing a new theoretical framework in Chapter 2, since mainstream museum studies cannot fully express the growing interest in hybrid museums in mainland China, whose origins and history of museum development are different.

In a historical and ethnographical framework to understand museums in China, Lu found that the primary function (denotation) of early museums is "to educate the public in order to help the 'modernization' of the country" (2014, p.199). In ways that differed from its Western counterparts, they were not established for leisure. This has shifted in recent years with added symbolic meaning (connotation) of the museum as a landmark, hub, business enterprise or mall (in some cases, a combination of all). The museum-mall type at SWCAC also blurs the boundaries between primary and secondary functions of the marketed "museum of design" (V&A Museum, 2014).

In some cases, the connotative meaning might dominate the denotative meaning; SWCAC's and Sea World's Plaza architecture form connotate certain ideologies that are associated with different cultural contexts, whereby they mean different things

to different people. Semiotic theory in architecture arguably see architecture as "double coded", containing "two levels of messages" (Moustafa, 1988, p.4). The first is directed towards ordinary people, whilst the second is directed at members of the elite "who possess the knowledge which enables them to grasp the more sophisticated message" (ibid.). Lu's framework of museums in China, her framework is centred around the latter message, whereby the different phases of museum development reveal much regarding wider changes, including how the key actors respond to power, politics and the formation of national identity.

1.4 Background and site context

Figure 6. Map of Guangdong Province, where Shenzhen is one of its megacities (Shenzhen Shopper, 2016).

In accordance with Flyvbjerg's (2010) assertion that there is value in using a single case study, the SWCAC can be used to generalise hybrid museums and recent museum partnerships in China, with the exception of special administrative zones (e.g. Hong Kong). This is possible because the SWCAC is based in the historically significant Shekou and also the city of Shenzhen. In *Learning from Shenzhen* (Brookings Institute, 2013, cited in O'Donnell, Wong and Bach, 2017, p.1), its association with the Reform and Opening-up establishes the importance of the city and solidifies the idea that "Shenzhen's economic model has to some extent become synonymous with China as a whole". Shenzhen is marketed as a "miracle city" and as the face of China's historic Reform (CGTN, 2020a). Although Shenzhen has its own unique city-brand and site-specific context conditions, Shenzhen is also looked upon as a "model city" (Xin and Leng, 2020; Ma and Rui, 2020); therefore, it can be seen as a template for other Chinese cities to emulate.

In observing the establishment and development of both the SWCAC and the wider Sea World, this study takes into account the unique site context of Sea World at Shekou, Shenzhen in the wider context of the "China Museum Boom" (Zhang and Courty, 2021). This section will provide key background information on the SWCAC in Shekou, and the wider contextual background that drives museum hybridisation and increased brand collaborations. Understanding both will provide context to SWCAC's brand image and Sea World Plaza's place brand. They also reveal the museum's relationship to Sea World and the city of Shenzhen. Finally, to reinforce the need to understand and expand upon the museum-mall as a building type of interest, the final section will present two case studies.

i.   SWCAC: the Design Society and V&A Museum partnership

The Victoria and Albert Museum [V&A] is Britain's national museum of art and design, based in South Kensington, London since 1857. Over the years, it established branches in London and Dundee: the V&A Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green, the archive/study collections site at Blythe House, the V&A East at Stratford, and the V&A Dundee in Scotland (the first V&A museum outside London). The establishment of SWCAC at Shekou, Shenzhen, is a historic moment because it marks the V&A's first international outpost and international gallery.

Unlike the V&A Dundee, this V&A outpost is neither a satellite museum nor a stand-alone building. Instead, it works alongside a local cultural hub, Design Society—established by CMSK to manage, to curate and to run day-to-day operations at SWCAC. This high-profile collaboration is marketed as "the first of its kind between a British museum and a state-owned Chinese company" (Design Society, 2020a). In the introduction video *V&A Gallery at Design Society, Shekou* (V&A Museum, 2018), Tim Reeve—the Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the V&A—welcomed this partnership with CMSK "partly because we can't do it on our own but also we wanted a conversation". This 'conversation' took the form of an outpost model rather than the Guggenheim model, since Reeve found that establishing a satellite museum "isn't appropriate" for this context (ibid.).

Together with CMSK and the V&A as founding partners, Design Society and V&A's partnership was established in 2014, with the same aim to create a design museum. The SWCAC officially opened in December 2017. As the name Design Society suggests, it is both a noun and a verb. It suggests "a place that inspires action, stimulating the growing design scene in Southern China" (V&A Museum, 2018). This five-year partnership has officially promoted itself as a two-way conversation that is engaged with the local context, whilst not losing the aims of establishing China's "first design museum" (ibid.). This partnership is also important to the UK-China "golden era of trade and partnership", famously coined by then-Prime Minister

David Cameron (First Strategic Insight, 2015; Great Britain. HM Treasury and DIT, 2017).

Figure 7. Martin Roth (Director of the V&A 2011-2016) at the signing ceremony for a "major design museum" with representatives from CMG (Cormier, 2017a).

To design this landmark, CMSK hired prolific Japanese architect and Pritzker Prize winner, Fumihiko Maki, to work on the project (Pritzker Architecture Prize, 2021). The highlight of SWCAC's architecture is the three cantilevered volumes (Figure 8); one faces Hong Kong, one faces inland and another towards Nanshan mountains, respectively. Each one carries symbolic meaning.
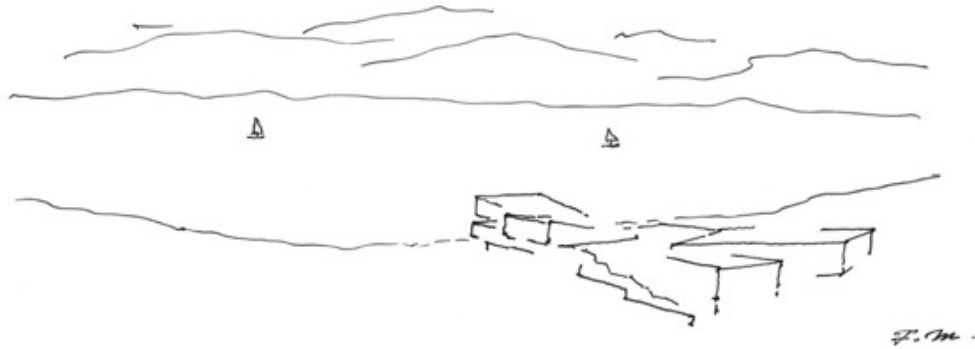
Figure 8. Maki's early sketch of SWCAC showing the three cantilevered volumes. One of them faces towards Shenzhen Bay, in the direction of Hong Kong whilst the other two face inland (ArchDaily, 2017a).

Although the SWCAC's brand is centred around the Design Society and V&A partnership, this project also involves other local state and transnational actors. For example, the *Values of Design* exhibition at the V&A Gallery, the SWCAC was designed by Sam Jacob Studio [SJS]. Described as "a progressive architecture and design practice creating idiosyncratic and striking projects underwritten with intelligent thinking", this practice is highly experienced in designing cultural spaces and galleries, workspaces, retail spaces and masterplans. Notable clients include the UK's Science Museum, and the Design Museum (SJS, no date a). Other international actors include ARUP (for structural engineering), LIGHTDESIGN, Nagata Acoustics, and Bruce Mau Design (a brand developer hired to develop Design Society's brand image). It is a star-studded cast.

Figure 9. SWCAC is a part of Sea World, a tourist attraction and commercial area (CallisonRTKL, 2021a).

Figure 10. Sea World Plaza at night (CallisonRTKL, 2021a).

When the SWCAC was completed in 2017, it was "designed as a cultural core of a large-scale multi-use (retail, commercial, residential) development in the Sea World area" (Maki and Associates, 2012). This museum-mall building type has a hybrid building programme, including open-plan gallery spaces, a theatre, a multipurpose hall, and food and beverage, among culturally affiliated retail spaces. Although it is a high-profile collaboration with a UK museum, the V&A does not own the entire building, but instead occupies two gallery spaces (the V&A Gallery and the Main Gallery are operated by Design Society itself) on the ground floor, whilst more than half of the space in the building will be run by outside (but selected) operators: from additional galleries and education centres to restaurants.

As an outpost, the V&A has less authority over Design Society and the operations at SWCAC. This also includes architectural design. In an email interview (2019), Brendan Cormier (the lead curator of Design Society) made it clear that the V&A did not have much influence on the architectural design of SWCAC, but it did provide advice on aspects including the placement of emergency exists, and power points to light tracking systems, to name but a few. The V&A also involved some of its staff in the UK to act as consultants and provide professional training for Design Society staff.

This case study is particularly significant because this outpost model has the potential to spread across China. The outpost system was adopted by another world-renowned art institution not long after the SWCAC opened. France's Centre Pompidou established a similar five-year contractual partnership with Shanghai's West Bund Museum (under Shanghai West Bund Development Group Co., Ltd). The architect hired for the project is the world-renowned architect, David Chipperfield, which again shows that this outpost model and business formula are not exclusive to Shekou.

Both the 'place' (Shekou) and city (Shenzhen) are important in the brand and architectural development of SWCAC; both are bound by the historical association with China's Reform and Opening-up and its current association with the Belt and Road Initiative [BRI]. In *Learning from Shenzhen*, the authors found that Shenzhen can be seen as a city that emphasises "the achievements of China's post-Mao economic reinvention … as a site of veritable success stories" and Shenzhen's "speed of modernisation…"(O'Donnell, Wong and Bach, 2017, p.2). Firstly, Shenzhen's city-brand is often associated with the city's rapid development and "a miracle that began in 1980" (CGTN, 2020b). Within a span of forty years, the city has been transformed from a fishing village, to a border town manufacturing zone, and into a global city (Cartier, 2002). Another common trope is that Shenzhen is "a new city without history" whose urban spaces are shaped by a set of institutions, practices and ideologies (ibid., p.1514). This typical rags-to-riches story allows flexibility for policy-makers and actors to construct the image of Shenzhen, as they see it. This includes the urban masterplans like CMG's Shekou Model (where Sea World is based).

More recent associations include President Xi Jinping's declaration of Shenzhen as "an important engine in the building of the Greater Bay Area", driven by the aim "to attract more young people from Hong Kong and Macau to study, work and live in the mainland" (Ma and Rui, 2020). Another narrative centres around the creative and cultural industries of Shenzhen. As a designated Creative City of Design, Shenzhen's Municipal Government has been developing its growing design scene (supported by growing tertiary education, cultural venues and city-wide design events) and rebranding its former association as the factory-of-the-world. The Design Society and the V&A Museum partnership uses these connections of the creative city (as publicised in the V&A Blog, Press Releases and Design Society annual reports) to establish their joint mission to promote 'design' in Shenzhen.

Shenzhen's historical importance would also affect the way Shekou is branded, thus influencing the way the SWCAC and Sea World are designed and connected to China's Reform and Opening-up.

Figure 11. The Shekou Model's PPC Development (Wan et al., 2020).

Figure 12. Map of Shekou Industrial Zone in 1980 (O'Donnell, Wong and Bach, 2017).

As for Shekou, where Sea World is based, the following subsection highlights the background of the area's regional and national importance of in Nanshan District, which also contains the Shekou Industrial Zone [蛇口工业区]. This case study is site-specific but it remains important to historicising the brandscape and city branding. The early allocation of Shekou was appointed to CMG by Beijing officials in 1978. Construction of Shekou began on 8th July 1979 with more than thirty tons of explosives used to clear the site for the development of Shekou Industrial Zone

(PRC. SASAC of the State Council, 2020). This site used to be counted as a separate region developed solely under CMG's Yuan Geng (one of the founders of the Industrial Zone) before the formation of the Shenzhen SEZ.

At present, the SWCAC is part of a wider place- and urban redevelopment of Sea World, Shekou subdistrict—in an area formerly known as the Shekou Industrial Zone. Within forty years of historic reform, rapid urban and economic transformation of Shenzhen, Shekou is part of this miraculous transformation from former fishing villages, factory, and port to a tourist attraction. The urban redevelopment of the Shekou Industrial Zone is known as the Shekou Model, coined and widely marketed by CMG. The Shekou Model is made historically significant to China's Reform and Opening-up. The area of Sea World enjoyed Deng's patronage and has gone down in history as the first port to open to foreign trade during the opening-up phase. Shekou even served as a base for overseas workers contracted by multinational oil conglomerates (Hutton, 2019). Today, the area has been redeveloped into a port-park-city (PPC) model, with Sea World as part of the "park" or leisure area.
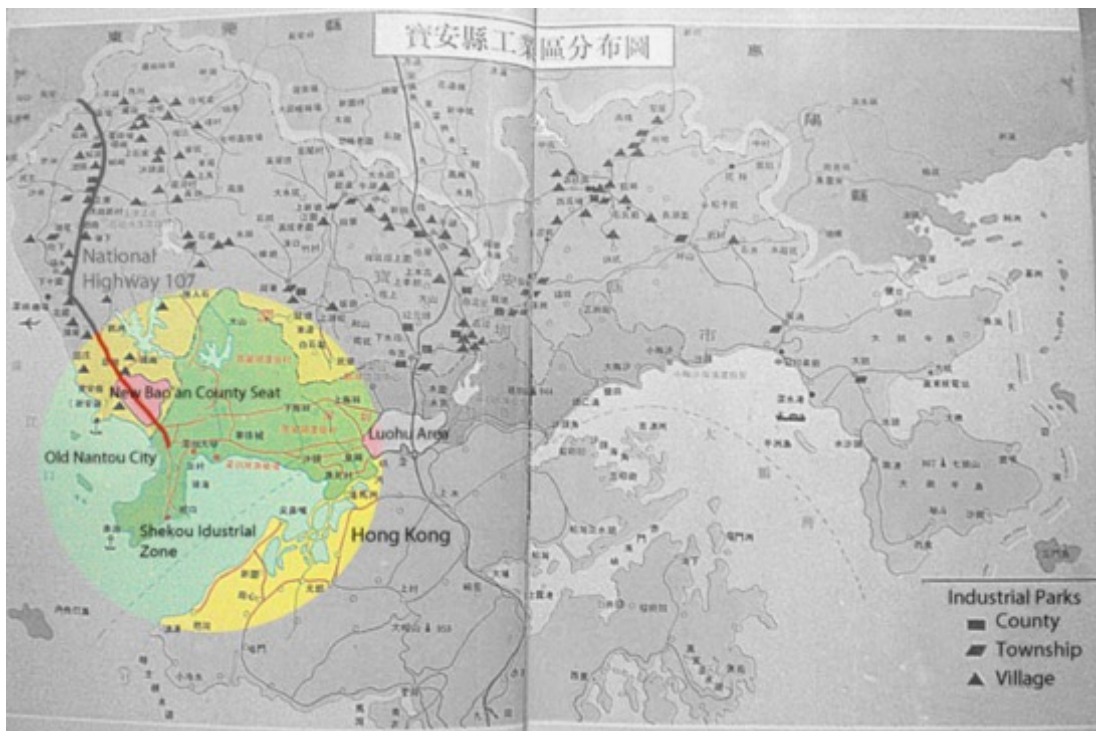
Figure 13. A 1985 map showing Shekou Industrial Zone and former Nantou District at the mouth of Shenzhen Bay (coloured), in the shape of a "snake's mouth" (O'Donnell, 2013).

Shekou [蛇口], which translates as "snake's mouth", is named after its position at the mouth of the Pearl River at the southern tip of the Nanshan district. It was on 24 September 1990 that Nanshan District was formed by the merger between the nearby Nantou District with Shekou Management District. The area includes both the inland area and islands, with a total area of 12.74 square kilometres. The inland area of interest is located in the southeastern part of the Shekou Peninsula. The flow diagram gives a simplified but current breakdown of each level of administration in Shenzhen: from macro to micro levels.

City: Shenzhen (Total: 9 districts) → District: Nanshan (Total: 9 subdistricts) → Subdistrict: Shekou (Total: 13 neighborhood committee) → 13 Neighborhood Committees
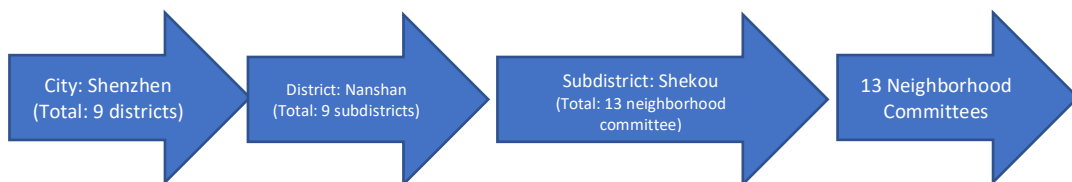
Figure 14. A simple flow diagram that depicts the administration level starting from city-level to neighbourhood, with a site-specific focus on Shekou.

Shekou is a subdistrict within the larger Nanshan District [南山区]—one of the nine districts in Shenzhen (the character qū [区] denotes district). Nanshan District and its total area of 186.58 square kilometres is further subdivided into nine subdistricts or jiēdào [街道]: Nantou, Nanshan, Shahe, Shekou, Zhaoshang, Yuehai, Taoyuan, Xili and Qianhai Cooperation Zone (People's Republic of China [PRC]. National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020). Shekou subdistrict is further divided into thirteen shèqū jūwěihuì [社区居委会], which loosely translates as "community neighborhood committees".

Figure 15. Administrative map of Shenzhen (Shenzhen Shopper, 2016).

The current functions of the Shekou subdistrict office are listed in the *Introduction of Shekou Sub-District Office* published on the *Nanshan Shekou Subdistrict Office* website (2014). The report lists thirteen primary functions that fall under the subdistrict, known in Chinese as jīběn zhínéng [基本职能]. The list divides into *Functions of the Party Working Committee*, which is in charge of the more spiritual construction and organisation of 'place' that is in-line with the party's principles and policies, whilst the *Functions of the Subdistrict Office* implement the urban management of the streets, planning work, cultural work, and more. Sea World and other upcoming redevelopment projects in Shekou subdistrict are made possible through mutual corporation between both the Nanshan District government and CMG.

Figure 16. The boundaries of Nanshan District with own annotation and existing map (Lin, 2015).

As more ports are developed by CMG, the brand image of the Shekou Model would become important in conveying 'place' value and synonymity of Reform success. The model itself has value. In an interview for *China Daily* (Luo, 2017), the deputy general manager of CMSK described the status quo in many countries involved in

the BRI, as "similar to Shekou 30 years ago. Shekou's model can be replicated to develop foreign port cities more effectively". CMG, with its long-established history as a port developer and operator, has invested in the ports of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Ningbo, Shanghai, etc., and has successfully obtained rights in all continents. According to SASAC (2018), CMG has a stronghold in at least fifty-three ports in twenty countries with a reputation as a port service provider and developer. The Shekou Model provides a template that some of these ports emulate, notably the Port of Djibouti takes after the PPC plan (Pairault, 2019).

Figure 17. A map showing CMG's involvement in the BRI in at least twenty countries (PRC. SASAC of the State Council, 2018).

This study sees a brand value in the Shekou Model. The Port of Djibouti has been labelled as the "most successful overseas application" of the Shekou Model (Luo, 2017). It is to be the key node in the BRI and a strategic foothold in the Horn of Africa and in the continent as a whole. As part of its diplomatic process, China has already helped construct much of Djibouti's key infrastructure and key buildings, such as the People's Palace of Djibouti in 1985 and Djibouti National Stadium in 1993 (Wan et al., 2020). In 2013, when the Djibouti Government sold 23.5% of its stake in the Doraleh Container Terminal (at Djibouti Port) to CMG's China Merchant Port Holdings Co. [CMP], the port of Djibouti's transformation began. The urban

developments at Djibouti is modelled after Shekou. This allowed the CMG to develop, operate and manage this large-scale redevelopment project.

Like the Shekou Model, cultural and commercial spaces are developed. Together with the Port of Dalian and IZP (a Chinese company specialising in cross-border internet trade and big data), all partners signed an agreement to establish the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone [FTZ] on 16 January 2017. It is being worked in phases (Figure 18), with the first phase beginning on 8 October 2021, which includes an exhibition centre, a four-star hotel, skyscrapers, and shopping malls. Li Xiaopeng, President of CMG, said in an exclusive interview with the *China Daily* (Luo, 2017): "We will use our experience in Shekou and adjust the model to local conditions. We will put this model into practice in Djibouti". His vision was to turn Djibouti into the "Shekou of East Africa".
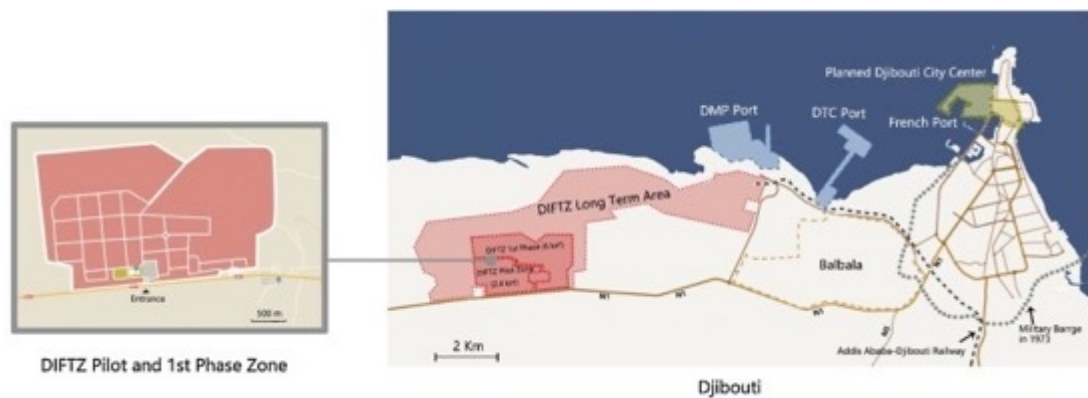
Figure 18. Port of Djibouti inspired by the Shekou Model. Areas colour coded in red, blue and green represent the Park, Port and City areas respectively (Wan et al., 2020).

In a key statement for International Museum Day 2021, the International Committee of Museums [ICOM] president (Pasqualci, 2021) talks of #TheFutureOfMuseums as one that must reinvent itself, "reconsider their business models", and "explore new solutions" to seek out sustainable options to survive during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Museums worldwide are generally experiencing less footfall, fewer tourists and less financial revenue. As a result of the pandemic, it has accelerated the search for "new hybrid forms of cultural experience" (ibid.).

"Brand collaborations" and "crossovers" (Content Commerce Insider, 2020) trending in China offer a solution for local and international brands. In *Tracking the Trends* (Canaves, 2021), this form of marketing has been a consistent source of entertainment and consumption that has attained new heights and partnerships that "surprise and delight customers"—earning the title of "mega-collaborations". In the same spirit of entertainment, surprise and consumption, museums in China also partner with global brands for short-term and long-term collaborations to create value and lasting impressions with consumers. A museum like the SWCAC, arguably facilitates these trends with hybrid programmes but this is also contrasted with its primary function as a mouthpiece of the state.

Echoing the mainstream analysis of the birth of the modern museum (Bennett, 1995), culture has been used to legitimise existing power, communicate state narratives and construct a new cultural identity. In mainland China, culture is used to package a visual imagery of local political agenda as "one of the pillars of the economy" declared by then-General Secretary Hu Jintao for the 13th National Plan (Lu, 2014, p. 196). China's Museum Boom, particularly from 2007 onwards (Varutti, 2014; Zhang and Courty, 2021), is one of the products conceived in the framework of government cultural policies.

The origins of 'museums' have always been historically linked to nation-state formation, i.e. the founding of the Louvre and the Republic of France. In China, the 'museum' caters to the needs of the state and continues to function as an important institution in managing Chinese culture and heritage, and educating the public. In recent years, urban reforms have triggered a huge shift in China's population and encouraged massive infrastructure and projects across the country. It was at this point that the Chinese state authority entered a relationship with the market and society and attempted to consider neoliberal economic practices, as China forged a renewed relationship with the West and the world. Building landmark cultural venues became part of this showcase as an indicator of modernisation.

China's entry into the World Trade Organisation [WTO] in December 2001 marked the country's integration into the world economic system. UNESCO's designation of Shenzhen as a Creative City of Design in 2008 follows this commitment towards using culture to foster new networks and spur economic growth. The creative city is another city concept that is normalised by neoliberalism, and seduces potential investors with capital (and cultural) production. The city uses creativity to drive economic growth through policy-makers, local authorities, and members of the "creative class" (Florida, 2012). In defining and comparing the creative city among other urban concepts (e.g. the sustainable city, the resilient city, and the smart city), the creative city is "based on the idea that economic competitiveness no longer lies in large endowments of raw materials or natural resources, but rather in the ability to attract, cultivate, and mobilize creative assets" (Hatuka et al., 2018). Much of this is owed to Richard Florida's (2012) "creative class" and "creative capital" concepts that gained influence in urban policy and development strategies. That said, the creative city is arguably a variant of the "global city" (Friedmann, 2005; Sassen, 2005).

Being a part of the UCCN also means fulfilling a set of requirements, including a report submission published every four years, according to their *Membership Monitoring Guidelines* (UNESCO, 2017). From the number of new museums being

constructed to major events such as the Shenzhen Biennale for Urbanism\Architecture (UABB), approximately 100million yuan has been poured into Shenzhen each year by the municipal government to support and bolster the city's creative and cultural industries since 2011 (UNESCO. Shenzhen City of Design Promotion Association [SDPA], 2016).

To conclude, the background and site context of the SWCAC at Sea World string together a complex network of cultural production and city networks. Analysis of the SWCAC must be considerate of the hybrid museum's relation to the place brand of Shekou, the city-brand of Shenzhen and on a global level.

iv.   Previous studies

In *Research Methods for Architecture,* Ray Lucas argues that "architecture is built upon the idea of precedents and the close examination of earlier works" (2016, p.35); therefore, much can be learned from other examples of so-called hybrid museums in China. This subsection presents two high-profile cases that share similarities with the SWCAC: the K11 Art Mall in Shanghai (an early predecessor of the museum-mall) and the *Centre Pompidou x West Bund Museum Project* (an outpost model established after the SWCAC). Although the cases serve a contextual purpose, their existence shows that the SWCAC is in a position to be used as both a generalising and "least likely" (Flyvbjerg, 2010) case; it is set within the assumption that the museum operates in the same contextual background and state-interest as its political system, whilst the latter runs on the assumption that other similar hybrid museums will continue to operate in the same way.

By examining the architectural design and the hybrid cultural-commercial programmes through photographic images and architectural drawings, this subsection reveals the relationship between the visible and invisible drivers, represented by the building type and local state actors respectively. Furthermore, it reinforces the need to examine these new building types beyond their brand and commercial values, as a museum phenomenon worth studying in reflection of broader changes in China. The following cases also prove that the SWCAC (as the result of the Design Society and the V&A Museum's partnership) is not an anomaly among recently developed Chinese museums.

Figure 19. K11 Art Mall in Shanghai (K11 Concepts, 2022).
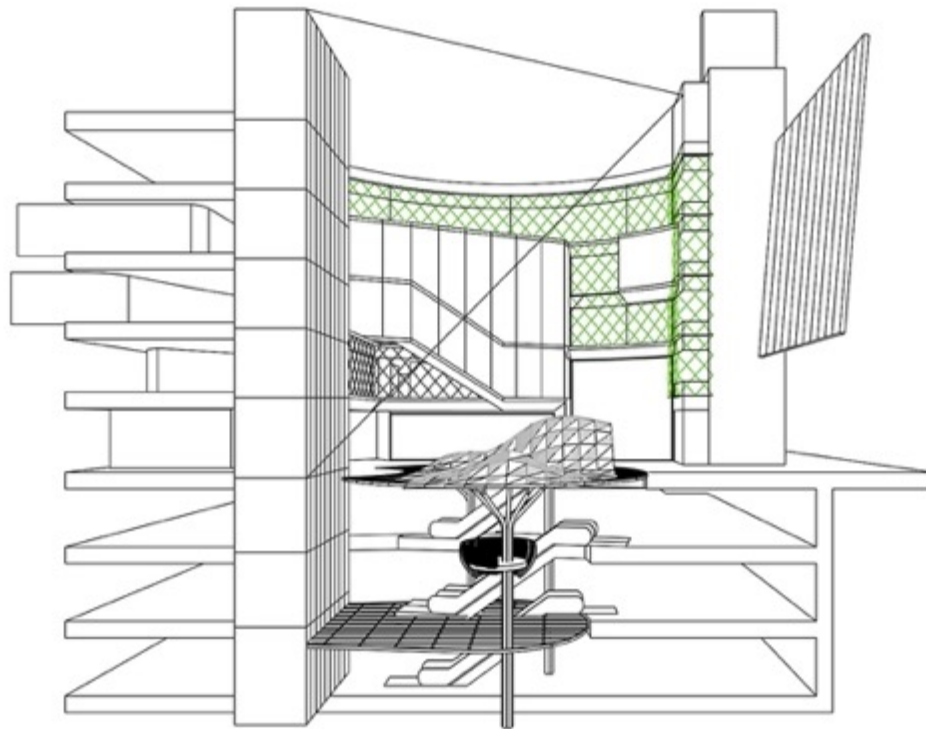
Figure 20. Section of K11 Art Mall's Inner Courtyard showing the lower levels (Sánchez, 2013).

This study considers the K11 Art Mall franchise as an early example of a museum-mall building type in China. Launched in December 2009, the first K11 Art Mall opened in Hong Kong and marketed itself as "the world's first museum-retail concept"—a concept that fuses art and retail spaces (The K11 Group, 2021). In an interview, K11 Founder and Chairman Adrian Cheng said that the idea started based on a need to give character to Hong Kong's bland retail section offered in

traditional malls (Haisma-Kwok, 2009). These malls with "no character" became the reasons for proposing "high-energy" retail and "multifaceted spaces" (ibid.). Cheng argued that he "tried to think outside the box. At 340,000 square feet, it [K11 Hong Kong] is the perfect size for a museum. It's a simple, round shape—perfect for a [walking] tour. So I placed exhibition windows between the shops—all of the shops. Even in the busiest area, you can see art" (ibid.).

Figure 21. K11 Art Mall blurs the boundary between exhibition and retail spaces (K11 Concepts, 2022).

The hybrid art-retail programme is arguably K11's biggest selling point and most distinctive feature of the art mall or early museum-mall type. Among the flagship stores and international brands, international cuisine and restaurants, visitors can also expect art installations and eye-catching "exhibition windows" on every floor (Haisma-Kwok, 2009). There are currently five K11 art malls operating in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenyang and Wuhan. Five more are planned: Beijing, Ningbo, Shenzhen, Tianjin, and "the most premium of all the K11 art mall concepts", the K11 Musea in Hong Kong (Ap, 2018). As Cheng points out: "K11, an expression of virtual world and reality, intertwines the functions of shopping malls

and art galleries. Art pieces are displayed as showcases placed between shops in the mall, for the shoppers to appreciate local art creations and enjoy shopping like 'artistic shopping experience'" (New World Development Company Ltd. [NWD], 2009).

This case is important to this study because state-owned and real-estate developers in China have been using signature buildings to promote their projects and their corporate brand, e.g. SOHO China uses avant-garde design and famous architects in their projects (Ren, 2008). Arguably, the involvement of international architects and partnerships becomes a part of the transnational architecture production process (Ren, 2011). In the case of the K11 Art Malls, the architecture design and hybrid programmes also function as part of its corporate brand and marketing strategy.

The K11's hybrid art-retail model is the brainchild of the K11 Group, a part of New World Development Company Limited (also known as "the Group"). It is a public-listed Hong Kong-based company focusing on property, infrastructure, department stores and hotels. The company soon expanded its projects and investments into mainland China, with "a total asset value of approximately HK$616.5 billion as at 31 December 2020" (NWD, 2021a). As a group, its corporate brand is defined by The Artisanal Movement—"a cultural vision, a philosophy of living" in which the human touch and artisan spirit are meant to thrive in this technology-savvy world (ibid.).

This corporate brand went on to be translated into a string of K11 malls across China. The close examination of Shanghai's K11 Art Mall shows how architectural space is designed as hybrid and multifunctional to accommodate both The Group's core values and Cheng's vision for a new kind of retail experience. Launched in June 2013, Shanghai's K11 Art Mall is regarded as mainland China's first K11 Art Mall. This mall follows The K11 Group's values of promoting a coexistence between "Art, People and Nature" (The K11 Group, 2021). This particular "hybrid model of art and commerce" (ibid.) incorporates hi-tech features that cohabitate with indoor foliage and art installations in and around the mall. The inner courtyard features a nine-storey high, outdoor waterfall alongside 2,000 square metres of living vertical

gardens that collect rainwater and become part of the building's cooling systems. Other key architectural features include the "exhibition windows" (Haisma-Kwok, 2009) and shop windows; glass is used to blur the boundaries between art and retail.

Figure 22. An aerial view of the inner courtyard of K11 (Sánchez, 2013).

Figure 23. One of many pop-up events held at K11 (MUSE Awards, 2021).

The various actors who developed and conceptualised Shanghai's K11 Art Mall have become part of this mall's key publicity and marketing strategy. The list included: Bjarke Ingels Group [BIG], Lead8, Leigh & Orange, the ECADI, and P Landscape Co. Ltd (Sánchez, 2013). Kokaistudios, a multi-cultural architecture and interior design firm founded by Venetian duo Filippo Gabbiani and Andrea Destefanis, was chosen to design Shanghai's K11 Art Mall. The K11 Art Mall's vertical greenery and a landscaped courtyard are set in contrast with the underground shopping area—a solution to extend the mall downwards. The underground area is accessible from the inner courtyard through the free-form glass skylight (Figure 22).

As part of Cheng's vision to create "a brand new kind of shopping mall" (Haisma-Kwok, 2009), the hybrid art-retail model also includes restaurants, food and beverage, private art galleries, a rooftop garden, and even an urban farming facility. The results are multifunctional spaces that complement the mall's "dense program of openings, activities, lectures, design competitions and exhibitions" (Sánchez, 2013) and the curatorial strategies that contextualise artworks within retail space and to constantly surprise visitors with new ways of engagement (Wu, W., 2020). The private art galleries are organised around an event space in basement 3, intended to integrate with "the permanent collection K11 owns and displays around the mall" (Sánchez, 2013). The distinction between public and private exhibition spaces, art and retail areas is thus blurred. As a hybrid museum, Cheng also went on to establish the K11 Art Foundation in 2010, spending millions to add to the permanent collection for the mall, which will showcase new pieces from local artists (Haisma-Kwok, 2009). These displays not only showcase local talents but also provide value to K11's brand by establishing emotional engagement with its users.

To conclude, consideration for both brand image and hybrid programmes is deemed as an important trait in the conceptualisation and development of the K11 malls across China.

Figure 24. The Atrium at Basement 2 is designed as an open and public, multifunctional space (Sánchez, 2013).

Figure 25. K11 Shanghai's urban farming facility (Sánchez, 2013).
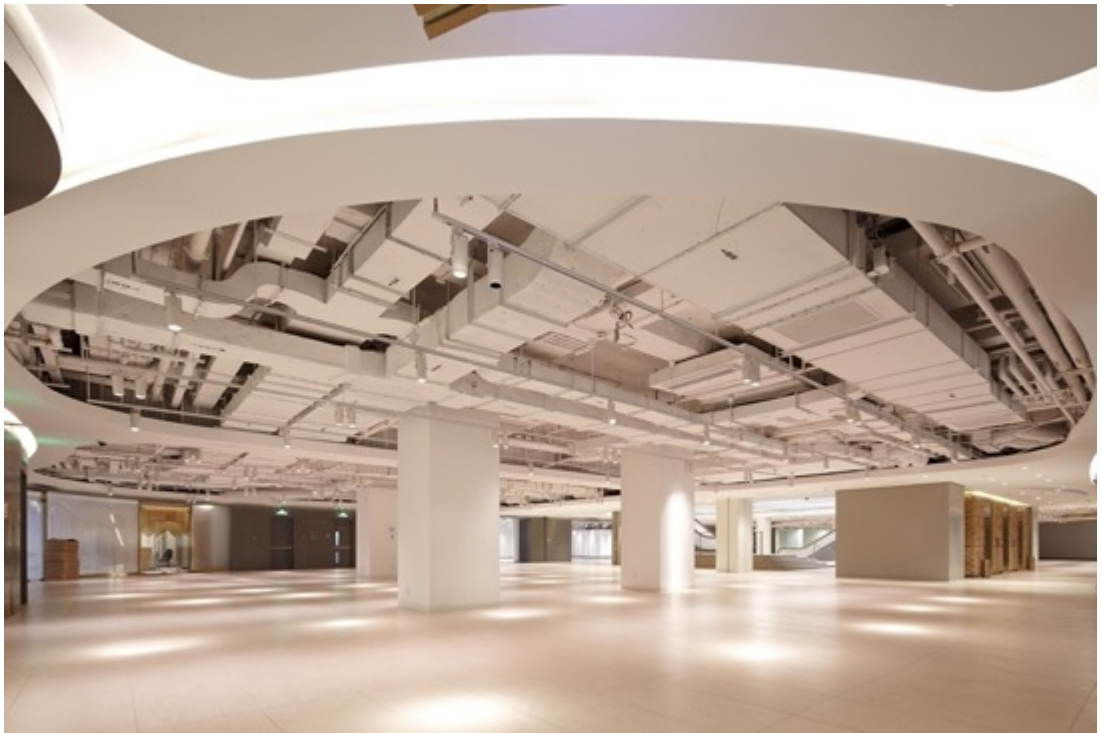
Figure 26. One of the open-plan exhibition spaces at K11 Shanghai (Sánchez, 2013).

Figure 27. The West Bund Museum from the waterfront (Crook, 2019).
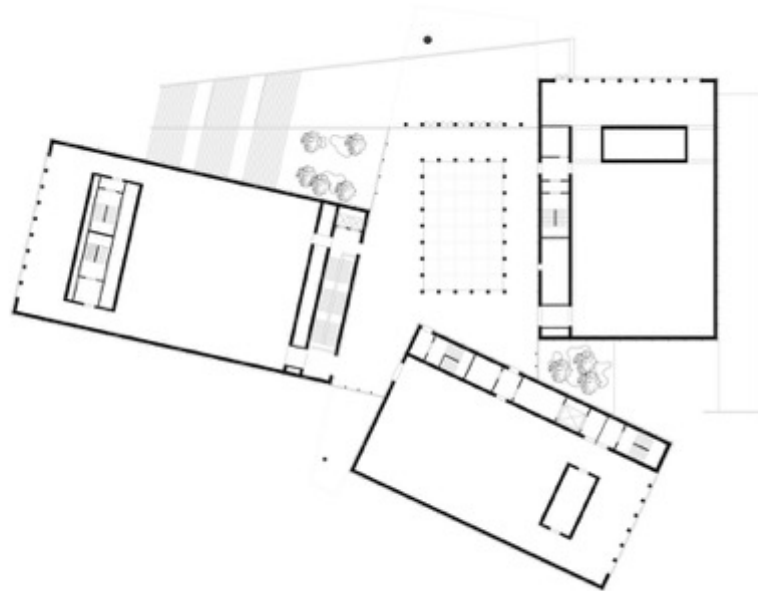
Figure 28. First-floor plan showing the three volumes of the museum (Crook, 2019).

This is a more recent case that takes after SWCAC's outpost model—the high-profile collaboration between France's Centre Pompidou and China's West Bund Museum. This project with Centre Pompidou is a five-year partnership between the world-renowned French museum and the Shanghai West Bund Development Group Co., Ltd (West Bund Group)—an SOE that is authorised by Shanghai's Xuhui District. The West Bund Group was "responsible for the comprehensive development of the Xuhui waterfront area" under the *Comprehensive Development Plan for Both Sides of the Huangpu River* (West Bund Group, 2022). There are many similarities shared

between the two V&A and Centre Pompidou outposts. From the transnational actors involved in the museum's production (international architects to cultural institutions) and the design of multifunctional spaces, to its role in wider place- and city-brand, this outpost utilises brandscaping practices and hybridisation as traits important to its conception and operations.

On a diplomatic level, the Sino-Franco project appears to benefit both parties through mutual benefits: establishing Shanghai as a global arts hub whilst expanding the Pompidou's reach to new audiences. To mark this historical event, President Emmanuel Macron attended the inauguration ceremony on 6 November 2019, as the "the most significant project" (Centre Pompidou, no date) and "largest ever cultural exchange and cooperation project" (Holland, 2019) between France and China. The partnership with West Bund Group was formalised in 2018 and involved (Centre Pompidou, no date):

- lending works from the Centre Pompidou collections;
- designing exclusive exhibitions in resonance with the local cultural context;
- implementing the cultural programme and mediation activities;
- training museum professionals;
- presenting projects and exhibitions by Chinese artists in the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

World-renowned British architect David Chipperfield was chosen to design this museum, even before Centre Pompidou was officially confirmed. According to an interview, Chipperfield expressed some frustration towards the Shanghai authorities at the vague brief. Apparently, he was told it was for "a museum" and answers what the museum contained were uncertain (Hickley, 2019). The client did not even know what should be placed inside but there appears to be a need to include "three big multi-functional halls that can be used for anything - exhibitions, performances, parties" (ibid.). This suggests that the hybrid programmes and multifunctional spaces may not originate from a clear corporate mission (e.g. the

K11 Art Mall's core values driving its hybrid programmes) but could possibly originate from indecisiveness and uncertainty as well.
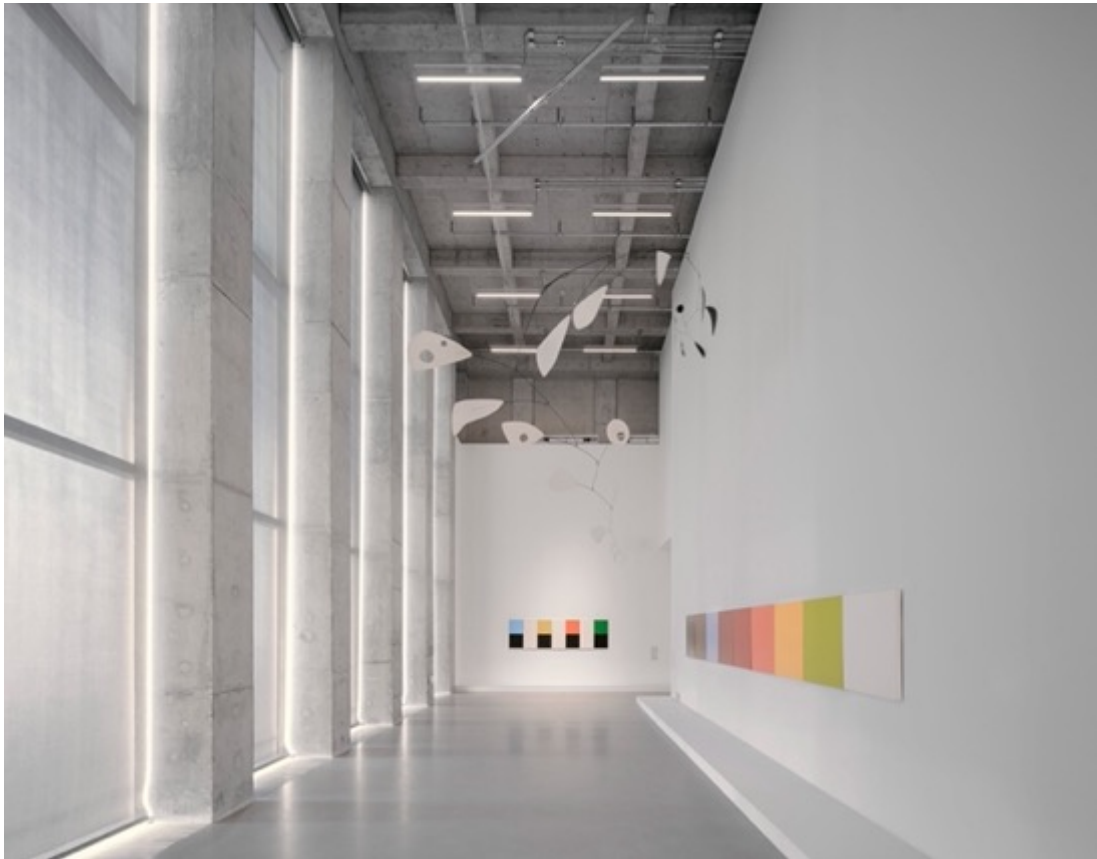
Figure 29. One of the museum's exhibition spaces (Crook, 2019).

The architectural design and building programme of this outpost is arguably Chipperfield's answer to the generic and vague brief. In response to the "three big multi-functional halls" (ibid.), the building is designed around three main volumes, after the three main exhibition halls (Figure 28). Each volume is clad with translucent glass to provide an "iridescent aesthetic" (Crook, 2019). Inside, the two-storey central lobby with a double-height atrium is the core of the building that connects the three volumes. Although this does not have a retail element, the building programme does include a riverside café, bookstore, a multipurpose hall, an art studio and education spaces.

Regarding the relationship between the local partner and the international partnership, findings suggest that a partnership does not equate to equal share in marketing, management, operations, etc. of the museum. In an official press

statement, Centre Pompidou President Serges Lasvignes says that the outpost's "exhibition content is approved by the authority in charge of cultural affairs", which is "in compliance with Chinese law" (Holland, 2019). The West Bund Group is "entirely in charge of the operation of the museum" (ibid.), similar to the V&A outpost model where local partners have fuller autonomy in their marketing, management, and day-to-day operations. Managing censors would also be made easier with the local partner being able to help navigate cultural sensibilities and differences. However, Lasvignes added that the museum still enjoys freedom of expression and would find "common ground and com[e] to agreement on choices that make sense for both parties" (ibid.).
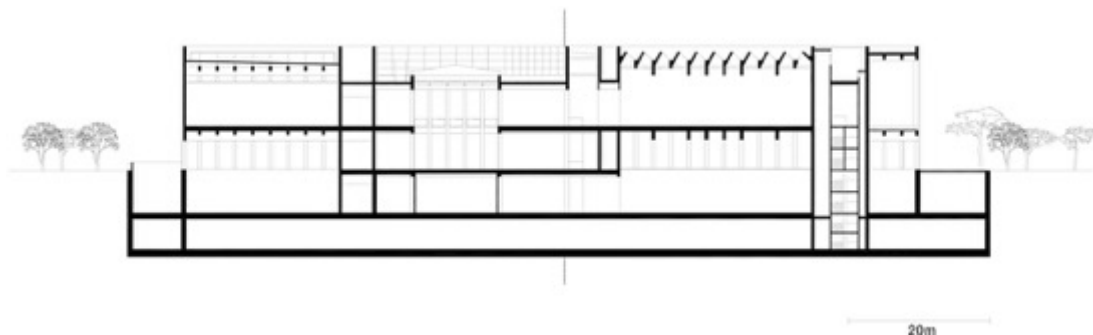
Figure 30. A section (above) showing the central atrium (below) and exhibition spaces (Crook, 2019).

Figure 31. The education space (above) and multipurpose hall (below) (Crook, 2019).

c. Concluding Remarks

By describing how these spaces are designed, this section reinforces this study's need to better consider the brandscapes within their local contexts. Moreover, the concepts of branding (namely brandscape) and hybridisation may not demonstrate the same formula as SWCAC, but these are recurring traits that are prominent among recently-opened museums in China. To some extent, the above case studies provide some clarity of examples of hybrid museum types (mostly the museum-mall) that are emerging in mainland China. Since the opening of Shanghai's K11 Art Mall in mainland China, The Group claims that it has become a cultural-retail pioneer that "breaks down the boundaries between art and business and takes the public on a Journey of Imagination" (NWD, 2021b). It sees itself as the art-mall model that boasted the adoption of contemporary trends and the development of the regional economy and society across the mainland through its many branches. Meanwhile, the *Centre Pompidou x West Bund Museum Project* continues to follow the template left by the SWCAC and pursues a kind of hybrid museum that caters to diplomatic functions and cultural exchanges as well.

Both the K11 Art Mall and the West Bund Museum operate in the city context of Shanghai and the generalised context of China (sharing the same political, social and economic contexts). However, the level of hybridisation in each museum is expected to manifest differently since they will not have the same structural organisation, partners and city-brand image as SWCAC in Shenzhen. Although there is currently no framework or classification system to define museum-malls or hybrid museum types in China, the following could provide some considerations for future reference:

1. The selection does not include national (or central) museums that are directly managed under a branch of the central government, but rather through indirect management through SOEs and private or state-owned property developers. Because they are not centrally managed by the central government, they are able to work within public and private realms, thus creating opportunities for hybrid

spaces. Like CMG, the K11 Group and SOHO are owned by local developers who use signature design by international architects to brand their projects and showcase their corporate brand. These key actors (from local politicians and foreign architects to international cultural institutions) play a role in creating new hybrid spaces.

2. The museum is designed with hybrid cultural and commercial programmes in mind. Authors like Clare Jacobson (2014) have noticed an absence of a permanent historical, archaeological or art collections in her book, *New Museums in China*. When comparisons are made between hybrid museums and national museums like the Palace Museum in Beijing, these recently-opened museums appear to adopt multi-use and open exhibition spaces for both permanent and temporary exhibitions. Her list of each selected museum is descriptive, but they share the same trait of incorporating multifunctional spaces, especially when a permanent collection is absent. These spaces perform social functions: research, exhibition, education, and collection, but also cater to state functions and high-level events, e.g. the signing of MoUs.

To conclude, this brief overview of two key studies reinforces the need to reconsider the museum-mall beyond its commercial nature and superficial façade.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

To understand the phenomenon of hybridising museums (like SWCAC), Chapter 2 establishes a theoretical framework that can encompass the dominant themes of branding and hybridisation central to new museum architecture in China. The structure of this chapter is designed to correspond with the research questions and the main aims of this study, namely through: (i) the contribution of branding and the process of hybridisation towards an already limited area of study, and (ii) hybridisation in developing the new roles and new functions demonstrated at the SWCAC.

Chapter 2's aim is to examine a range of relevant concepts that centres around branding as an overarching concept and constant factor. As a simplified Venn diagram, the proposed framework can be visualised this way:
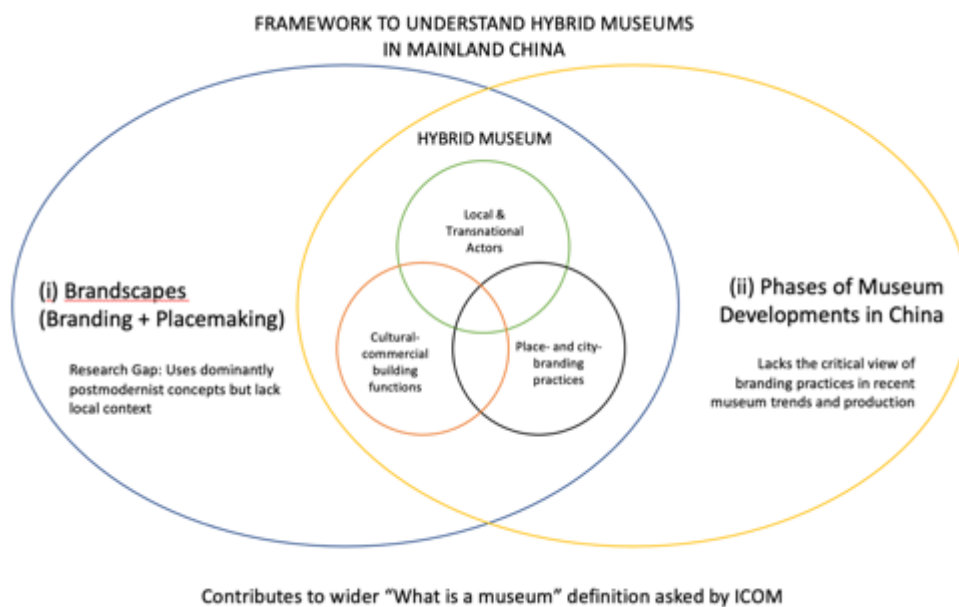
Figure 32. Understanding hybrid museums in China: a conceptual diagram of this study's theoretical framework.

The diagram shows how the key themes come together to inform the framework. The overarching theme of branding is visualised in the coming together of the two

mutually exclusive concepts of *(i) Brandscapes* and (ii) Phases of *Museum Development in China*. The overlapping of the two represents the first part of my framework in *2.2 Branding as an overarching theme*. This section is divided into two parts: *(i) Expanding Anna Klingmann's brandscape* (representing *Brandscapes*) and *(ii) Expanding the third phase of museum development* (representing *Phases of Museum Development in China*). Each individual section reviews the conception, key ideas and research gaps of Klingmann's brandscape and the shape of museum development. However, the findings argue that when combined, they compensate for each other's shortcomings.

The diagram visualises how each one of these themes connects and overlaps. Meanwhile, the dominant theme of hybridisation in new museum architecture is represented by the overlap between *Brandscapes* and *Phases of Museum Development in China* (see Figure 32)*. Section *2.3, Three Levels of Hybridisations,* divides understanding of the process of hybridisation in hybrid museums into three ways: *(i) The transnational actors*, *(ii) The cultural-commercial hybrid*, and *(iii) Place branding and the global city*. Whilst they are broad themes, the overarching framework in section 2.2 ensures that section 2.3 is kept within the subtext of branding practices and museums in China.

Together, sections 2.2 and 2.3 form the theoretical framework for viewing hybrid museums like SWCAC. Section *2.4 Conclusion* summarises findings and prepares the proposed framework for application onto SWCAC in Part 2.

2.2. Branding as an overarching theme

This study identifies the importance of branding in hybrid museums, particularly in the development of a museum's brand image, building programmes, partnership, and place brand. Section *2.2, Branding as an overarching theme*, is divided into two parts: *(i) Expanding Anna Klingmann's brandscape* and *(ii) Expanding the third phase of museum development*. Each section will identify the key texts, key ideas and research gaps. The outcome of this section is to localise the original concept of the brandscape for mainland China.

The first subsection*, (i) Expanding Anna Klingmann's brandscape*, will look at the key ideas and key chapters from Klingmann's concept, in the hope of providing new insights to view increasing branding practices (namely the concept of brandscape) and hybrid spaces in museums in general. This study finds that the concept of the brandscape (branding and placemaking) can help express the popularity of multifunctional, hybrid cultural and commercial spaces. This concept already has conceptual roots in seminal postmodernist texts, but it doesn't historicise cases studies and lacks application across Asia (since the texts and case studies themselves are arguably West-centric).

The next subsection, *(ii) Expanding the third phase of museum development*, attempts to fit hybrid museums into the canon of museum history and early modern architecture development in mainland China—a context that is missing from Klingmann's West-centric concept. This section namely looks at Tracey L-D Lu's "third phases of museum development" (2014) in China to investigate its key ideas and research gaps. The historical framework of museum development in China often links the museum as a tool to view changing power, politics and national identity formation. Therefore, the increase in brand collaborations and hybrid museum-mall types can be viewed as a mirror to view changes in China. Overall, the growing prominence of branding practices and the various modes of

hybridisations in museums demonstrates different ways museums are developing in China.

Branding, at its origins, was largely two-dimensional and limited to graphic marketing devices (e.g. logos, symbols, advertisements). When looking at the history of branding in general, brands have transformed from symbols of consistency starting with simple household goods to widespread penetration in all significant institutions in our lives. Premodern branding practices have been in existence for thousands of years with the same purpose to inform and differentiate, regardless of culture, but it is the industrial and postmodern era that propelled the brand into part of the globalisation and modernisation paradigm. The brand as we know it today has become "a symbol for contemporary consumer values associated with the information age" (Klingmann, 2007, p.2), where the need to stand out from the crowd is driven by intense communication, customisation, differentiation, and competition spurred by the dissemination of information on a global stage.

Traditional associations of brands are no longer limited to corporations, their products and services, but their values are determined by involvement and association with a certain type of lifestyle. The terms brand or branding often cause a derogatory association with profitability, superficiality and manipulation, especially among anti-capitalists like Naomi Klein, whose book *No Logo* (2001) drew hard-line associations of the practice of branding as synonymous with the horrors of capitalism. It is in this view from Wally Olins, one of the most successful corporate identity and branding gurus, that this framework insists that a brand is neither good nor bad, but is based on "how and where and in what cause it is used" (2003, p.11). Instead of looking at what the brand stands for, the focus is on who created the brand.

In the context of the built environment, the traditional functions of brands to inform, differentiate and represent continue, but with a long-lasting public presence and tangible form. There are few studies that explicitly look into this relationship between architecture and branding. Anna Klingmann's *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy* (2007) claims to be the "first architecture

book that takes the Experience Economy as its premise to show architects…how to create places that are authentic, meaningful and engaging" (Klingmann, no date). It is one that explicitly observes the potential of applying branding techniques to architecture despite its controversial nature. Her book, as suggested by the title, examines the interconnected nature of architecture and branding that has developed in recent decades when the industrial economy shifted to the service economy and, now, the 'experience economy', coined by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore—based on an immersive, intangible, and staged experience that companies increasingly use to "engage customers, connecting with them in a personal, memorable way" with the aid of advancing technology (2011, p.5).

In this context, architecture in the experience economy is no longer appraised by its exchange value or representational value, but by its ability to create memorable events or experiences that engage the consumer. This experiential value would trigger a particular emotional engagement, identity and lifestyle. Klingmann's eponymous architecture company specialises in a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural approach that combines strategic planning, branding and design. The company's corporate missions and research interests align with Klingmann's own understanding of 'brandscapes'—as a cross between branding, architecture and placemaking (Klingmann, no date).

Through her experience in professional practice, Klingmann uses her book to reaffirm her own ideas of BRANDISM™, an approach that integrates and channels the potentials of branding with architecture. A short document introducing BRANDISM™ (Klingmann, 2006) introduces brands as…:

> …major contributors enforcing global culture and undoubtedly, the marketing world has become one of the central formulators of people's expectations and hopes about themselves. Brands give products, services, places, and events an added symbolic value, which, as it were, elevates them above themselves, and makes

them more than they are in a material or functional sense. Brands synthesize images, identities, and life-styles into coherent entities, while simultaneously codifying cultural values at large. Brands act as catalysts to raise the value and/or status of a particular place, a person, or an event

Her book, *Brandscapes* (2007), provides examples of 'brandscapes' ranging from luxury flagship stores, museums, shopping centres, and planned residential developments to cities. Each chapter expresses different examples of brandscape, whilst adopting postmodernist approaches to understand their spatial flexibility, blurred functions, market value and more. However, there is neither a theoretical interrogation nor a particular structure throughout the book. Therefore, it is important to briefly review Klingmann's ten chapters that present the underlying concepts behind her concepts of brandscapes (ibid.):

1. *Chapter 1 Introduction: Architecture in the Experience Economy* introduces architecture and its "intimate relationship" with branding over the decades—not as a "formal and didactic viewpoint but from an experiential perspective" (ibid., p.3). In this brief opening chapter, Klingmann draws out the key ideas driving this relationship between architecture and branding, namely as a product of prevailing economic conditions (Lefebvre, 1991), a capitalist city (Harvey, 2007), post-Fordism and growing commodity value (Eco, 1997). In this phase, architecture becomes integrated into the global economic system and commodity production whereby the brand image gives it representational, commodity and exchange value.

2. *Chapter 2: Eyes Which Do Not See* begins "by examining architecture's position within the context of the transformation of commodities from tradable objects to the branded experiences of subjects" (ibid., p.11). With mention of the diverse offerings of

Disney cruise liners, air travel and BMWs, what made them most valuable is their highly choreographed environment and customisation that extends out into a brand and lifestyle experience.

3. *Chapter 3: The Experience Economy* looks at various brands whose image is tied to the experience attached to a product, of lifestyle-oriented consumption patterns, e.g. Starbucks, CNN of Time Warner and Nike. With a mix of brand and architecture case studies, the chapter pits architecture as a brand that is able to serve as added value through experiences and also communicate a set of values and associations.

4. *Chapter 4: Architecture without Architecture* goes into the classic Disney theme park case study—the most celebrated study of postmodernist's constructed environment, theme park design and modern branding. However, the chapter also uses examples of other urban environments that share similarities to the operations at the Disney theme park: from Times Square, Potsdamer Platz, and Niketown in New York to urban entertainment districts [UEDs] such as Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica. Although not explicit, the source of hybridisation becomes distinctive to these experiences.

5. *Chapter 5: Marketing without Marketers* sees architecture as an active space that "provokes" actions (ibid. p.112), mainly based on the work of Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi. Here, the chapter is most explicit about the process of hybridisation occurring in some of Koolhaas's projects, with mention of the blurring between "a set of new oxymorons that erase former incompatibilities" (ibid., p.124). An existing example includes his own project, the Prada Epicenter New York. The flagship store is designed to provide a diverse

shopping experience with experiential themes within: "a clinic", "archive", "trading floor", "library" functions that redefine original meanings to provide a unique brand experience (ibid., p.125).

6. *Chapter 6: (M)arketing* sets the tone with architecture able to serve as the brand of the architect, with distinctive aesthetics but also living proof that a brand need not be an inanimate object but also a person—very much an early kind of starchitect. Le Corbusier is one such celebrated brand-name architects, whose style is both distinctive and sought after.

7. *Chapter 7: (M) Architecture* returns to the seminal *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977) by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, to view the city of Las Vegas as "an interesting case study for the potential of applying branding techniques to architecture" (Klingmann, 2007, p.189) and place marketing. Alongside other case studies, this section highlights place marketing, theming, creating drama and curating choreographed spaces as part of the brandscape.

8. *Chapter 8: Beyond Bilbao* is another take on the well-cited Guggenheim Bilbao and the Bilbao Effect upon the deindustrialising city of Bilbao. The historic transformation from post-industrial city to cultural hub has made its mark as an urban catalyst and revitalising agent for many cities. The success of the museum has led to the widely emulated Bilbao Effect. The success seemed to be owed to three ingredients: the icon, a global trademark and a signature architect, "each of which constitutes brand equity in its own right" (ibid., p.240)—*not to mention, a spectacle in its own right.*

9. *Chapter 9: Architecture as Brand* focuses on the production of signature architecture in corporate branding, another area of interest. As global corporations have a presence in urban cultures, their architectural style is also used as visual symbols to convey corporate identity and personality in public spaces, e.g. Volkswagen and Ford. Brand-name architects have also been employed to design high-profile corporate buildings around the world, and can be affiliated with the city, e.g. Norman Foster to the City of London, Santiago Calatrava to Valencia, and more. This all ties into cultures of the "global city"—another concept that can be used to understand the museum within complex economic, political and social systems (Zukin, 1995; Sassen, 2001 and 2005; King, 2004).

10. Her tenth and final chapter, *Ten Reminders to Architects*, summarises what she deems as a successful brandscape, used as a tool of communication and catalyst to transform urban spaces.

Throughout the ten chapters, the brandscape responds towards wider economic and global systems, regardless of the type of brandscape explored in the book. Together, they justify a positive relationship between branding and architecture, and its wider impact beyond the superficial image. As her Introduction claims, Klingmann's goal was to reconsider a better application of careful branding strategies "to examine the potential of architecture as a medium to create an identity for people, communities, and places" (2007, p.7). Whilst aware of the criticism of homogenising and compromising local identity for an international or global image, she encourages architecture to utilise mechanisms of branding to create long-lasting effects rather than a short-lived spectacle. In this manner, this framework continues some of these ideas and uses them as a foundation to view hybrid museums in China. The case of SWCAC would arguably fit into many of these

observations of brandscapes mentioned above. Yet, the broad scope of identified brandscapes leaves much room for further speculation, but at the same time, leaves readers on an ambiguous note.

There are several research gaps that I have identified. Firstly, for this thesis looking at SWCAC in China, Klingmann's concept is incomplete. As the book was published in 2007, it requires much revision and reconsideration, especially with the rise of e-commerce and museum partnerships emerging in China. The year 2007 is significant because of China's Museum Boom and its policy shift, which placed culture as one of the economic pillars. Therefore, the significance of the high-profile museum in wider place brand has yet to be fully explored in terms of influencing local policy, city developments and national interest.

The other concern is the lack of other museum case studies as examples of brandscapes. Chapter 8 was the only chapter dedicated to the Guggenheim Bilbao, the Bilbao Effect and its impact upon the city, all of which have been well-researched in various fields (McNeill, 2000; Evans, 2003; Sklair, 2005 and 2012; Jencks, 2006; Kaika and Thielen, 2006; Plaza, Tironi and Haarich, 2009). The chapter does not provide anything drastically new, but it does serve as a reminder that museums are taking upon multiple roles as place brands, icons, cultural diplomats and urban catalysts. Generally, the case studies mentioned in the book are geographically limited to the United States and Western Europe. Therefore, in China where economic and political conditions are unique, this current version of brandscape cannot express the deeper complexities, unique branding practices and hybridisation in museums.

Finally, the book fails to historicise the brandscape according to history of the place, local context and key actors that determined the brandscape's purpose and form. The case studies are presumed to operate under the same, universal conditions whereby every culture, place and city work under the same formula. A localised form of brandscape can understand how other underlying factors may enrich the brandscape when applied in non-Western cities.

ii.   Expanding the third phase of museum development

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society
and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves,
researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible
heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education,
study and enjoyment.

The *Museum Definition* as described by ICOM (2018).

It becomes evident that the definition and functions of the 'museum' have vastly
changed and expanded beyond its traditional function to educate; its meaning
continues to change as it rejects, challenges, adapts and appropriates according to
site-specific and geographical contexts. The early conception of the 'museum' (as
an apparatus of power and civilizing tool within the context of nation-state
formation) has been challenged and readapted throughout the years (Foucault,
1995 and 2001; Bennett, 1995; Marstine, 2006). Museology itself enjoys extensive
scholarship from many areas of studies—sociology, anthropology, art history,
history, gender, and more—but in a framework of the Western canon and history
of art.

2020 is a year that changed the way museums (in general) operate as global
lockdowns around the world accelerated the search for "new hybrid forms of
cultural experience" (Pasqualci, 2021). Recent changes in museological practice
(e.g. acquisition and repatriation, exhibitions and the exchange of ideas) have
repositioned and challenged the current field of museology; it is known as 'critical
museum theory' or 'new museum theory', as expressed in Janet Marstine's *New
Museum Theory* (2006). The book is a collection of essays from various scholars that
offer alternative views that challenges the traditional ideas of the museum. What
constitutes a strongly defined theme that binds museums of the past and even
museums today (regardless of geographical location) is the desire to provide an

authentic view of history, often based on value systems favoured by the dominant institutions. Her book presents four categories using metaphors to describe museums today: the museum as (1) 'shrine', (2) market-driven industry, (3) colonising space and (4) post-museum. As expected of any museum, these categories may overlap. New museum theory, as redefined by Marstine, holds diverse and contradictory meanings that have received extensive scholarship from many areas of studies, e.g. sociology, anthropology, art history, history, gender, and more, however, they have lacked application of developments in Asia.

New museum theory believes in a transformation of the 'museum' from a site worship "to one of discourse in critical reflection"; the museum represents a space that is inclusive of many viewpoints and conscious over current concerns and debates (2006, p.5). Whilst museums in the West are challenged to examine their colonial histories, exhibition narratives, community outreach, social inclusion, and more, China's museum culture is arguably younger and seems to be taking 'shrine' and 'market-driven' directions. In many ways, these "new hybrid forms" (Pasqualci, 2021) evolving in China can be partially seen through Marstine's four museum categories.

The increasing number of new museums built in China is reflective of the scale of growth and investment made to brand the city. They are also "effective means of obtaining land and marketing the adjacent residential projects with attractive cultural packages" (Ho, 2014, cited in MacLeod et al., 2018). The rapid expansion had created a skills gap and exhibition content that could not meet the surplus of museums. Thus, to conclude, the hybridised museum seems to be a far more sophisticated space made to overcome these concerns. Paired with localised contexts of China, a new framework is proposed to understand this difference between brandscapes and 'post-museum' developments in the West.

In regard to the corpus of literature addressing Chinese museums (in the English language), less research has been done, with monographs and volumes on museology preferring historical rather than critical perspectives. However,

architecture historians do agree that China's shape of museum development appears to be facilitated by—if not synonymous with—the development of early stages of modernity in China (Rowe and Kuan, 2002; Xue, 2006; Denison and Guang, 2008; Zhu, 2009; Wang, 2017; Lord et al., 2019). All these texts acknowledged the influence of external forces and Westernisation as a catalyst for the visible architectural and urban changes.

Two key texts on China's shape of museum development will be used as a contextual and foundational basis to reposition the process of hybridisation and branding in Chinese museums in recent years. Both Tracey L-D Lu's *Museums in China* (2014) and Marzia Varutti's *Museums in China: The Politics of Representation after Mao* (2014) focused on the evolution of museums in China using key economic and political events (e.g. from the establishment of Treaty Ports to the Open Door Policy) to divide the different phases and architecture stylistic developments. The book classifies and examines different ways of seeing China's history of museum development and its evolution over the years. Lu's three phases seem to share China's chronology of modern architecture, which also consists of three distinctive phases based on three stages of modernity (often beginning with the establishment of the Treaty Ports, the rise of the Communist Party, the Reform and Opening-up, to the present day) marked by tumultuous economic and political shifts. The timeline begins with the appearance of European-styled museums, which began in the Treaty Port era. Meanwhile, Varutti's phases are also divided using the same logic of using key economic and political events (e.g. pre-modern, early modern, the rise of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP], Reform and Opening-up, globalising movements) to examine the stylistic and narrative evolution of the museums. Unlike Lu, Varutti has four phases, including pre-modern museums and the history of collection in China, before the European-styled museums are introduced.

This study frames the hybrid museums and museum collaborations in present-day China in Lu's third phase of museum development, at the largely agreed starting point of China's early modern phase where the familiar museum type also

appeared. The first phase starts from the signing of the Treaty of Nanking which signaled the end of China's imperial feudalism and semi-colonialism, and the start of the early modern transition in China. Early missionaries in the 18th-century established the first European-styled museum (the Zikawei in Shanghai) as a base to learn about Chinese culture or install a sense of superiority over the Chinese populace with modernising Western powers. The second phase is the 1950s-1970s, which coincides with the victory of the Communist Party and, with it, their admiration for socialist philosophies from the Soviet Union.

The third phase of museum development is most relevant to this study. The market reform in the 80s signalled the third phase, which enabled better integration into the global economy and labour market, and it was in the 1990s that the Open Door Policy brought China out of isolation and back onto the global market. What has remained constant throughout these phases to the present day is that "museographic practice in China might have been substantially globalised, but the political and ideological framework has changed little, and the public museums remain an institution to serve the interests of the CCP and the state" (Varutti, 2014, p.209). State leaders would still use the museum to convey the concept of national boundaries and to construct their national identity among its citizens but this time responding to the market trends and cultural consumption. Considering that this book was published in 2014, this later phase could not fully predict the future of museums in China, especially when integrated with new marketing trends (e.g. e-commerce, brand crossovers, etc.) from 2014 to the present day.

Hybridised museums may take on various forms depending on the local context. However, in China, museums are faced with different challenges "in light of the often heavy-handed use of culture in top-down economic processes" (Ho, 2018, p.7). In examining the third phase, Lu's Chapters 6, 7 and 8 examine different types of museums (e.g. ecomuseums) that emerged from the need to provide diverse offerings for tourists in light of economic changes after 1979. Through a range of case studies, Chapters 6 and 7 showed how these museums preserved cultural heritage and developed heritage sites to accommodate this influx of tourism.

However, the chapter of interest is *Chapter 8: Museums in a changing China*. According to the NBS of China (Lu, 2014, p.196), there were 360 new museums in 2011, but this figure jumped significantly to an increase of 2,838 new museums by the end of 2012. Decentralisation of CCP power to municipal governments, rapid economic growth and globalisation also brought about inter-city competition, where museums become symbolic images of the local government's achievements.

Chapter 8's *The multifunctional museums* (also the very last section of the book) is written as a brief conclusion. It summarises key ideas mentioned in the book from the transformation of China into a modern nation-state, in which the museum in "the last one and a half centuries is a process of power negotiation and the construction of a great variety of collective and individual identities" (Lu, 2014, p.211). This section reinforces this relationship between power, politics and identity, but without discussion of the form and development of 'multifunctional museums'.

The second key text is Varutti's book on *Museums in China: The Politics of Representation after Mao* (2014). She uses the museum as a mirror of the past, the present and the future of societies "to examine the complexity of social change" in China (ibid., p.1). It is one of few pieces of existing literature that studies the history of museum development in China, particularly focusing on recently-opened museums during this Museum Boom. Through direct observation of fifty museums, their exhibitions and conducting interviews with museum academics and professionals, Varutti's work is largely concerned with the representation of the Chinese nation through the past and identity construction.

Unlike Lu (with three phases), Varutti argues for four phases of museum development: (i) the first phase as proto-museums exemplified by the Temple of Confucius in Qufu, Shandong Province, (ii) the second phase contains a range of museums that transitioned from the imperial to the republican system, ending with the Nationalist Government's retreat to Taiwan, (iii) the third begins with museums under Communist rule, and (iv) the fourth phase begins in the early 1990s. Varutti's

four phases focus on the museum as an imported product, modelled upon Japanese and Western influences in the first phase, Soviet in the second and Chinese in the third. The fourth phase of Chinese museology presumes that it "has finally freed itself from foreign influences" (ibid., p.35), but current museum trends still depend on international architects and brand-name actors to produce landmark museums.

Despite the slight differences, both Lu and Varutti are concerned with the economic and political shifts that shape the design of the museum. Lu's and Varutti's texts are relevant to this study, but as they were published before 2014, they are unable to fully explain the brand-driven, transnational museum collaborations happening at present (i.e. the SWCAC was completed around 2017). They did not predict the interest in 'brand collaborations', or kuàjìng [跨界] or kuàquān [跨圈], as it is known in Chinese (Content Commerce Insider, 2020). Although they acknowledge foreign influences in the history of museum development in China, these texts also could not explain the new kind of hybridisation happening in the production of museums with the continued, involvement of brand-name and foreign actors.

In short, "the debate on Chinese museums, both in China and beyond, is still in its infancy" (Varutti, 2014, p.5) therefore, museums must be seen as malleable spaces that will evolve and adapt accordingly.

2.3 Three Levels of Hybridisation

The combination of Klingmann's concept of brandscapes (2007) and Lu's third phase of museum development (2014) aimed to conceptualise a localised form of brandscape that works for China, but the general idea itself can be applied across other cultures. They offer a more generalised approach towards understanding the dominant theme of branding in recent projects and collaborations in mainland China. These texts help provide background context that encourages a trend of hybrid museums in China, but the actual process of hybridisation in museums has yet to be fully examined.

If Section 2.2 is designed with generalisation in mind, the aim of this section specifically draws attention to less visible drivers that are less apparent, using the process of hybridisation in museums as the main concept. However, unlike in section 2.2, hybridisation here is regarded as a changing variable that varies across different museums. Some museums may opt for more cultural programmes or commercial programmes; some may even exclude one of the three themes mentioned. This understanding of hybridisation in museums is designed to be more fluid.

In the Venn diagram (Figure 32), this section is designed to address the other dominant trait found in museum collaboration: hybridisation. In this overlap of the *(i) Brandscape* and *(ii) Phases of Museum Development in China*, the three key subthemes represent the three themes observed in hybrid museums in China. The title "Three Levels of Hybridisation" indicates stages of progression that the process of hybridisation in museum collaborations and spaces are observed in this framework. It also implies an interconnected relationship with one another.

This study identifies three dominant types of 'hybridisations' behind a 'localised brandscape'. Arranged as *(i) The transnational actors*, *(ii) The cultural-commercial hybrid*, and *(iii) Place branding and the global city,* each subsection is arranged in a specific order that represents stages of micro-, meso- and macro-levels of

hybridisation, respectively. At the same time, the order represents the order of influence upon the development and production of the museum, which means that the transnational actors are deemed as the most important catalyst of hybrid museums. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of Part 2 (the main analysis of SWCAC) will also follow the logic behind the *Three Levels of Hybridisation*.

The following subsection begins with the most important catalyst of hybrid museum production in China, also regarded as the least visible form—the network of actors involved in the conceptualisation and development of the museum. Studies on brandscapes and the history of museum development in China acknowledge how local—and increasingly non-state and foreign—actors have been active in stylistic and narrative changes in Chinese museums; it is regarded as an imported concept. In the traditional Foucauldian view, these 'agents' (from key individuals to institutions) use museum spaces and exhibits to embody or communicate specific meanings and values. This study has determined that this group of actors are also involved in the branding and hybridisation of museums in China.

From the outset, the type of 'hybridisation' expected in this study is not solely based on the postcolonial discourse, coined by Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (2004). Whilst the term comfortably sits in the postcolonial idea of 'hybridity', the power dynamics between the colonised and the coloniser is not the main driver behind museum hybridisation in China. For China, the museum (as an institution) was a product of "a result of international and external conflicts, Westernisation and colonialism" (Lu, 2014). Studies on China's history of early modern architecture and museum development agree that China has only been semi-colonised. However, 'hybridisation' enables this study to take after multiple perspectives and voices, to view cultural representation and cultural interactions whereby the dichotomy of the colonised and the coloniser are "inhabited by internal conflicts and contradictions" (Hernandez, 2010, p.41). This ambivalence carries in the hybridised museum and in the writing of history.

To acknowledge this ambivalent perspective, the following section is divided into *a. Transnational architecture production* and *b. A transcultural perspective*. The two seemingly synonymous concepts best describe these entanglements between actors, but there are key differences, which will be made apparent in the literature

review below. This study is particularly interested in the entanglements of foreign actors (e.g. SWCAC is born from an SOE partnering with a UK cultural institution and the building was designed by a Japanese architect) and their manifestation in the design of the hybrid museum.

a. Transnational architecture production

Pierre-Yves Saunier describes 'transnational history', in simplistic terms, as the study of interactions between civilisations based on "an approach that focuses on relations and formations, circulations and connections, between, across and through these units, and how they have been made, not made and unmade" (2013, p.2). The prefix 'trans-' is indicative of the 'transversal' (Welsch, 2001), which captures the increasingly interconnected and entangled cultures spurred on by improved global communications systems and economic interdependencies. The idea embraces the wider context of the social sciences, with the premise that people and ideas are always in motion, moving beyond the boundaries of a specific region, nation, culture or civilisation. The prefix 'trans-' also seeks to abolish dualism, division and difference.

As implied, transnationalism offers a less rigid (but more realistic) reading of global history that accommodates cross-cultural interactions in the wider world. In Saunier's book *Transnational History* (2013, p.2), he adds that the transnational perspective "enhances its capacity by adding the history of entanglements between countries to the checklist of national history writing". Where scholarly studies view the nation as a construct or an "imagined community" (Anderson B., 2006), transnational history observes how the interactions waxed and waned, with added entanglements between countries to existing national history. National histories are thus, given alternative readings (but not replaced) as one shaped by outside forces; it acknowledges contributions from beyond its borders. Therefore, adopting a transnational history is largely seen as a "perspective" or "subcategory" that reconsiders the puritan form of national history (Anderson B., 2006)—one that uses the nation-state as the key framework of analysis (Iriyie, 2013, p.11). According to Saunier (2013), transnational history is extensively used in migration studies, cultural studies, international relations and has also made its way into museum studies. Since this is such a new concept, there are few that position the museum within the framework of transnationalism.

In the context of hybrid museums in China, the intersectional concepts of 'transnational history' or 'transnationalism' best describe the hybrid museums in China, which can be interpreted within the nation-state construct but also as transnational architecture. One such way to conceptualise hybrid museums in China is to regard museums as distinctive transnational actors, since their development implicates governments, and they are tied to the urban development and economic growth of the city in which they reside (Goff, 2017). In support of the new production of architecture made possible with globalisation, the city becomes the centre in which all sectors of production and new actors congregate and shape local politics. Major cities, including those in China, have never been so greatly integrated with the global economy, and never more competitive.

With a collection of leading scholars in the field, Ren Xuefei's *The Globalizing Cities Reader* (2017) builds upon the original framework of Sassen's 'global city' concept based on the need to reconsider today's "divergent pathways of global city formation, the new centralities and marginality's that crystallize within global over networks, emerging forms of regulation and governance, variegated social political contestations, and the multi-dimensional connectivities that link cities to one another"(ibid., p.xxiv). The book takes a 'multi-dimensional' perspective to consider new centralities (in which the city is core) since the restructuring of the world economy after the 2008 major recession in the US and Western Europe. The museum would become part of this language to convey the global city image.

One of its chapters reminds us that globalisation in China is of a different context (Wu F., 2017). The market reform in 1979 indicated a transition towards a more market-oriented economy and integration with the global economy. The author takes a top-down stance on the globalising city as "the important medium and vehicle" to achieve the aspiration of the state, whereby globalisation legitimises state presence in the economic sphere (ibid., p.117). With these changes, this market-oriented reform has changed the relationship between (i) the central and local states, and (ii) the public and private sectors. Despite the relaxed control of the central government, local governments, local elites and business actors have

become ambitious actors in the production of global cities. Globalisation may have decentralised power, but the case of Shanghai sees the city as a new site of governance and "an entrepreneurial, gigantic 'City Inc.'" (ibid., p.121).

The other area of interest is the production process of iconic architecture itself. Again, the Guggenheim Bilbao is another popular case of 'iconic architecture' that ties into the success story of Bilbao's city-brand. Iconic architecture is defined by two characteristics: (i) famous, and (ii) a symbolic/aesthetic judgement; but imbued "with a special meaning that is symbolic for a culture and/or a time, and that this special meaning has an aesthetic component" (Sklair and Struna, 2013, p.749). Key scholars like Leslie Sklair (2006; 2012; 2016) offer another view of the relationship between global capitalism and a more specific group of actors: the transnational capitalist class [TCC], in the making of iconic architecture. Among Sklair's extensive work on the TCC and their globalising agenda, he identifies 'four fractions' in his 2001 and 2013 articles:

(i)   Corporate fraction: Those who own and/or control the major transnational corporations [TNC] and their local affiliates
(ii)   Political fraction: globalising politicians and bureaucrats
(iii)   Technical fraction: globalizing professionals
(iv)   Consumerist fraction: merchants and media

These divisions are not segregated, but people within these fractions are expected move from one fraction to another. In sum, all four fractions are necessary in the production of iconic architecture, in which the museum may find itself. Each fraction has different motivations but they have the common goal of ensuring the success of iconic architecture. The corporate fraction is profit-driven and is interested in increasing market share. In the vast majority of his works, Sklair (2002; 2005; 2006; 2012) has been studying the relationship between the TCC and the production of iconic architecture, which aligns with the interests of this study.

Whilst Sklair's conceptualisation of the TCC is helpful, it still lacks an application specific to China.

Ren's book *Building Globalisation: Transnational Architecture Production in Urban China* (2011) expands upon some of Sklair's ideas and sets up the connection between the symbolic capital of architectural design with the economical, political and cultural capital that is transformed by various transnational actors in China. The author also addresses the trend of using international architectural styles as branding tools by local political and economic elites. As part of the production of new urban spaces, these private-public partnerships are developed with internationalisation strategies in mind (Ren, 2008). The 2008 Beijing Olympics is used as the classic example of transnational architectural production; the National Stadium became a manifestation of China's national aspirations but also incited controversies, beginning with anti-foreign sentiment on the ground.

Overall, the book addresses transnational architecture production occurring in contemporary China through ethnographic fieldwork, historical researcher network analysis. Her work has been influenced by the writings and discussion she had with leading scholars in early studies of global architectural production (Sassen, 2001; Sklair, 2005; Klingmann, 2007), Chinese consumer studies (Davis, 2000; 2005), China's urban development (Friedman, 2005) and China's development of modern architecture (Zhu, 2009). To investigate the role of transnational architecture production in the making of China's global cities, she conducted a hundred in-depth interviews with the producers and consumers of these transnational products. However, her fieldwork only covers developments in Beijing and Shanghai between the years 2004 and 2008; thus, a gap in knowledge exists for transnational architectural production beyond this point.

Based on the above texts, the hybrid museum can be drawn into the transnational architecture production process and increasingly adopts new business models and strategies. *The Museum as a Transnational Actor* (2017) by Patricia Goff made comparisons with the organisational and business model of the satellite museum to

multinational corporations (MNCs) or TNCs; they "expand their reach across borders; they create subsidiaries and franchises; they strike deals with governments" (Goff, 2017). In terms of seeing the museum as a business and a cultural diplomat, the Guggenheim franchise has been cited and studied extensively (McNeill, 2000; Olins, 2003; Jencks, 2006; Klingmann, 2007; Ren, 2011). As one of the earliest examples of a museum franchise, it has sold its brand and its intellectual property to partners around the globe, making it a new type of transnational activity.

Donald McNeill's (2000) article draws a link between statehood, architecture and political change under the conditions of globalisation through a discussion of the recent opening of the Guggenheim Foundation art gallery in Bilbao. Since its opening in 1997, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has attracted millions of visitors, spurred economic activity of the region and initiated a large-scale transformation of the city. This shows the power of city-brand development. The widely popular Guggenheim Effect spurred imitations across the globe but the failed projects— Guggenheim Las Vegas, Guggenheim Hermitage and Guggenheim Helsinki—show that superficial imitation is not enough. It also takes the cooperation of the entire city and an understanding of its own local context to truly recreate its success. For example, the Guggenheim Bilbao has wide-ranging support not just from the Guggenheim Institute and the local municipal government, but also from Bilbaoarte (under the City Council), the School of Fine Arts and Bibao Bizkaia Kutxa (BBK). The effect cannot be easily replicated without the coordination of state and non-state actors, i.e. by authorities, patrons and non-profit institutions giving support to art-related activities in the region.

To conclude, transnational architecture production causes 'hybridisation' in museums, but is only possible through the network of actors and globalisation. The hybrid museum in this study must see the museum as a result of these invisible drivers.

b. A Transcultural Perspective

In the mainstream nation-state sense, our understanding of culture simply came "to encompass the whole of a people's, a society's or a nation's activities" (Welsch, 2001, p.61). Culture is a ubiquitous term used to describe anything; the term becomes so frequently used today as a word that encompasses division, categorisation and collectivity. According to Wolfgang Welsch, author of *Transculturality: the changing form for cultures today* (2001), Johann Gottfried Herder's concept of 'culture' continues to be most relevant today, especially in nation-building and the construction of cultural identities. Herder's concept of 'culture' is characterised by three determinants: social homogenisation, ethnic consolidation and intercultural delimitation—a limiting construct and divisive. Culture is traditionally described as a tool for nationalistic agenda in which the nation's ideal culture is promoted, packaged, and sold locally and globally. Culture can also be used as means to establish such differences even when "there is nothing natural or universal about possessing a nationality" (Gellner, 1983). The concept of 'transculturality' by Welsch (1999; 2001) came in response towards a need to develop to challenge this generalisation of 'culture'.

Transculturality refers to a transition, or to a phase in a process of transition; however, it does not point to the disappearance of single cultures. This traditional conception of culture that Welsch describes is problematic, "inadequate" and "no longer suited to today's cultures" (2001) due to the inner complexity of modern cultures and varying lifestyles at present. It is, thus, the development of 'transculturality' that ought to address those key issues that would acknowledge the entanglements and flows from various agents and networks that transgress the traditional boundaries of the nation-state and the cultural identities that are constructed. Transculturality also firmly believes that cultural purity is a myth, whereby no culture is ever pure, but is rather historically hybrid and varied. What was initially foreign can be seized and assimilated within a nation's own culture to a point where the own- and the foreign culture are indistinguishable.

In terms of applying transculturality to the material culture, *The Social Life of Things* (1986) by Arjun Appadurai points out that things, like people, have social lives and thus, seeks to understand objects' meanings in terms of their life cycles "from production, through exchange/distribution, to consumption". Anna Gerritsen and Stephen McDowall (2012) further explore 'global lives of things' to see how objects acquire multiple meanings and identities as they travel across regions. Meanwhile, for architecture, *The Bungalow* (King, 1982) examines how the meaning and design of this building type have changed over time, and in a different geographical context, the museum and its non-conformist functions are also subjected to globalising forces.

Museums objects are also given a chance to be imbued with multiple meanings based on these global circulations and historical interactions between cultures. *ICOM-Europe's Mission Statement* (2006), has, on one occasion, expressed a need to "support transcultural learning in the museums of the region" but did not elaborate on what it means by 'transcultural learning' and how this can be achieved. The application of the transcultural perspective to museums is scarce in general, but the following texts managed to show how transcultural approaches can be adopted into museum exhibits and how historical narratives can be developed.

One example documents the trans-border arrangement of Ming dynasty pilgrim flasks in the galleries of China, India and Europe at the British Museum (Yang P., 2021). A trans-border arrangement "refers to displaying and classifying an object in museum space based on the object's context of production as well as its relations with other objects and people; its transfer, gifting, collection, consumption, and appropriation" (ibid., p.32). As such, this method of displaying objects revisits the dominant modes of museum categorisation based on cultural division and rethinks conventional nation-state division in the modes of display.

Another study is a compilation of essays on transcultural curation entitled *Adding Value: Recent Trends in Museum Exhibition of Asian-Pacific Artifacts* (2020) edited by Jens Sejrup, published in the *Journal of Transcultural Studies*. Susan Eberhard,

one of the authors, examined an example of transcultural curation supporting global political agendas in post-socialist Chinese museums. Based on the exhibits at the Changsha Museum in 2016, the exhibition showcased Chinese exported silverware that is presented as an example of Chinese craft heritage and, also, of evolving state-foreign-policy agenda. Through exhibition text, catalogues and transcultural objects, her paper explores the strategies through which these artefacts are represented through China's timeline. Her findings show that current trends in Chinese museums are focused on the BRI, global connectivity and technological achievements. The exhibits and exhibition narratives point towards evidence of a second Silk Road, another idea promoted by Xi's government. Another underlying narrative implies how the exhibits have "provided the grounds for a political re-envisioning of the 'century of humiliation'" (ibid., p.129), and that Western imperialism was forced upon China.

Hybrid museums in China may include transcultural curation as alternative means to present objects and to visualise new historical narratives. By applying transcultural curation to this study, it also acknowledges that symbolic meanings and object values shift; they lose previous meaning and form new powerful narratives. To conclude this section, the positioning of transcultural objects and transcultural curation can serve as powerful political statements through exhibitions in museums.

ii. The cultural-commercial hybrid

In today's globalised economy, established museums have been open about their economic realities and adopted business models to generate adequate revenues. This can manifest in various types of marketing strategies, e.g. the expansion of the Guggenheim franchise, travelling exhibitions, and so forth. The Guggenheim satellite museum model is especially characterised by a strong consumer orientation, leading one commentator to suggest that they are transforming "from public educational institutions into corporate entertainment complexes…" (Fraser, 2005, p.42 cited in Goff, 2017). The conflict emerges as the museum balances between running as a business for-profit, and also, in the traditional sense, retaining a transcendent space of so-called purity or authenticity to educate and house objects of value.

Some scholarship does address the necessity for museums to commercialise and adopt corporate values (Kotler et al., 1998; McNeill, 2000; Klingmann, 2007) to stay competitive in the fast-changing market. Like that of a business, globalisation has driven museums to *adopt new marketing strategies and approaches that "[enable] museums to increase audiences*, build relationships with stakeholders, and increase revenue streams" (Kotler et al., 1998, p.8). The transition from product-centred to consumer-centred organisations also runs in parallel to the increasingly interconnected network, which encourages intense competition among museums. The ability to adapt to quickly-changing styles and trends meets the demand of diverse requirements from a specialised consumer segment. It also places emphasis on a fast turnover profit.

In *New Museum Theory* (2006) by Janet Marstine, 'the cult of authenticity' in Western culture is "a protective gesture against relativism of postmodernism and the commodification of culture", but as the variety of museums has grown in the last few decades, 'new museum theory' argues for a less monolithic view of museums (ibid., p.3). Therefore, viewing the museum (in general) will not be limited to either the traditional conservator and educator, or as a profit-driven

business; Marstine's book supports this study's conception of a hybridised museum. Out of the four commonly heard metaphors of the museum: 'the shrine', 'the market-driven industry', the colonising space and the post-museum, the categories of interest in this subsection is an overlap between 'the shrine' and 'the market-driven industry' (Marstine, 2006). The author acknowledges that the commercial aspects (and its profit-driven aims) are merging with the traditional functions of the museum, as museums are becoming more open about their economic realities and requiring business models to generate revenue. Since funding sources may come from the government, private corporations or private benefactors, the so-called pure environment "unsullied by commercial concerns" is but an illusion (ibid., p.11).

The metaphors of 'the shrine' (cultural) and the 'market-driven industry' (commercial) are directed at the cultural-commercial programmes in hybridised museums in mainland China.

a. *The shrine*

For 'the shrine', traditional associations of culture and power are still relevant and necessary in understanding the structural and organisational aspects of the history of museum development in the Chinese context. As museums in China seem drawn into the conception of nationality that underpins museums, the existence of 'the shrine' suggests that the museum may have retained its purist and elitist intentions.

To an extent, the museum (as a general cultural institution) still conforms to the Foucauldian disciplinary model because of its association with nation-building. From the means to internalise social control and classify, display, and preserve the past, the traditional museum can be expressed through Foucault's concept of heterotopia (2001; Bennett, 1995), which is used to describe spaces that have more layers of meaning or relationships to other places than immediately meet the eye. The museum is seen to exist in time but also exists outside of time because they are built to withstand time itself. The separation of the exhibition of objects, placed on pedestals and in glass boxes, becomes a transcendent space designed to "suspend time" and provide only a one-way dialogue with the sentient visitor (Bennett, 1995). This is the distinctive nature of museums as 'the shrine'.

Figure 33. British Museum's Sutton Hoo's display in Room 41 is typical of a 'shrine-like' museum (British Museum Blog, 2017).

Another associated idea of 'the shrine' is the concept of surveillance. In the Western canon of the history of museums, this idea marks a change within the social order, whereby the early public museums become a civilising space for the lower classes to aspire to the same lifestyles and mannerisms of the middle and upper classes—the model citizens. This voyeuristic idea of watching and being watched leads back to Foucault's own studies of the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995). Foucault's seminal work is based on the issue of governmentality, which has led to the famous concept of the panopticon, as well as heightening surveillance in prisons. Although the book makes no mention of the museum, the Machiavellian essence of governance, surveillance and regulation of spaces has been repeatedly appropriated in the historical framework of museums as well.

Foucault's seminal concepts of heterotopia and surveillance have since been reframed and challenged for different geographical contexts and times. With direct reference to the museum and application of Foucault's concepts, Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum* (1995) confronts the Foucauldian framework (in addition to those of Gramsci, Bourdieu and Habermas) to understand the transformation of the museum as a space of chaos, disorder and frivolity into order, regularity and display. His book traces back to the emergence of the modern museum—functioning as "technologies of progress" (ibid., p.10)—in the late 19th-century, where changes to museum architecture reflected an expansion of scientific knowledge and a growing synergy between new governmental relations and high culture.

Unlike Foucault, Bennett makes the connections between museums and their relations to cultural institutions (Foucault's "agent"), which involves the "showing-and-telling" and the "exhibiting artefacts and/or persons in a manner calculated to embody and to communicate specific cultural meanings and values" (ibid., p.6). The narrative of the museum (the flow, displays and presentation) enters a form of performative mechanism in which its spatial (and built) form helps connect the objects to the visitor. In this view, museum spaces have the power to transmit

political and social messages, to convey moral values, to establish social distinction and wealth, to engage in public exhibitions, and so forth.

Although the books did not focus on Chinese museums, "the shrine" metaphor's top-down transmission of historical and narrative power continues to be relevant. To an extent, considering the history of museum development in mainland China (Lu, 2014, Varutti, 2014; Lord et al., 2019), this study's proposed conceptualisation of hybrid museums acknowledges that the relationship between power, politics and identity are strongholds to the general museum production processes, regardless of museum type or classification.

Figure 34. An etching of the Louvre in Paris by Thomas Allom, 'The Grand Gallery of the Louvre' (ca. 1844) (Richman-Abdou, 2018).
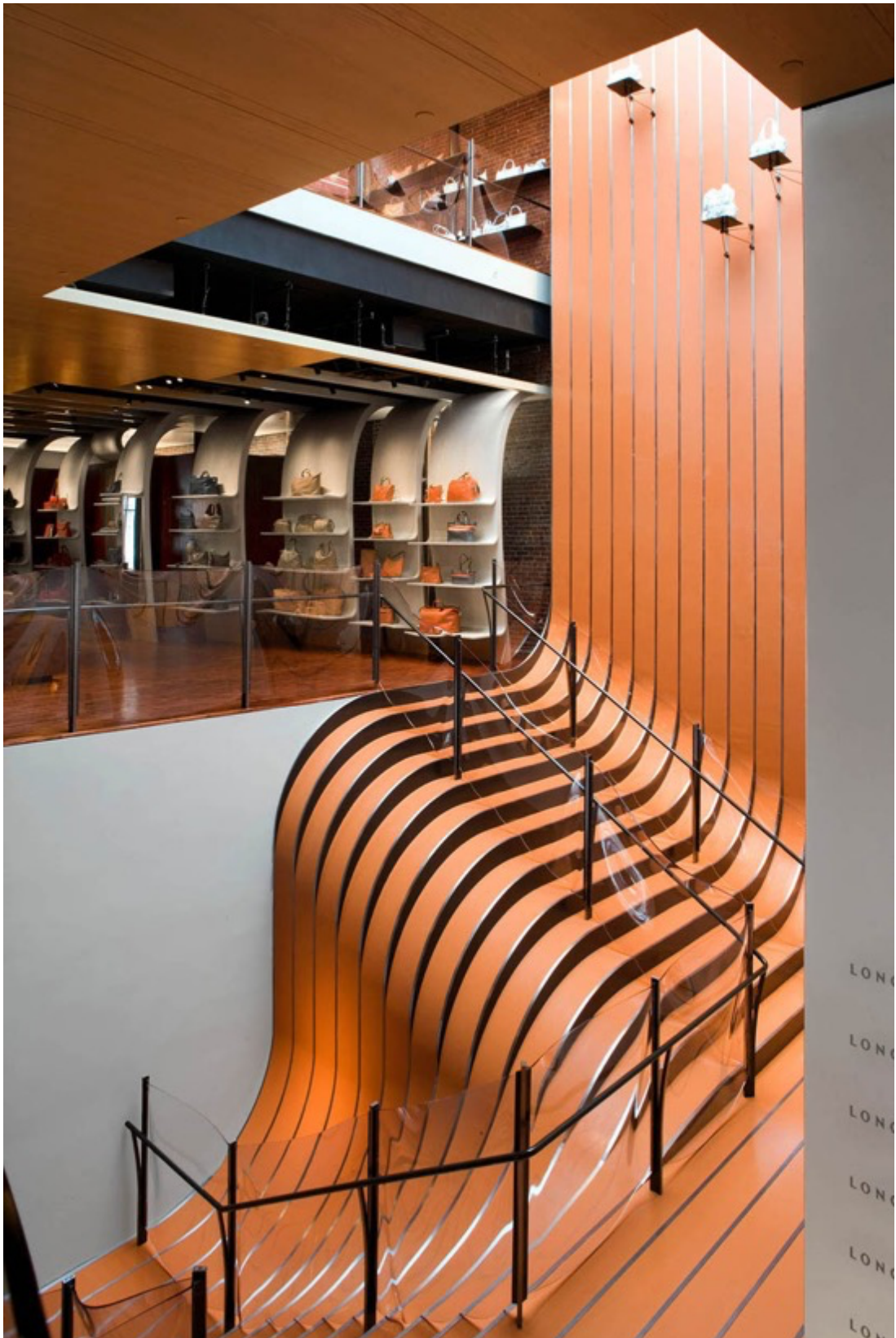
Figure 35. Longchamp store in New York is designed by Heatherwick Studios (Heatherwick, 2004).

Regarding the museum as a 'market-driven industry' (Marstine, 2006), parallels can be found in the consumption or commercialisation of culture in the luxury brand industry. From Louis Vuitton in Osaka to the Longchamp Store in New York (Figure 35), flagship stores have employed famous architects and museum-style curation to curate and sell their products. In expressing the popularity of these hybrid spaces, one architect working in China said that museums are "the Louis Vuitton bags of architecture. Every city in China wants one now" (Jacobson, 2011, p.xi). In *Junkspace*, Rem Koolhaas described examples of terms that blend formally divorced realities into a set of new oxymorons that erase former incompatibilities, e.g. "life/style, reality/TV, world/music, museum/store, food/court" (Koolhaas, 2020, cited in Klingmann, 2007, p.124). These oxymorons also see luxury retail stores incorporating a café or a gallery layout into their flagship stores: from Louis Vuitton in Osaka, Tiffany & Co. at Harrods, Chanel's Coco Café to the Vivienne Westwood Café in K11 Shanghai.

To an extent, this hybridisation of culture with commercial or leisure spaces is not new. One of the earliest known examples includes the UK's V&A Museum's promotion of its "ace caff" (the Museum café) as a tourist attraction and a public facility in the 1860s (Marstine, 2006, p.12; V&A Museum, 2017). The merging of the cultural with commerce to create adaptable and flexible museum spaces is becoming a popular typology that signals the changes in the global market (Kotler N.G, Kotler P, and Kotler W., 1998). However, the brand in the postmodern era not only emphasises lifestyle associations and corporate identity, but seeks to provide added value through the creation of memorable experiences, in which spatial design becomes a key element in this branding processes. The postmodernist saturation of entertainment and an increasingly market-oriented museum emphasise experience and entertainment as "a form of Karaoke architecture where it is not important how well you can sing, but that you do it with verve and gusto" (Evans, 2003, p.417). Therefore, the museum's brand and associated experiences are becoming increasingly important for a 'market-driven industry' museum (Marstine, 2006).

Figure 36. Louis Vuitton's first cafe (Le Café V) and restaurant (Sugalabo V) in their new Maison Osaka Midosuji store (Taylor, 2020).

Notable brands such as Starbucks (Figure 37) are given added value through the power of stimulating emotions through their key flagship stores. They are not only visually distinctive but are known for selling a lifestyle, and integrating this with their own corporate identity. From their products and services to architecture, this holistic approach goes to show that customers seek experiences that associate with a particular (and consistent) lifestyle; a sign that indicates their own self-identification, where every activity, henceforth, becomes part of a larger value system. The synthesis of culture and consumption has reached new heights on the

site of the former Guggenheim Museum in New York's SoHo district, which has been converted into a new Prada store designed by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas (founder of Office for Metropolitan Architecture [OMA]), as a part of the Prada Universe (Figure 38). OMA's keen research into 'shopping' responds to increasingly blurred retail spaces. Koolhaas's Prada Epicenter is designed to be "an exclusive boutique, a public space, a gallery, a performance space, a laboratory" (OMA, no date).

The result is arguably an early template of hybridised retail spaces, similar to China's hybrid museum-mall described in this study. Koolhaas's interest in these "acronyms" manifests into the design of this Prada Epicenter store, which is designed with museum and theatre elements in its commercial space (Klingmann, 2007). A key feature utilises a slope with steps, both for displaying items and to be used as a seating area. The venue also facilitates film screenings, performances and lectures. He observes that the result of these indistinguishable spaces (arguably the concept of hybridisation) is a "loss of variety" because of "an enormous wave of commercial entrapment that has transformed museum-goers, researchers, travelers, patients, and students into customers" (ibid.). However, his motives behind the Prada Epicenter were to challenge this thought with customers being turned into museum-goers, researchers, patients and students, instead of a consumer. That way, shopping experiences can be enriched. What the above case study shows is the relationship between the brand-name architect or collaborators in the design of hybrid spaces. They are arguably a part of the symbolic economy, employed to partake in the spectacle and play a direct role in transforming the urban- and city-landscape.

Figure 37. Starbucks Reserve Roastery Shanghai takes after the flagship Roastery in Seattle (Whitten, 2017).

For texts that look into this relationship between actors and the production of landmark cultural venues in China (including museums), Ren Xuefei's *Building Globalisation* (2011, p.57) managed to set apart four major types of international architects enticed by the Chinese market: (i) starchitects, (ii) corporate architects, (iii) research-oriented architects and, (iv) dual-track Chinese architects. The first of these, "the jet-setting starchitects" (ibid.), are those who receive the most media attention and a large crowd of admirers. China entices this group with its huge market potential and also the chance for them to explore many new possibilities in architecture design, scale and construction, blessed with the abundance of cheap labour and financial support. Their involvement also becomes important in driving competition in Chinese cities. The second group, "corporate parachutes" (ibid.), are a group of corporate architects, engineers, and project managers sent from their home base to China in order to diversify their portfolios, but often have limited knowledge of the local conditions and market. They turn to hiring locals to fill the knowledge gap. The third group are more research-oriented architects based in China and tend to be more well-informed about local conditions than the starchitects and corporate parachutes. The final group are "the dual-track Chinese architects" (ibid.), who have knowledge of both local conditions and international trends, but they tend to come from a pool of overseas Chinese architects.
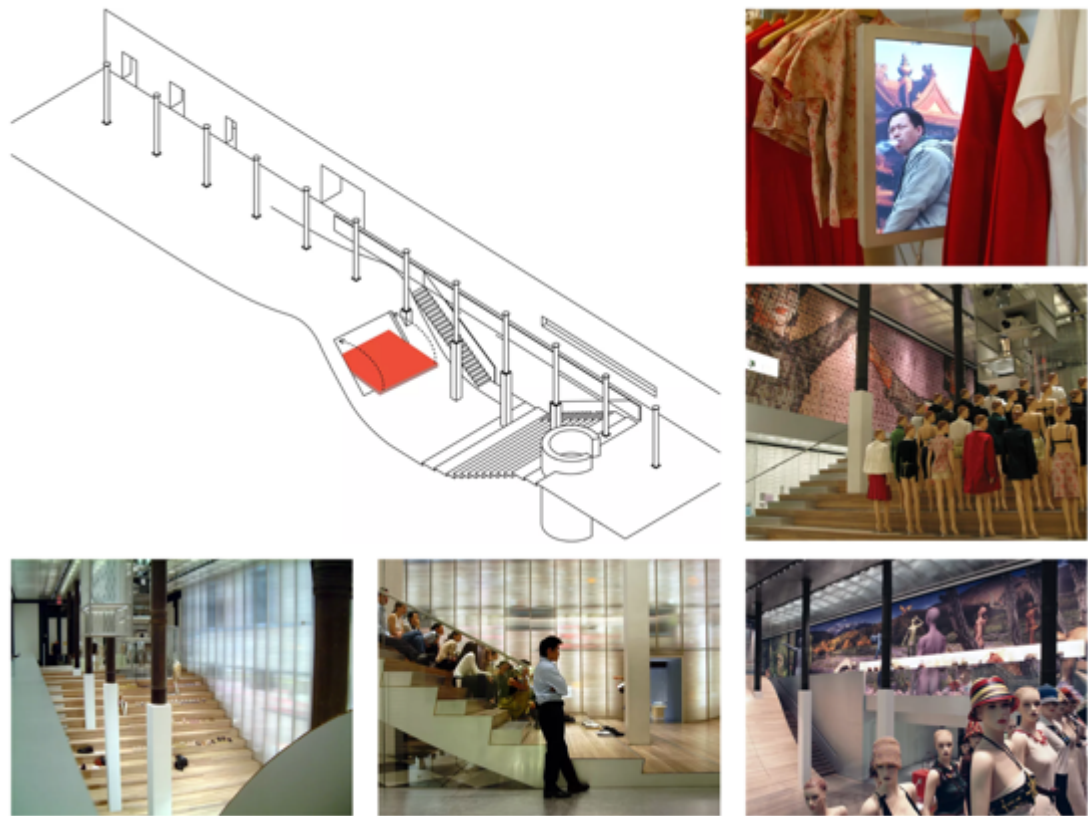
Figure 38. New York Prada Epicenter by OMA (OMA, no date).

Based on the history of museum development in China (Lu, 2014, Varutti, 2014; Lord et al., 2019), it becomes evident that it is never built solely for enjoyment and leisure, but reinforces economic dominance, protecting cultural heritage, constructing identities and national identity. Although the hybridisation of 'the shrine' and the 'market-driven industry' museum is becoming popular in general, much of the museum in China appears to reinforce the traditional analysis of the birth of the museum as an apparatus of the state (Marstine, 2006; Lu, 2014; Varutti, 2014; Foucault, 1995; Bennett; 1995). Whilst working within the confines of the state, understanding the process of hybridisation in recently-opened museums (through the cultural and commercial, the state and non-state, the local and global interests) argues for a new type of hybrid museum that is born under China's unique geographical context.

Culture has been widely used as the new currency for global city production, whereby the brand of the city or country is defined by aesthetic value. An example is the case of Cool Britannia, a manifesto of Tony Blair's New Labour government, which was used to rebrand a New Britain and marked a transition into the service and financial industries. It is also said that the 'creative industries' were coined during this time (Keane, 2016). *Cool Britannia* appeared to be a marketing hype aimed to promote the UK (and its pop culture) to the rest of the world, but it also became the face of Labour's new government. Hence, the iconic images (from the Union Jack flag, the London Underground, the red telephone box, the Britpop movement, etc.) symbolised a renewal in British pride and commodification of culture, but also the development of a recognisable (national) brand (Figure 39).

Figure 39. The Union Jack as symbol of British identity and has been widely used as a fashion statement, merchandise, pop culture, etc. since Cool Britannia was introduced (Jones, 2021).

The 'culture' projected in the place- and city-brand are thus reflective of underlying agendas, cultural values, and missions of the key actors. The nation itself could be commoditised. The museum (as a cultural venue) can be seen as a tool that

supports these branding strategies, but also display the "representational" space, city or nation in its exhibits (Lefebvre, 1991; Sandweiss, 2004). Considering Dovey's notion of 'place' (2010), this subsection supports a symbiotic relationship between the Chinese museum with the city. The idea of 'urban memory' in the processes of constructing and erasing architectural and urban experiences in the city also determines the representations to which memory fixes itself in the retrospective act of remembering cities, but also in the prospective act of constructing them (Sandweiss, 2004; Crinson, 2005). As an institution that presents the representational image of the city, the museum houses mnemonic functions and gives the 'place' new meanings. In a broad sense, these memories are "fundamentally local" (Dovey, 2010), yet globalising interests play a role in this construction and erasure of memory from the city. Thus, in considering brandscaping (with elements of both branding and placemaking) in the Chinese context, the museum must be viewed as a part of a wider economic, political and social system, within the local and global.

This section looks at the hybrid museum in relation to the concept of placemaking and the globalising Chinese city whereby they are reflective of the localising and globalising forces that shape and construct them. The first subsection, *a. The Chinese museum in the globalising city,* briefly sees the museum as part of China's modernisation projects; it reflects support from local state actors working together to construct 'culture' and the image of a 'global city'. The next subsection, *b. Branded environments*, sees the museum-as-entertainment that has the power to create new spaces for public cultures.

a. The Chinese museum in the globalising city

In *Museum Development in China: Understanding the Building Boom,* one of the authors examined how fiscal and political forces have "provoked an explosion of monumental public and private structures have coincided with a civic and popular drive to create urban places with a centre and a past" (Saunders, 2019, p.38). In many ways, this phenomenon is not new. Municipal governments from Bilbao to Shanghai have borrowed from branding and used architecture (with a focus on cultural venues) to enhance the cities' image and position themselves as global cities. Top architects have been involved in the design of the contemporary museum: Richard Rogers (Pompidou), Frank Gehry (Guggenheims, Disney Museum, EMP Seattle), Richard Meier (Getty, MACBA), Daniel Libeskind (V&A, Imperial War Museum, Jewish Museum Berlin), Rem Koolhaus (MoMA, Guggenheim) and I.M.Pei (Louvre). For practical reasons, it is a form of gaining international publicity and commanding global attention, especially if the architecture itself wins awards. Having a brand-name architect also adds to the culture of the city, for instance, in the cases of Barcelona and Brazilia, where Antonia Gaudi and Oscar Niemeyer are celebrated architects in their respective cities (Goff, 2017). By associating 'place' with a cultural icon, the city becomes the main stage in which the museum (as icon and spectacle) operates within the wider local and global flows.

The development of high-profile cultural venues in Chinese cities is especially significant as culture is designed as one of the "pillars of the economy" in the 13th National Plan (Lu, 2014, p.196). As a result, the construction of museums in Chinese cities has become an inevitable consequence of China's urban growth. It is also "a result of the specific ways in which Chinese municipalities govern themselves, expand our populations, make use of land, raise revenues, organise their living spaces and communities, plan major projects, and attempt to create civic space and economic activity" (Saunders, 2019, p.33). The need to use the museum as a tool to drive city growth also stems from an "urgent need for a sense of 'place' and centrality" (ibid.). The cultural venues, elite shopping centres and other

megaprojects become the symbol and most visible manifestation of this need to create new urban identities in the absence of municipal history or culture.

Unlike its Western counterpart, the museum in China becomes tied to these multiple and complex motives of state paradigm, and the wider place- and city-brand. Despite the increasing presence of TNCs and global franchises, these hybrid museums and museum collaborations involving transnational actors are arguably bound by China's 'developmental state model' in which "national and local governments remain architects of progress; they welcome international capital and will amend and bend rules to favour investors as well as local players…" (Keane, 2007, p,4). In China, given the museums' relationship with the state, it also becomes the most visible manifestation of local policy and globalising agenda. However, unlike its Western counterparts, megaproject development is not a response towards a deindustrializing process, but rather is owed to its rapid economic growth since the Reform and Opening-up, and consequent economic liberalisation in the 1980s that spurred an explosion of urban growth and infrastructure spending in China.

In *Created in China* (2007), Keane examines China's creative economy and how traditional understandings of culture have been reshaped. The brand of China becomes part of the import-export trade as it moves up the global value chain. Although the focus of this chapter is on the creative economy (the more two-dimensional TV, animation, advertising, publishing, gaming, and more), the rise in creative clusters in Chinese cities transform urban cultures as spaces of consumption and tourism. Although the book does not focus on branding as a practice, but rather on the transformation of China's cultural and creative industries, overlaps can be inferred as they fit into the same wider policy to transform culture into a resource. The blur between cultural and commercial programmes would later be endorsed in policy statements, through accelerated internationalism and upon joining the WTO in 2001. The book acknowledges how these creative and cultural policies would extend into urban design and nation's

modernisation project, in the form of international brands, fast-food franchises, shopping malls and spectacular buildings.

In terms of branding and architecture in China, signature buildings have been used in transnational architecture production, as expressed by Ren Xuefei in *Architecture as Branding* (2008). As Ren (ibid.) observes: "Chinese mega projects are a hybrid product of local investment capital, strong government intervention and international architectural design". In examining the case of SOHO China Inc., the study sees the use of iconic architecture from a starchitect as part of a corporate branding process, employed to brand their megaprojects. SOHO, in particular, is known for their avant-garde design from international architects to market its projects, e.g. SOHO employed Zaha Hadid to design Galaxy SOHO in Beijing (Figure 40). Not to mention, real-estate development in China is still largely a local practice in a landscape where Chinese cities are financed by domestic investment capital. In characterising Chinese megaprojects, Ren (ibid.) also notes that, with their huge budgets, signature buildings are made possible by strong political and financial support from local governments. The top-down intervention must thus be affiliated with these projects, including museums. Ren explains the two major factors for government intervention: (i) advancement of political careers from these megaprojects, and (ii) revenue return by land leasing. This would also fit into wider master plans built with globalising intentions.

Figure 40. Galaxy SOHO by Zaha Hadid (Zaha Hadid Architects, no date).

The article also situates transnational architecture production in rising megaprojects (including central business districts [CBDs], museums, and more). Local governments use megaprojects to create a new image for their urban space and rebrand their cities in the face of inter- and global city competition. Therefore, the construction of a high-profile museum often serves as "a landmark building that will serve as a civic focal point—a whole, centre, or museum, or some combination—in an effort to identify or 'brand' the city, both internationally and for the benefit of its own residents" (Sauders, 2019, p.33). Emerging from the big infrastructure investments appears to be a genuine desire for Chinese cities to develop a sense of coherence and urban identity.

For example, in Shenzhen, Caroline Cartier's study on 'transnational urbanism' (2002) focused on the Shenzhen Municipal Centre in Futian District's Central Business District (Figure 41 and 42). The article demonstrates cultural production, signature architecture development and transnational actors as crucial formulas in

turning the 'generic city' of Shenzhen into a 'world city' of many names, including
the Creative City of Design. She identified the key aims and intentions of the
Shenzhen Municipal People's Government using them to demonstrate the
importance of significant architecture development in Tier-1 Chinese cities. The
intention uses these architecture projects and the brand-name actors involved to
convey the symbolic image of the city as a global city open to international
investment.

To conclude, these projects represent a change in the way architecture and urban
spaces are produced today, namely through increasing transnational processes.
Museums, like other cultural venues, are also subjected to these processes and
global flows of capital, expertise, and resources.

Figure 7 Futian District: Buildings along Shennan Road that were designed by foreign architects between 1979 and 2018. Drawn by the authors.

Figure 41. The plan of Futian District in Shenzhen (Sun and Xue, 2020, p.444).

Figure 42. Shenzhen Civic Center at the Futian District, designed by SWA Group (Chalcraft, 2012).

A constant theme throughout this subsection is that the museum (as an extension of the city) uses the past to construct place identity and reinforce current ideology, even under the guise of commerce and urban spectacles. Although this points towards a dominantly state-led development of culture, existing literature suggests the development of the museum is embedded with the interactions between the local and the global. This in turn, shapes the way brandscapes are made. In *Landscapes of Power* (1993, p.12), Sharon Zukin describes the concept of 'place' as follows:

> Place…refers to territory-a territory with its own flora and fauna and local allegiances. Closely related is the idea of specific places as concentrations of people and economic activity. Place in this sense is a form of local society rendered so special by economy and demography that it instantly conjures up an image…Place in a third, broader sense is a cultural artifact of social conflict and cohesion.

Adding to a more fluid conception of 'place', Dovey (2010, p.4) summarises that for Barthes (1973), place is "a form of mythology"; for Foucault (1979) "a form of constructed subjectivity". For Henri Lefebvre, space is both a means of production and a product of it—while space is socially constructed, the social is spatially constructed. With this premise of place, Dovey reminds readers that "places are lived and embodied; they are structured, ordered, transformed, infiltrated and negotiated; they are symbolized, packaged and marketed" (ibid., p.11). His book, containing an assemblage of essays, tries to make sense of place within global fields of power, capital markets, nationalisms, design professions, mass media, rural-urban migrations, and so forth. The idea of 'place' is more fluid; it doesn't refer to a mere geographical space but also its people, their culture and relation to the broader world.

Regardless of museum type or geographical context, the museum has the power to create new public spaces and cultures in the city. Museums, as major attractions in themselves, also add to the fabrication of entertainment through active participation in cultural consumption. As a visible symbolic and emblematic presence, the museum has the potential to become a branded environment working as a part of the place- and city-brand, in the way the civic spaces and urban developments at Futian District in Shenzhen are coordinated (Cartier, 2002). In Graeme Evans's article on *Hard-branding the Cultural City* (2003), he describes hard-branding as a "specific attempt to capitalize on 'commodity fetishism' and extend brand life, geographically and symbolically". He is not the first to associate this fetishism with culture (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002). Brand reinforcement becomes a distinctive factor in the local landscape. The manifestation of globalisation has spurred fierce competition, and thus, branding cities also require an integrated development of their aesthetic, experiential and symbolic value.

As a hybrid cultural venue and branded environment, Evans' study views the development of art museums and cultural complexes as built upon the foundation of key actors: curators, foundations, architects and politicians, and so forth. Cultural-led regeneration relies on the museum as a cultural status symbol. Not only is culture the new currency and global marker, "culture is more and more the business of cities—the basis of their tourist attractions and the unique competitive edge" (Zukin, 1995, p.2). According to Sharon Zukin (ibid., p.12-13), "cultural institutions establish a competitive advantage over other cities for attracting new businesses and corporate elites", but they also stimulate the growth of "art museums, boutiques, restaurants and other specialized sites of consumption which create a social space for the exchange of ideas on which businesses thrive". Culture has the means to drive urban regeneration, tourism, drive local economic development (Scott, 2010; Florida, 2012), bolster the creative and cultural industries and promote nationalist agendas. Urban planning would soon begin to reveal that the quality of place and cultural consumption are exceedingly connected (Dovey, 2008;2010).

The museum as a cultural venue, branded commodity and business seems to be manifestations of key actors, who use the museum as tool for their broader interests. When it comes to branded environments and possibly early hybrid spaces, the most famous example is the Disneyland Theme Park. Disneyland's overall branding strategy and architecture emphasise on amusement, escapism, consumer appetites and new technologies to construct a hyper-realistic space. For Eco (1986), that focus was on the experience and emotional satisfaction of visitors who enter and participate in a simulated world or so-called "toy cities"—spaces that blur the lines between the real and the fake. From its own monorail system and high streets to its hotel, every aspect is carefully curated to blur the simulated from reality, built as a microcosm of a functioning city. Disneyland's overall branding strategy and spatial design places emphasis on amusement, escapism, consumer appetites and new technologies to construct a "simulacrascape" through the "hyperreal" (Bosker, 2013).

This framework for understanding hybrid museums can learn much from the development of branded environments. With similarities drawn from 'McDonalidization' (Ritzer and Miles, 2019) (a concept whereby fast-food chains dominate sectors of American society), 'Disneyization' can be described as "the process by which *the principles* of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (Bryman, 1999, p.26). This led to the formation of gated communities like Celebration (a gated community owned and controlled by the Disney Corporation) built around the corporate identity of Disney, where the romanticised heritage of rural America is shaped around the corporate philosophy of Disney Corporation as well. Celebration is not only a highly-controlled urban environment but a community whose morals and behaviours are regulated, and the architecture is the uniform image that holds this corporate philosophy and idealised living together. The visitor and residents are in a simulated environment built upon architectural signs and symbols (e.g. picket fencing) that convey the ideal American family as predominantly white and middle-class. Architecture here symbolises the middle-class appeal but also promotes homogeneity of places and exclusion with one

accepted standard. The integration of branding with a controlled environment both share the extension of the actors involved and their possibilities of homogenising identities.

Figure 43. Main Street at Disneyland has a streetcar track and high street stores on either side (Ramirez, 2018).

On a wider scale, Venturi's, Brown's and Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977) use Las Vegas as an example of a 'message city'—one whose urbanscape is made entirely from signs. The elements of borrowing historic styles and pastiche to create the visual spectacle merge characteristics of a theme park or fairground whilst being a functioning city. Rather than theme park attractions, Disneyization could present itself with live entertainment, attractions, merchandising, dining, commercial zones, and more; they blur the private and public spaces. Zukin (1993; 2010) would describe it as a re-aestheticisation of public space that became dominant in America during the 90s. The shifting authority of urban space from the public to the private sector can be felt in the typical projects of public parks, commercial streets and flagship stores of multinational corporations. The shops, entertainment complexes and museums become interventions that help shape an ideal city based on consumption, but at the same time, "weakens local distinctiveness" of place (Klingmann, 2007, p.258). These seemingly inauthentic and

scripted attractions would form the basis of the simulacra or 'pseudo-events', as a result of the social relations of tourism. In all, this tension between the market and place becomes part of the performative "tourist gaze" (Boorstin, 1964, cited in Urry and Larsen, 2011).

Figure 44. Las Vegas is a city of signs (Feldberg and May, 2022).

The Disneyfied streets of growing global franchises, coffee shops, retail, and so forth are the key traits that foster powerful identities through experience and lifestyle association of consuming. In *Cultures of Cities* (1995, p.28), Zukin termed this as "pacification by cappuccino". Foreign signs and brands would suggest a challenge for the local; the culture of cities thus in conflict with globalising forces. In mainstream literature on the culture of the city, the definition of culture has taken upon multiple meanings that could also be used to describe the culture of cities in architecture and urban studies. Zukin (1995, p.3) adds: "the cultural power to create an image, to frame a vision, of the city has become more important as … traditional institutions … both social classes and political parties have become less relevant mechanisms of expressing identity. Those who create images stamp a collective identity. Whether they are media corporations like Disney, art museums, or politicians, they are creating new spaces for public cultures".

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter does not provide a standard template to view hybrid museums and museum collaborations in mainland China (since museums are varied), but it expanded and combined relevant studies on branding and hybridisation to define this museum phenomenon. In section *2.2 Branding as overarching theme,* the main aim was to expand on the original concept of the 'brandscape' (by Klingmann) for application on non-Western cultures, like China. The findings supported a merge between key attributes of the brandscape with the local museum context, thus a localised form of the brandscape enables better evaluation of hybridised museums in China.

In section *2.3 Three Levels of Hybridisation*, the three types of hybridisation examined China's hybrid museums and their multifunctional nature as a kind of new business model operating within wider the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests. Although focused on the museum development in China, the combination of these ideas offered a universal view to examine complex economic and political shifts through an increasingly more complex and blurred functions of the museum.

Part 2 will use the SWCAC to test and challenge this overall framework.

PART 2

INTRODUCTION TO PART 2

The three-part sequence described in Chapter 2, section *2.3 Three Levels of Hybridisation,* forms the main structure for the following Part 2, comprising of *Chapter 3*: *The Transnational Actors, Chapter 4: The Cultural-commercial Hybrid* and *Chapter 5: Place branding Sea World and 'Shekou's Story'*. Each chapter corresponds with a different mode of hybridisation (transnational actors, cultural-commercial building functions, and place- and city branding). The overall findings in each chapter support the idea for a localised brandscape born from the unique conditions in China.

Beginning with the less visible drivers, Chapter 3's focus is on the branding of the Design Society and the V&A Museum partnership, namely through the way the project is branded in key publications and represented within the physical space of SWCAC. This chapter identifies three brand-name actors that are most influential in the project's brand image and architecture design. Complementing the findings in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 examines the physical evidence of hybridisation through design process and experience of SWCAC's façade, built form and building programmes. The cultural-commercial elements will determine the drivers behind its multifunctionality and market-driven environment. Lastly, Chapter 5 expands upon SWCAC in relation to the place- and city-brand of Shekou and Shenzhen. Although the main analysis looks at Sea World Plaza, the urban developments at Sea World present both localising and globalising interests that appear contradictory to the brand image projects at SWCAC. When viewed within the broader view of Deng's Reform and CMG's Shekou Model, the conflicting images show the hybridisation of the local and the global as a unique phenomenon in China.

Overall, Part 2 challenges the presumption that the state has the most autonomy over the museum's spatial agency and narratives. However, this section acknowledges that the production of (hybrid museum) architecture operates within

"the system of capitalism" as well (Klingmann, 2007, p.4). Therefore, architecture "like any other commodity promotes the expansion of profit, servicing the increase of production and, more recently, consumption" (ibid.). In *Mass Appeal in Architecture,* Italian semiotician Umberto Eco (1997, p.195) observes architecture having characteristics "in common with the messages of mass communication". Among the list, he includes (ibid., p.196):

> Architecture is a business. It is produced under economic conditions very similar to the ones governing much of mass culture, and in this too differs from other forms of culture. Painters may do with galleries, and writers with publishers, but for the most part that has to do with their livelihood and need not have anything to do with what they find themselves painting and writing; the painter can always pursue painting independently, perhaps while making a living in some other way, and the writer can produce work for which there is no market, perhaps with no thought of them having published, but the architect cannot be engaged in the practice of architecture without inserting himself into a given economy in technology and trying to embrace the logic he finds there, even when he would like to contest it...

In such a high-level partnership with the V&A Museum, the branding processes and architecture production of SWCAC share similarities with multinational corporations [MNCs]. In this view, it becomes common to see state-owned enterprises [SOEs] or private developers use foreign architects to build their cultural buildings as part of their branding strategy. As a result of these interactions, the synergy of ideas and brand-name actors are in a continuous process of creating new meanings for the museum and establishing themselves in wider relation to the city and nation.

CHAPTER 3: THE TRANSNATIONAL ACTORS

3.1 Introduction

In order to better understand the process of hybridisation within the hybrid museum, *Chapter 3*: *The Transnational Actors* begins with its most important but least visible form: the key actors who conceived it. The chapter presents SWCAC as an example of a hybrid museum carefully developed by key actors or 'agents', who conceptualise and develop the museum's brand image to reflect their own corporate brand, and convey specific meanings or values. At surface level, the brand image of the SWCAC uses the past to construct its brand, to reinforce ideology, and to place emphasis on its connections with Shenzhen's city-brand and China's economic reform. However, this chapter also sees discrepencies and contradictions on the brand image being presented by the different actors, whereby the image does not match or fully express the underlying realities of the museum collaboration.

The process of hybridisation at SWCAC is expected to demonstrate how hybrid museums are made from an interconnected system and "entangled cultures" (Welsch, 2001). By looking at the underlying layers beneath the SWCAC, this chapter shows how the actors work together to construct a local and global brand image for the SWCAC that suits their individual and collective aims. By understanding the underlying transnational organisational structure at the SWCAC, this chapter presents a need to reconsider how the SWCAC is branded and constructed by different actors. The role of each key actor determines how the SWCAC is represented, and later experienced. The consulted secondary sources originate primarily from online documents, press releases, book publications and reports available on the websites of key actors: CMG, Design Society, the V&A Museum, Maki and Associates, the Nanshan District Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government. Using these texts offer a glimpse into the museum's inner workings, including its mission and aims, community service, education programmes, and so forth.

This chapter has one main section: *3.2 Brand-name Actors*. The section is broken down into three key actors: (i) the client (CMG), (ii) the partners (Design Society and the V&A Museum), and (iii) the architect (Maki and Associates). It is arranged to begin with the most important actor (CMG) that enabled the multiple 'hybridisations' to manifest at the SWCAC. The following section will show how each key actor may exercise political, cultural and commercial power through SWCAC, and become active in the construction of new place identity and historical narrative.

3.2 Brand-name actors

How SWCAC's and Sea World's narratives are constructed and negotiated between the different actors will be examined through textual language, particularly through official websites, videos, key exhibitions, exhibition catalogues, sponsorship, etc., with particular attention paid to how the collaboration is branded and how the SWCAC's brand image is built to complement the actors' corporate brand and place- and city-brand. The following findings based on the three key actors: (i) the client (CMG), (ii) the partners (Design Society and the V&A Museum), and (iii) the architect (Maki and Associates). In (i) the client and the first half of (ii) the partners (Design Society), the subsections mainly centre around the role and missions of the state-supported actors, presumed to have the most power to construct the brand image and narratives at the SWCAC. In the later half of (ii) the partnership (the V&A Museum) and (iii) the architect, the relationship between state actors with non-state and other transnational actors will be explored, challenging the authoritative and dominantly state-led assumption of the collaboration.

In such a high-level partnership with the V&A Museum, the branding processes and architecture production of SWCAC share similarities with multinational corporations (MNCs) or as a transnational actors in its own right (Goff, 2017). In this view, it becomes common to see state-owned enterprises (SOEs) or private developers use foreign architects to build their cultural buildings as part of their branding strategy. As a result of these interactions, the synergy of ideas and brand-name actors are in a continuous process of creating new meanings for the museum and establishing themselves in wider relation to the city and nation.

Through the process and act of constructing these architectural and urban experiences at Sea World, Shekou and Shenzhen, the organisational collaboration between actors determines how the past and current ideologies are perceived and experience in the localised brandscape.

As part of our redevelopment of the Shekou district of
Shenzhen we wanted to offer the local residents an
internationally important museum that would help promote the
development of China's creative industries and further progress
design in China. We can think of no better partner to do this
with than the V&A, which brings with it a wealth of expertise on
the role of a contemporary design museum as well as
understanding of Chinese culture through their long-standing
connections with China. We think this collaboration will deliver
a truly wonderful new museum.

Mr Sun, Vice-President of China Merchants Group (V&A
Museum, 2014).

Judging by the traditional state-led cultural development in China, it can be
presumed that the state actor will have the most power in exercising political,
cultural and commercial influence on museums, regardless of type. For SWCAC,
CMSK (as the client) would be the most active in developing the overall museum's
brand and the place identity of Shekou. CMSK is a subsidiary of CMG, born from the
merger between the Shekou Industrial Zone with China Merchants Property on 30
December 2015. CMG, "a state-owned backbone enterprise headquartered in Hong
Kong" under the direct supervision of the State-owned Assets Supervision and
Administration Commission of the State Council [SASAC] (CMG, 2015), was founded
as early as the late Qing dynasty, in 1872, as a shipping enterprise.

As a part of its corporate mission, CMG prides itself on being a pioneering SOE that
was historically significant to China in its early modern history. This would become
one of the key themes behind SWCAC's conception and brand. Their website—
particularly the *About Us* and *History* sections—presents CMG as a long-established

and ground-breaking group that embodies Shenzhen's success and China's economic reform. From its founding year until 2014, a timeline of CMG's notable achievements lists the key moments for each year. The website proudly lists the many historic "firsts", not just for Shenzhen but for a modernising China: as the "first joint-stock company", "first merchant fleet", "first bank and insurance company" (CMG, 2015). Over the years, it has diversified its interests into three core industries, namely "integrated transportation, specialty finance, and integrated urban and industrial park development and operation" (ibid.). CMG is listed in the Fortune 500 list of 2020, with a track record of being one of the eight central SOEs awarded an A grade by SASAC for 16 consecutive years.

Figure 45. CMG's main logo and the Chinese characters are written by famous calligrapher Tan Zekai in 1947. Below the logo is a simplified diagram of CMG's subsidiary companies (CMG, 2015).

In many ways, the process of hybridisation has been deeply rooted in CMG's own development and diversification of business over the years. As an indication of its

enormity and presence in everyday life in China, CMG also owns various subsidiaries. This notable list includes China Merchants Bank, Sinotrans Limited, China Merchants Expressway Network & Technology Holdings Co., Ltd, China Yangtze Shipping Group Co., Ltd, China Merchants Securities, China Merchants Life Insurance, and more. China Merchants Bank, the joint-equity commercial bank, can be seen spread around the country as a prominent domestic bank (Figure 46). CMG has also established a comprehensive port network in many continents as part of the BRI. As a port investor, developer and operator, it even owns international ports, e.g. China Merchant Port Holdings Co. (CMP) has a 23.5% stake of the Port of Djibouti, also known as the "first successful overseas application" of the Shekou Model (Luo, 2017; Chen, Tian Miao, and Li, 2020).

As a pioneer of new ideas and as a part of its corporate brand, CMG has allegedly introduced many "first[s]". SWCAC's brand image is also based on being "the first of its kind between a British museum and a state-owned Chinese company" (V&A Museum no date a.; Design Society, 2020a). Together with the V&A as its founding partner since 2014, this five-year partnership has officially promoted itself as a two-way conversation that is engaged with the local context, whilst not losing the aims of establishing China's "first major museum of design" (V&A Museum, 2014). Completed in 2017, SWCAC was "designed as a cultural core of a large-scale multi-use (retail, commercial, residential) development in the Sea World area" that is host to a variety of functions, including a museum, theatre, multipurpose hall, and private art gallery, along with various culturally affiliated retail spaces (Maki and Associates, 2012). Although it does not claim to be the first museum-mall type (the first art-mall was claimed by The K11 Group), it does have a claim as the V&A's first overseas outpost.

Figure 46. One of many China Merchants Bank branches around the country. This branch is in Yichang, Hubei Province (Jiang X., 2018).

Figure 47. "The construction of the Shekou Industrial Zone officially started with the first explosive of the mountain blasting in July 1979, which was called the first shot of the Opening-up of China" (CMG, 2015).

The SWCAC and the V&A outpost function as part of CMG's 'Shekou Model'—a term that refers to the historically significant urban and industrial park development of Shekou as a "port-park-city" (PPC) (Pairault, 2019)—and as evidence of Deng's Reform and Opening-up. Shekou is also "China's first port open to foreign trade" beginning in 1979 (Luo, 2017) and is described as "one of the strongholds of the CMG" (Design Society, 2017a, p.15). As a place brand, the cultural hub (SWCAC) and the commercial zone of Sea World Plaza are developed by CMSK to construct a new place identity for the former industrial area. According to Sun, the Vice-President of CMG, the official opening of SWCAC in 2017 (and partnership with the UK's V&A Museum) is an important initiative for CMG, as the museum is used "to create a culture and leisure destination for Shekou as part of the continued development of the region" (ibid.).

In many ways, like many Chinese cities, Shekou's urban space and the creation of the place brand of Shekou itself is fairly recent (dating from the historic construction of the Shekou Industrial Zone in 1979), therefore creating more flexibility in constructing the ideal "imagined community" (Anderson B., 2006). The relationship between the SWCAC with wider state interests and place identity strengthens the "desire in Chinese cities to develop a sense of coherence" since the "extraordinary newness of most Chinese urban space, the rootlessness of much of the urban population…have combined to produce an identity crisis" (Saunders, 2019, p.36-37). The development of cultural venues and commercial areas fulfils the urgent need for a sense of place and centrality in Chinese cities, hence the explosion of museums, shopping areas and public and private spaces. In many ways, the historical narrative is given flexibility, and thus, CMG is able to carefully curate Shekou and use place branding as a tool to legitimise its significance in Chinese history.

How this relationship with Deng's Reform and Opening-up becomes associated with the place brand of Shekou is developed carefully through a series of publications by CMG, and presented at SWCAC. To commemorate the forty-year anniversary of China's economic reform, the following publications by CMG historicise the development of Shekou and their contributions towards Shenzhen: *Shekou: Where the Dream Started* (Xu and Liu, 2018)*, Snapshots of Time* (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018), and *Reform and Opening-Up* (Zhong, 2018). Their focus is on the overall urban transformation of Shekou. Generally, the publications document the growth, successful ventures and leisure spaces (e.g. the Nanhai Hotel, Sea World, the Minghua cruise ship, bathing beaches and more) at Shekou over the forty years.

Whilst literature sees this image of destruction and reconstruction as widely associated with China's rapid urban development, *Shekou: Where the Dream Started* [蛇口：梦开始的地方] (Xu and Liu, 2018) romanticizes this rags-to-riches narrative that has been consistently projected in local district reports:

> The wind is rising and the tide is surging in the bay area. Forty years ago, with a blast in Shekou, the curtain of China's reform and opening up was raised. Today, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area has emerged at the call of this era, and the great changes of the times are once again stirring the estuary of the Pearl River. We will act in response to the situation and build on our past achievements. With rock-solid confidence and indomitable perseverance, we will lose no time in progressing. We will stand at the head of tide and strive to act as a trailblazer in the reform and opening up of the new era. We will endeavor to work greater miracles that will impress the world!
>
> Wang Qiang, Nanshan District Government Work Report (2019a).

This area of Sea World and Shekou would become "the epitome of Nanshan's development" and, on a national scale, "the pioneer of China's historic reform and opening" (China Daily, 2020). Its importance to the district and to the region has been highlighted by the *Nanshan District Government Work Reports* (2016 and 2019b) as a key area of development. It particularly sets Shekou as a template of China's modernisation and rapid urbanisation through its propulsion towards global city status.

Figure 48. Deng Xiaoping inspecting the Shekou Industrial Zone on 26 January 1984 (CMG, 2015).

Shekou: Where the Dream Started (Xu and Liu, 2018) is largely a historical account of Shekou written in Chinese, with various contributors made primarily up of members of local and regional writers from writers associations and publishing houses, journalists from Shekou News and Shenzhen Commercial Daily, and members of CMG. All of these contributors share stories containing their own experiences of Shekou along with historical facts and statistics to attest to this transformation over the forty years of economic reform. Each short essay has a

different focus: commercial housing and real estate developments, development of leisure spaces, the earliest shopping centre, the entrepreneurial spirit, the Shekou Industrial Zone Trade Union, the setting up of China Merchants Bank, Shekou Hospital, and so on. In sum, each essay appraises the progress made in Shekou.

Figure 49. Yuan Geng's statue at the Waterfront Entrance of SWCAC (Tsui, 2017).

Overall, CMG uses this narrative and overall language to brand itself as the pioneer of change through the visible transformation of the urban landscape. It begins with the introduction by the main editors, introducing Shekou through the personification of 'Shekou's Spirit', and the development of 'Shekou's Story' and Yuan Geng's "China's Hawaii" (Xu and Liu, 2018, p.106). As one of the main co-founders of the Shekou Industrial Zone, Yuan Geng's contribution is so "venerated in China for turning sleepy Shekou into the nation's first industrial zone and a laboratory for the Communist Party to experiment with a market economy" that a section at SWCAC's Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening [Museum of Reform] was dedicated to him and his achievements (Tsui, 2017). His importance is immortalised as a statue placed in front of the Waterfront Plaza entrance of SWCAC, looking towards Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong.

Overall, this text develops the brand image and historical narrative of Shekou through stories of extreme urban transformation and rapid growth. This memory of

the past would become a constant theme that helped construct place identity and reinforce the 'brand' of the local landscape, infusing the place of Shekou with historical and symbolic value. Consistent throughout the various accounts are the contrasting images of the early days of the industrial zone: the wildlife (snakes, mosquitoes, frogs, and even a lynx in one account), the deserted beach, the oysters, the fishing villages, the "scorching heat" (Xu and Liu, 2018, p.78), views of Nanshan Mountain and the iconic levelling of these untamed woodlands with canon fire are all typical images used to associate with Shekou. The contrast of transforming from essentially nothing into a metropolis becomes part of its biggest selling point, even in the hybrid cultural-commercial building programme at SWCAC and the design of Sea World Plaza.

Although some of these 'urban memories' have been lost during Shenzhen's rapid urbanisation, CMG's SWCAC and following key publications become the only remnants of the past, but history at this stage is reconstructed and archived within the context of the Reform and Opening-up, and as CMG's contribution to China. In a more visually punchy publication available in bilingual format, *Snapshots of Time* (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018) highlights key architectural sites within the Shekou Model (Figure 50). The publication divides Shekou into three sections according to its PPC urban layout. A total of forty sites are documented and colour coded into the respective sections (SWCAC falls under subheading *11, Bathing Beach*). Each site was documented as both images and texts in a chronological narrative depicting growth over the years, thus creating contrasting images between the past and the present.

The theme of contrast (the past and the present, and the old and the new) is most visible in the exhibits at the Museum of China's Reform and Opening-up, one of the galleries at SWCAC. The publication also highlights the relationship between CMG and the transformation of Sea World throughout the decades. Through a series of photographic images, it showed that the site of SWCAC was formerly an oyster farm, then a bathing beach and now reclaimed land. As the client, CMG would use both the publications and museum exhibits to solidify its corporate image and

curated narratives through the 'shrine-like' museum exhibit of glass boxes and dioramas of a reconstructed past (Marstine, 2006). Moreover, this museum at SWCAC has also become another one of CMG's "first[s]", as "the country's first history museum with the theme of reform and opening-up" (Design Society, 2018).
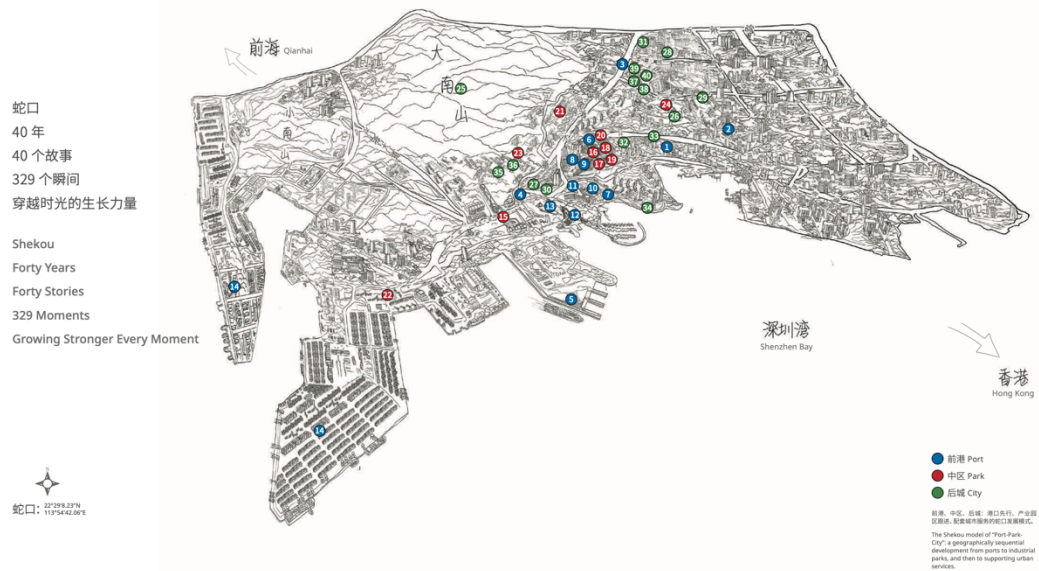
Figure 50. A drawing of the Shekou Industrial Zone at present, with forty key sites labelled and used to present area growth over forty years. The labels are colour coded as Port, Park and City (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018).

Figure 51. A guide (and former worker at the early Shekou Industrial Zone) giving a tour of the exhibits at SWCAC's Museum of Reform (ibid., p.65).

Finally, *Reform and Opening Up: 40 Years of Development and Construction of China Merchants Shekou Industrial Zone (1978-2018)* (Zhong, 2018) is a book that presents an alternative view centred around a new narrative being constructed around the place brand of Shekou. It pays homage to Xi Jinping's 'Chinese Dream' [中国梦], to promote the BRI project (ibid.). This book is divided into seven chapters in chronological order starting from 1978-1979, 1979-1981, 1982-1986, 1987-1993, 1994-2008 and 2009-2018; it recounts the key moments and key figures involved in the beginning of the Shekou Industrial Zone, the initial years of China's Reform and Opening-up, becoming an SEZ, becoming an enterprise, the transformation of the Industrial Zone to a modern city, expanding the Shekou Model, and ending with praise of its historic legacy, respectively.

Whilst the Reform and Opening-up is owed to Deng, the frequent mention and exhibits dedicated to Xi's contribution to the BRI show another brand association at work. These texts focus on the miraculous urban transformation of Shekou and Shenzhen; in turn, the underlying narratives reflecting the aspiration of the state manifest into tangible forms at the SWCAC. The 'hybridisations' at the SWCAC is thus a product conceived by CMG to work as its cultural arm, business and urban development plans. It also provides alternative ways for SOEs to employ the hybrid museum to function as a cultural landmark, a state mouthpiece and a symbolic image of the place and city in China.

To conclude, CMG, as a state-supported business, uses the hybrid museum (represented by SWCAC) to convey its corporate brand as an innovative and pioneering "central enterprise" (Design Society, 2019). The underlying messages found in the three key publications reflected CMG's constructed associations with Deng's Reform, the Shekou Model and Shenzhen's city-brand. These constructed images linked to the history of China's economic reform would become crucial to the overall branding of the SWCAC and urban experiences at Sea World.
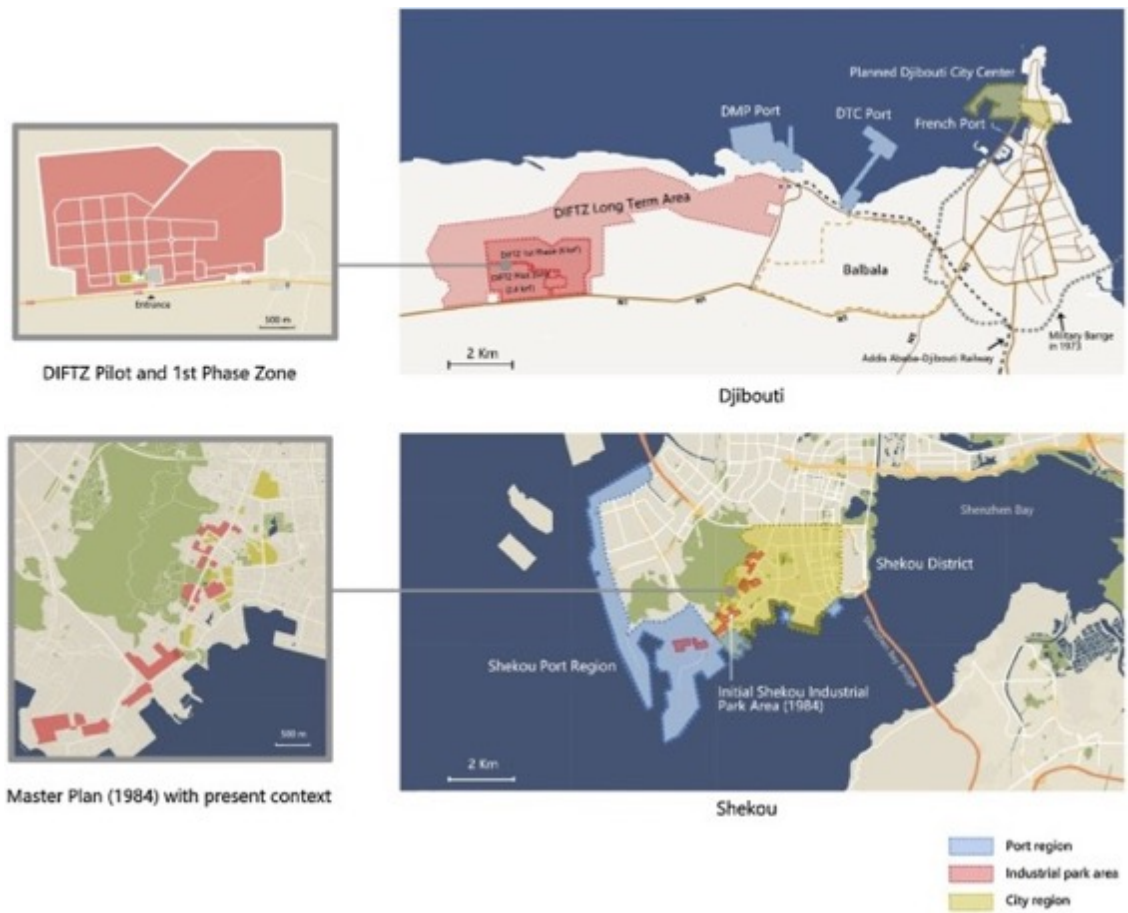
Figure 52. A comparison between the Shekou Model versus Port of Djibouti—a Shekou Model export to East Africa (Wan et al., 2020).

ii. The partnership: Design Society and the V&A Museum

This chapter challenges the dominantly state-centred assumption of Chinese museums by introducing the partnerships behind the SWCAC. Despite the state-centred urban growth promoted by CMG, the partnership between Design Society and the UK's V&A Museum challenges the overall representation and brand of SWCAC; as it is presumed both parties had an equal stake on the design of the SWCAC. To support SWCAC's global brand image, key reports published by Design Society celebrate the partnership with the V&A Museum—the emphasis is placed on the cultural cooperation among the partners. As for the local image, Design Society's mission is to bolster the creative industries, "to establish a sustainable complex and entity" and support Shenzhen as City of Design (Design Society, 2017a).

The conflict in constructing the brand image of the SWCAC lies in the way Design Society and the V&A Museum brand their individual and collective missions within this project. Together, they present a space built by and for multiple voices, supporting more recent discussions in new museum theory that favour diverse voices. However, behind SWCAC's brand image is a complex process whereby the type of cultural exchange and upskilling of museum professional promote multiple voices and histories to exist within a space– in a "neither here, nor there" sense of a cultural hybrid (Hernández, 2010, p.10).

The first subsection discusses Design Society's dedication "to promote design communication and cultural exchange through both content production and platform building", diversify its financial revenue, "give the floor to multiple voices" and expand its networks within and beyond China (Design Society, 2017a). It demonstrates how the SWCAC is promoted as a new type of museum, but also retains its state-led interests in its underlying agendas and missions. Second, it explores the V&A's mission to expand its legacy outwards and, in turn, adds a diplomatic function to the partnership. Within the framework of the nation-state, this new way of working in China is conceived as a part of the "golden era of trade

and partnership" (First Strategic Insight, 2015; Great Britain. HM Treasury and DIT, 2017).

Their unique transnational organisational structure sets the hybrid museum as a space that allows "entangled cultures" (Welsch, 2001) to become part of wider local and global networks, supporting the idea of a localised brandscape that can be both inclusive to the local context as well as the global. The overall findings will show how multiple interests work together under this partnership and that foreign cultural institutions are also drawn into the process of constructing place- and city branding of Shekou, Shenzhen and even China.

Design Society is a new cultural hub established by CMSK to oversee the cultural operations of SWCAC. As encouraged by state and district policy, SOEs like CMG turn towards culture as an economy driver and, in the words of the Deputy General Manager of CMG, to "enhance people's quality of life, enrich the city's cultural atmosphere, promote the interconnection of culture-commerce-industry and help encourage the development of China's creative industries and the further progress of design in China" (Design Society, 2017a, p.15). In the *Foreword*, Di Qian, as the Member of Party Committee, Administration Director of CMSK and Chairman of Design Society Foundation, referred to culture as "the force to facilitate social progress" (ibid., p.14). In this regard, CMSK has been developing media organisations and building cultural facilities to complement the larger urban and industrial park development of Shekou and of Shenzhen.

To an extent, the SWCAC (as a hybrid museum) exhibits novelty. This partnership positions SWCAC as a "totally new way of working" (Design Society, 2017a, p.17) in China through 'market-driven' elements (Marstine, 2006) and the outpost model, with leverage on the V&A's brand. The construction of SWCAC is not only the V&A's "first overseas outpost" (Tsui, 2017) but is also built as "a new landmark of Shekou" and "a world-class cultural name card" (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.100). To celebrate the significance of this partnership, the SWCAC has a commemorative wall (Figure 53) acknowledging this in the most conspicuous place, next to the V&A Gallery and Main Gallery entrance, and by the reception on the ground floor.

Figure 53. Own photos of the lobby by the V&A Gallery, at Culture Plaza entrance. The wall text by the reception desk commemorates the partnership (taken in December 2019).

At the same time, Design Society is still "under the direct supervision of the central government" (Design Society, 2020b); therefore, its underlying message is expected to reflect the corporate brand of CMG and wider national interests. As a part of CMSK's cultural arm, Design Society (as an actor) has the cultural and commercial power to construct place identity and develop its own corporate brand set out by CMG's underlying attachment to Deng's Reform. This existing corporate image built by CMG is extended into the way Design Society is developed and branded. Design Society's annual and bilingual reports (2017a; 2019; 2020b) introduce its

programmes, highlight key spaces and events in the year, as well as document its contribution toward wider city-branding practices.

The annual reports covering Design Society's operations at SWCAC reveal common themes that support CMG's underlying corporate brand and vision to develop "Shekou's Spirit" and 'Shekou's Story' (Xu and Liu, 2018). In many ways, Design Society developed its own corporate brand that is most reflective of its goals "to establish a niche of 'cultural enterprise' that sustains itself through varied sources of income and initiatives, combining cultural and commercial prowess to establish a sustainable complex and entity" (Design Society, 2017a, p.57). Whilst it does seem to support state interests, the transnational collaboration best embodies the hybrid local and global spirit based on these varied actors. These themes will also reappear across texts from the V&A Blog and other Design Society publications, such as their exhibition catalogues, press releases, and videos.

Consistent with CMG's reputation as a pioneering brand, it describes itself as a "new creative platform" (Design Society, 2017a, p.3-5). Later reports also describe Design Society as "an innovative cultural platform", with emphasis on CMSK as the founder and the UK's V&A Museum as its "founding partner" (Design Society, 2020b, p.12). Its name is also both a noun and a verb, deliberately suggesting it as "a place that inspires action, stimulating the growing design scene in Southern China" (V&A Museum, no date a). The relationship between the UK's V&A Museum forms part of SWCAC's brand image; the SWCAC's associations with this world-renowned institution becomes one of the museum's highlights. Whilst the V&A's brand holds superficial value, Design Society's reports are sure to pay tribute to the V&A's less visible contributions to the SWCAC, namely its role in advising on the design of the building, in the professional training and upskilling of Design Society's museum staff. Other less visible involvements "ranged from exhibition development and management, learning and interpretation, loans procedures and conservation, to digital strategies, visitor experience, press and membership" (Design Society, 2017a, p,59).

Figure 54. Chapter 3: How to run a platform acknowledges the less visible role of the V&A Museum in developing Design Society and the SWCAC (Design Society, 2017a, p.59).

How Design Society conveyed CMG's brand and values can be seen in these reports, where Design Society document its missions, its building programmes, notable events and achievements each year. The reports also describe the museum's role in developing the place brand of Shekou and also the city-brand of Shenzhen, through its carefully curate events, exhibitions, workshops, and so forth, thus making SWCAC less isolated as a museum but operating within a system of interconnected

networks. To mark the opening of Design Society on 1 December 2017, Design Society's *Year Book* (2017a, p.102) provided a lengthy introduction of its primary missions, goals and business aims through the introduction of key actors, key spaces and key events through six chapters: (1) Why Design Society, (2) What we offer, (3) How to run a platform, (4) Where we work, (5) Who we are and (6) Appendix (namely the site context).

This was followed by the *Design Society's 2018-2019 Review*. The report covering the activities of Design Society over two years begins with three forewords by CMSK, V&A and Design Society, representing the three key actors directly responsible for the brand development and design of SWCAC. Their presence is also visible at the SWCAC in the form of logos and spaces named after them (i.e. Shenzhen UCCN Gallery, the V&A Gallery, Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening, and the Design Society Art Store). The report is later followed by a documentation of key *Exhibitions* held (pages 21-52), *Touring and Loans* done in Suzhou and Shanghai (pages 53-60) and a list of school-centred programmes under *Learning* (pages 61-74). The rest of the report introduces the key missions and aims of the SWCAC and its *Future Programmes*, ending with more information about its contribution to wider Shenzhen programmes and about its main client, *About CMSK*. In many ways, the reports work as evidence that documents Design Society's commitment to becoming a cultural platform and contributor to place brand. *Design Society's 2020 Review* did not repeat the previous years' narrative formula and focused on the *Exhibitions* and the current and future projects being developed by Design Society: from opening a Design Society Store in Shanghai, establishing Design Society Culture & Arts Foundation and developing another cultural hub called I-FACTORY in Shekou, to its involvement in the Greater Bay Area Energy Hub project.

Within the boundaries of the SWCAC, as a hybrid museum-mall, the Maki-designed building "will provide the eco-system in which mutuality will thrive and where visitors may transform from visitor, to consumer, to participant, to maker and creator" (Design Society, 2017a, p.47). Among the three Design Society reports,

only the *2020 Review* acknowledges how SWCAC's business ecosystem is different from a "traditional shopping mall" (Design Society, 2020b, p.96). The explicit form of hybridisation at the SWCAC is acknowledged in the building programme, where "every shop in it contains cultural and art elements, [and] it also pays more attention to the combination of art and commerce" (ibid.). The reasons for SWCAC's cultural-commercial hybridisation can be attributed to the "sustainability of Design Society" that is dependent on the growth of a network, of "overlapping creative practices and through building a 'network of partners, contributors and supporters from China and around the world', across academia, business, governmental affairs and education, as well as through collaborations with major museums, residential programmes and archival institutions" (ibid., p.12).

However, Design Society is also looking beyond the boundaries of the SWCAC, in ways that contribute to the wider creative city events at Shenzhen, designated as one of UNESCO's Creative Cities of Design. Being a part of the UCCN also means living up to its expectations and fulfilling certain criteria to keep the title. To be a part of the Cities of Design Network includes sharing resources with other creative cities whilst "develop[ing] international cooperation among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development, in the framework of partnerships including the public and private sectors, professional organizations, communities, civil society, and cultural institutions in all regions of the world" (Cities of Design Network, no date). All Cities of Design are also required to host international conferences on design, international workshops, exhibitions, international competitions, design fair trade, a design week or month, establishing a design university, and so forth (UNESCO, 2017a). A report of its activities must be submitted every four years (UNESCO, 2017b). Most importantly, cultural exchanges aim to share and disseminate knowledge learned among this global network of creative cities.

Figure 55. A page from Design Society's 2020 Review that highlights the new Design Society Shanghai Store and the events held (above). Below is another page that highlights the latest venture I-Factory (Design Society, 2020b).

All three reports from Design Society (2017a, 2018-2019 and 2020b) also acknowledge the museum as a mnemonic tool that remembers Shekou's Reform history but also contructs new memories that support its current status as a creative city. The multifunctional space and hybridisation found at the SWCAC arguably respond to the creative city-brand of Shenzhen. Based on the *Shenzhen*

City of Design Report (UNESCO, 2016) published by the SDPA, major events were organised by the city during 2015-16. Most of these involved collaborations with the support and involvement of international partners: Bi-City Biennale for Urbanism\Architecture [UABB], HK-SZ Design Biennale, Shenzhen International Industrial Design Fair, Shenzhen Bay Fringe Festival (originated in Edinburgh), Shenzhen Design Award for Young Talents (of UCCN), and more. An estimate of 100 million yuan has been poured into Shenzhen each year by the municipal government to support and bolster the city's creative and cultural industries since 2011 (ibid.).

The SWCAC can be seen as a museum that also fulfils these obligations of the creative city, among many other cultural venues in Shekou and Shenzhen. As suggested by this study's framework, the SWCAC (developed by the various actors) is a transnational actor capable of operating across borders and cultures. Since the cultural industry was inscribed as one of the "pillar industries of the national economy" during China's 10th Five-Year Plan and 12th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development, the museum is a showcase of visible, "cultural strength…as a modern, international and innovative city" (SDPA, 2016, p.116). Steps taken to promote design in Shenzhen are also documented in a general guideline, *The Shenzhen Cultural Innovation and Development 2020*. It is made for the Shenzhen Municipal Government "to carry out publicity and culture work in the next five years" (ibid.).

To conclude, Design Society's reports prove that SWCAC is deliberately designed as a hybrid museum, born from the varied types of hybridisations. However, instead of presuming that its brand is designed by a single actor, the brand inforcement of Design Society does not rely on the images of CMG's and China's Reform history alone, but also in the current association with transnational actors like the V&A Museum, and more.

This is an incredibly exciting project for the V&A. It builds on the long history the V&A has of working in and with China to share collections, knowledge and expertise. By working with our trusted partner, China Merchants Group, we are able to engage in a meaningful and financially sustainable way with one of the most dynamic design cities in the world at a time when China is emerging at the forefront of new design ideas and creative thinking.

Tim Reeve, V&A Chief Operating Officer (V&A Museum, 2014)

In this study, the UK's V&A Museum is an equally important partner to the conception of SWCAC because its involvement as an international cultural institution challenges the way hybrid museums can be developed and designed in China. Unlike Design Society's relationship with CMG's own interests, the V&A Museum offers a 'market-driven' approach that is not bound by the state-led cultural developments in Chinese museums (Marstine, 2006). It developed a new way for other museums to enter the Chinese market, in the form of a long-term partnership with a local state actor. With a dominant state narrative constructed by CMG and Design Society, just how much the V&A contributes (or does not contribute) to the place- and city-brand (Shekou and Shenzhen, respectively) will be examined below.

Superficially, the V&A outpost in Shekou and the the V&A Dundee have been benchmarked against the Guggenheim model (Anderson A., 2018), notably for its franchise-type model. However, unlike the V&A Dundee (which is classified as a satellite museum type), this V&A outpost at Sea World does not have a stand-alone building. When the outpost was compared to the Guggenheim model, Tim Reeve— the Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the V&A—rejected this idea in a promotional video, saying that the model "isn't appropriate" for the V&A and that

this partnership is welcomed "partly because we can't do it on our own but also we wanted a conversation" (V&A Museum, 2018).

Figure 56. The SWCAC by the waterfront (Bari, 2017).

In many ways, the V&A outpost is unique for its flexible, five-year renewable contract with Design Society. It neither has a permanent presence (like Serpentine Pavilion Beijing or the Eden Qingdao) nor has a short-term presence (e.g. blockbuster exhibitions). In an email interview, Brendan Cormier (2019), the lead curator of Design Society, expressed the benefits of this V&A outpost model as "a far more nimble and flexible way of operating as opposed to the satellite museum model set out by institutions". He added that this model can be useful for further activity in China and around the world because it is "far more structured around collaboration between two institutions, and that has been really beneficial for both parties" (ibid.). In terms of operations, basic funding available to museums in the US and Europe tend to be one or more of the following: through the government (municipal, state or regional, and national), corporations, charitable foundation, private benefactors, or are self-supporting. Each would also have its own interests, e.g. governmental agencies would be interested in revitalising the urban surroundings or promoting the arts industry, or corporations would have their logo placed on the museum ads, banners, and so forth.
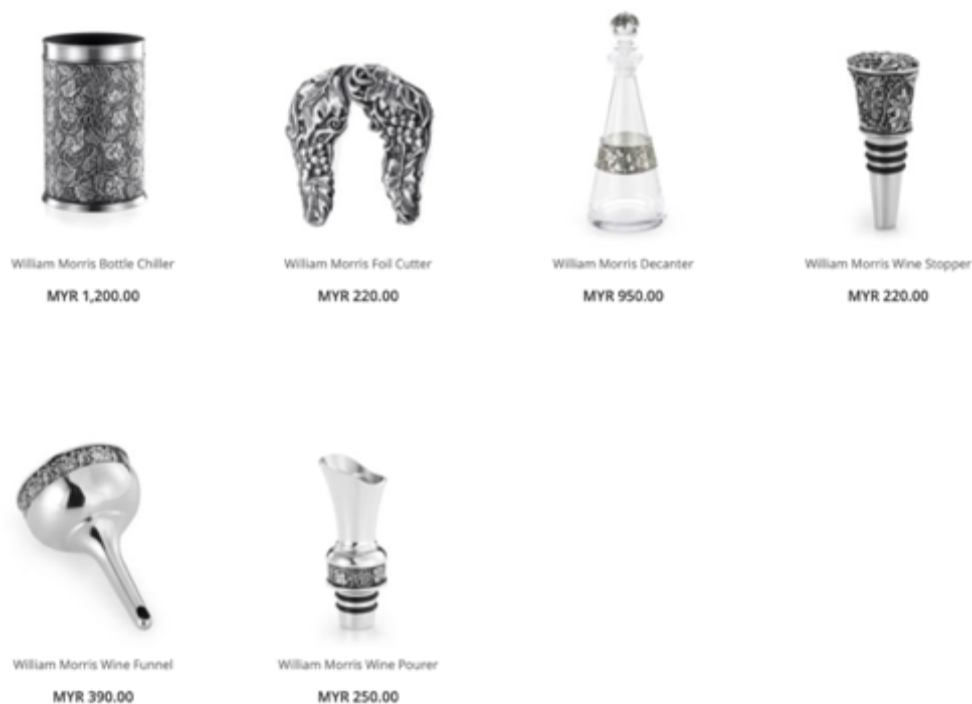
Figure 57. Royal Selangor Pewter x V&A for a William Morris collection (Royal Selangor, no date).

To an extent, the visible outcomes of the partnership (ranging from merchandising to joint exhibitions) with the V&A Museum serve as examples for possible collaborations and future partnersships. In line with Design Society's own mission to synergise the cultural with the commercial to create its distinctive business ecosystem, the number of international designers and collaborators is indicative of "their efforts to tap into the wealth of ideas, expertise and production facilities in Shenzhen and beyond" (Design Society, 2017a, p.47). The business ecosystem at the UK's V&A Museum has already encouraged designers and companies, who share their "values of innovation, high quality design and craftsmanship" to collaborate, becoming a part of their V&A merchandise (V&A Museum, 2022). An example is a bespoke collection with Royal Selangor (a Malaysian pewter manufacturer and retailer) inspired by the V&A's Arts and Crafts patterns from the William Morris collection (Royal Selangor, no date).

Despite the joint aims to promote design, to increase financial revenue and establish new networks, the V&A Museum has different motives and interests in

this partnership with CMG's Design Society. During the launch of Design Society, Reeve made clear the main components of the collaboration between the V&A and CMSK: "concept, development and design of a V&A Gallery devoted to 20th and 21st-century international design; presentation of two major touring exhibitions in 2017 and 2018; and provision of professional advice and training" (Design Society, 2017a, p.59). As transcribed, Reeve's drew out the main aims and objectives of the collaboration during his speech (Mengoni, 2016a):

> The V&A has a long history of working in and with China, and this project is enabling us to connect with the fast moving design, manufacturing and creative scene here in Shenzhen, as well as sharing our collections, knowledge and expertise in one of the most energetic and progressive cities in the world. We support the objectives of Design Society to use the power of design to address major issues of our time and elevate the role of design in society.

> The launch of Design Society is a great opportunity to celebrate the result of the very productive dialogue we have had with our colleagues at CMSK over the past two years. This pioneering collaboration between a UK museum and a Chinese partner is part of a new approach to our international engagement strategy. We are looking to develop new longer-term international collaborations, which enable us to engage in more creative ways, by building a global network of trusted partners with whom we can share the idea of the V&A by creating new culturally meaningful projects which we could not do alone.

The focus is to forge a new strategy of cultural exchange and expand its networks, starting with China housing its first overseas outpost. They also share the new and pioneering idea of this partnership itself, which also implies SWCAC as a new type of museum.

Unlike Design Society, the V&A Museum has a much longer history of promoting design and, to an extent, pioneering new ideas that changed the way museum architecture and world fairs are designed. Thus, this makes the V&A an appropriate brand-name actor to collaborate with Design Society and to promote design at Shekou. The V&A's founding history and its mission can be traced back to the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in 1851.

In general, this study can regard this historic event as a good representation of early hybrid museums. The Great Exhibition had seen an estimated footfall of at least six million people—from the masses to the aristocrats—visiting the exhibition, who came "to window shop, gawping at marvels of the contemporary designing technology that opened their eyes to what the new industrial world could offer" (Glancey, 2015). Its key aim was to display the wonders of industry from all nations and British imperial power through exhibits from its colonies. Britain occupied half the display space inside, but the whopping number of approximately 100,000 objects from over 15,000 contributors was an astonishing feat even by today's standards (Picard, 2009).

Apart from the displays, the Great Exhibition also presented new ideas that became essential in museum building design today. The building of the Great Exhibition was an architectural breakthrough in technology and design of its time. Its glasshouse construction was a pioneering design made up of a "self-supporting shell, [which] maximised interior space, and the glass cover enabled daylight" (Merin, 2013). Designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, it was a revolutionary building which featured panes of plate glass (a recent invention of the time) and cast iron structure, but most of all, it showcased an enormous amount of consumer goods from around the world, especially manufactured products from the British Empire and beyond.

Like the Great Exhibition to the history of the V&A, Shekou's association with Deng's Reform is reinforced in the branding of the SWCAC's and Sea World, and the V&A is somewhat complicit in the construction of this historical narrative. As its

founding partner, both Design Society's and the V&A's joint mission to promote 'design' and the strong affiliation to their respective historical events form the basis of this partnership at the SWCAC, from its marketing core, philosophy, building programme and more. Therefore, the V&A has more of a direct influence on the partnership, the production of SWCAC and place brand in ways that cannot be seen at a superficial level.

Figure 58. Colour lithographs of the Great Exhibition façade by T. Picken (above) and one of its exhibits at The Indian Court by Joseph Nash; both in 1851 (below) (V&A Museum, no date b).

This chapter has thus far shown that CMG, Design Society, and the V&A Museum infuse their individual missions and respective (founding) histories to construct the image of SWCAC. As a result of this process of hybridisation, it supports this study's idea that hybrid museums are shaped by interconnected systems and "entangled cultures" (Welsch, 2001). Where their interests intersect, the collective missions to promote design is carefully crafted in the joint exhibitions and events developed at the museum. From the outset of the partnership, the UK's V&A team had been "developing networks with creative professionals, academics and educators, entrepreneurs and developers, as well as local communities, in order to inform the research and curatorial approach of the new gallery and its public programme" (Mengoni, 2016a). The importance of this collaboration is evidenced in the development of the V&A Gallery and the Main Gallery on the ground floor of the SWCAC.

This section argues that the Design Society and the V&A are working together to provide alternative history and transcultural narratives to construct Shekou's and Shenzhen's brand, within sight of their own individual aims. The *Values of Design* is a joint exhibition that visibly demonstrates their collaboration, marketed as a two-way conversation by both partners. There have been two *Values of Design* exhibitions held thus far, one in 2017 and another in 2020. The first *Values of Design* exhibition that opened in December 2017 presented more than 250 objects from the V&A permanent collection, as well as newer and local acquisitions. The exhibition offered the local audience a unique view of design, how design is valued and how design produces value. Meanwhile, the second *Values of Design: China in the Making* was held on 18 January 2020.

This exhibition is important because it provides a window to view how the various actors work together to construct and situate the exhibition within the local and global image of Shenzhen. The involvement of the V&A and other transnational actors shows how foreign voices also have the power in constructing another

country's place-, city- and national brand development. The exhibition's catalogue, press releases and the design of the exhibition itself can be presented as evidence of underlying state-foreign-policy agendas (Eberhard, 2020). As a result of these interactions, the exhibition space and curated objects demonstrate a non-conventional interpretation of the history of design, with transcultural interpretation of familiar objects and also local ones from Shenzhen. The exhibition design of *Values of Design* (2017) also accommodated these narratives presented by Design Society and the V&A. Whilst the exhibition itself is centred around the 'design' history and creative industries at Shenzhen, the V&A provided a globalising image associated with both the museum and the city. Therefore, the design of the exhibition can reveal much more about the V&A's involvement in the process of constructing new histories and urban memories of Shekou and Shenzhen.

An additional transnational actor was called in to design this joint exhibition. London-based Sam Jacob Studio [SJS] was chosen to complete the V&A Gallery at SWCAC—also marketed as the V&A's first international gallery in China. The gallery space and its concept for the first *Values of Design* are discussed further on SJS's website. The main design utilises the 770m² gallery space and transcultural narratives through "a series of bays arranged around a central nave anchored by two large multiscreen installations" (SJS, 2021). The exhibition highlighted some of the most important design movements from the past, giving a global perspective on the subject through seven identified *Values* that have "influenced design or that design creates" (Braidwood, 2017): *Performance, Cost, Problem Solving, Materials, Identity, Communication* and *Wonder*. To divide each section, the designers play with transparency and opacity through different materials, where only certain sections are totally visible and less visible, e.g. *Wonder* would require visitors to enter the space that is barricaded by a chain-mail curtain held by a curved metal railing hung from the ceiling. Each value is symbolically and literally materially embodied.
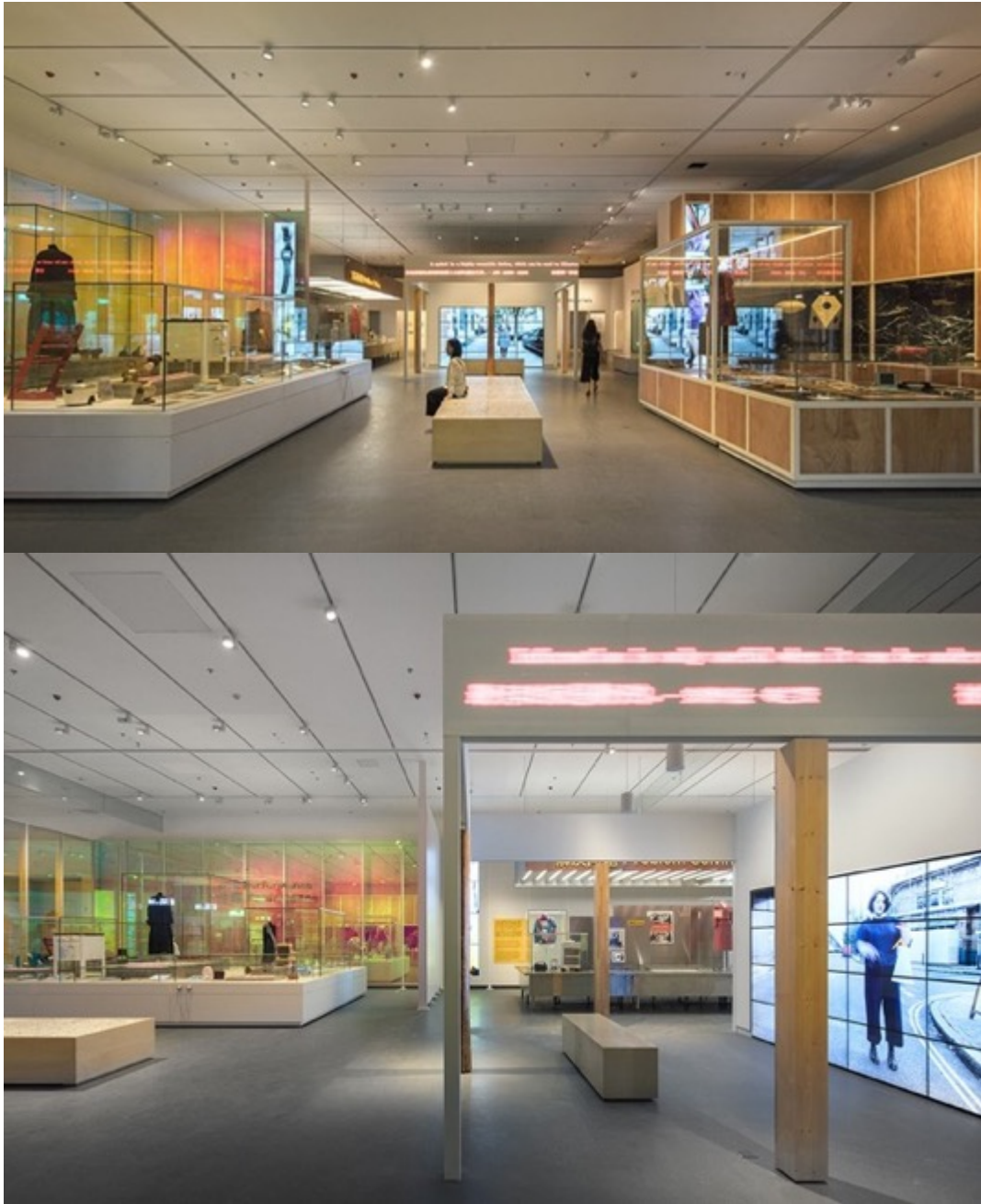
Figure 59. The main gallery space with the "central nave" housing multiscreen installations at the centre (above). Below, the nave held up by timber pillars, facing the bays: Performance and Problem Solving (SJS, 2021).
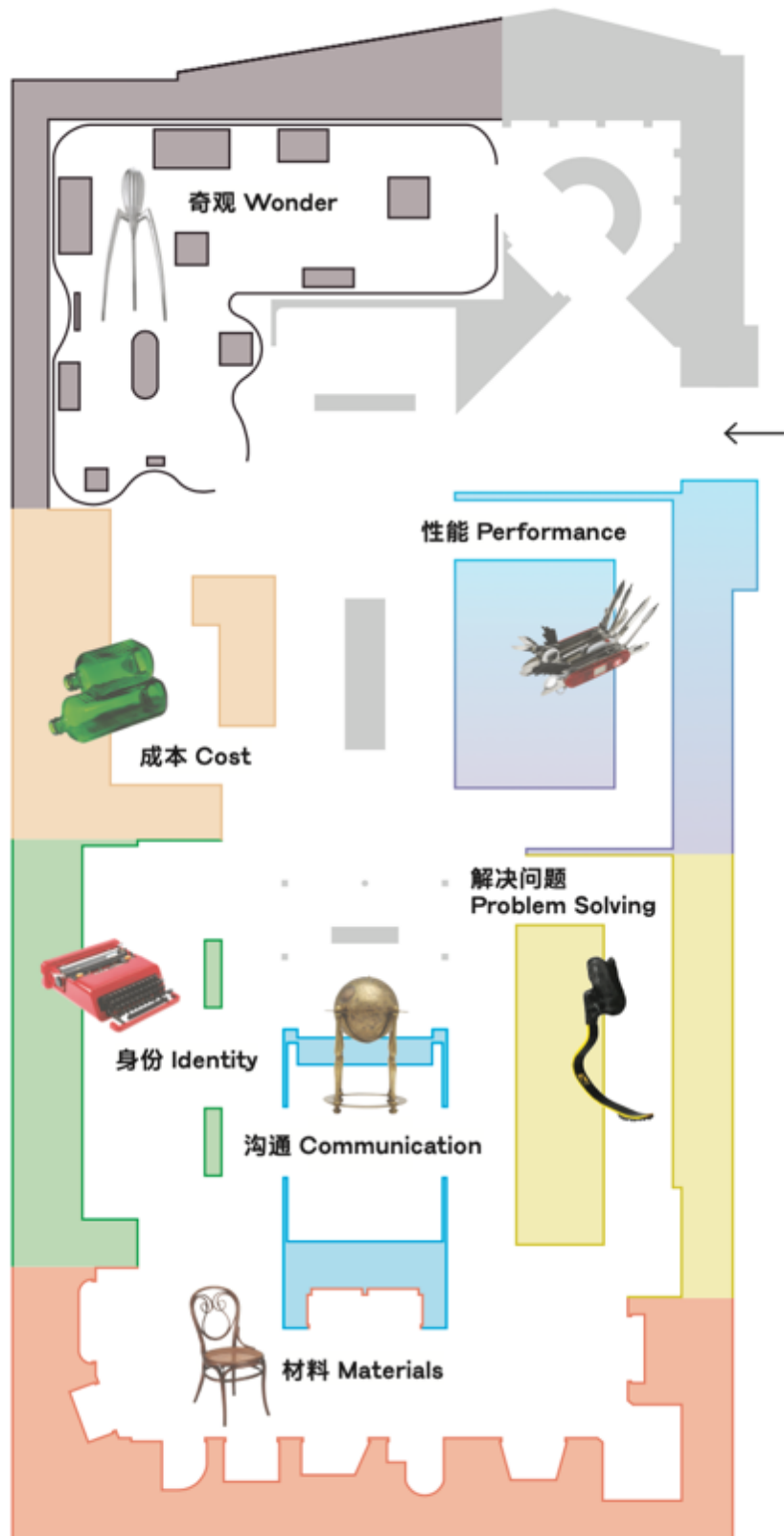
Figure 60. Plan of the exhibition space and the arrangement of exhibits based on seven values of design (colour coded) (Design Society, 2017b, p.20).

Figure 61. (Above) The Wonder section is isolated via its placement near the entrance but also by the chain mail curtains. Each of the seven themes is made visually distinct based on the materials used to house the exhibits (SJS, 2021).

Based on the way the *Values of Design* is marketed, this collaboration seemed to support as a traditional binary relationship between the UK-China, East-West, and the self and the 'Other', but closer inspection of the exhibition layout and

narratives showed non-binary and non-Eurocentric interpretation of objects. Design Society, together with the V&A (led by Cormier), presented the objects at *Values of Design* based on how people measured the value of things and how values shaped design "within a much wider historical and cultural framework" (Mengoni, 2016a). However, not in a conventional way that follows a specific timeline or period in history. In contrast to this linear flow of time, there was none. A blogger for EyeShenzhen and Shenzhen Daily began the blog entry on the exhibition thus: "A Swiss army knife is on display next to an 18th-century Iranian astrolabe; an ancient Egyptian water filter is placed alongside a modern e-cigarette; and a Teddy Ruxpin sits beside an iPhone…The paralleled items look irrelevant to each other at first glance, but in fact they are connected by contracting qualities such as whether they represent 'useful combinations or impractical overload…'"(Zhen, 2017).

In this exhibition alone, the presented objects are recontextualised to fit into a more universal history of 'design', rather than associating 'design' through the Western-canon. A non-binary narrative of design guided the experience and reception of these varied objects. This unconventional presentation of objects demonstrates a type of "trans-border arrangement" which sees "the circulation of material objects across cultural-geographical boundaries over a period of time in the past" (Yang P., 2021). Pao-Yi Yang's concept of trans-border arrangement is based on a combination of key studies, including Arjun Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things*, Monica Juneja and Anna Grasskamp's call for a critical curatorial and pedagogical practice, and Welsh's transculture perspective. As new modes of displaying museum objects, Yang's trans-border arrangement and transcultural curation allow objects to be compared across cultures and timeframes "in a dynamic process of displacement and integration from one cultural context to another" instead of being fixed to one local identity (Juneja and Grasskamp, 2018 cited in Yang P., 2021).

The *Values of Design* exhibition "argues that design performs many different roles depending on its purpose, its attitude and its context" (Design Society, 2017c). The 2017 exhibition grouped seemingly irrelevant items together based on each design

Value they intended to convey. The *Values of Design Gallery Guide* (Design Society, 2017b) highlights some of the key exhibits grouped under each *Value*—namely pieces from the V&A Collection alongside newer, localised ones. Exhibits range from the WOBO bottle from the Heineken Collection Foundation and a Celestial lobe from 1650s Pakistan up to 21st-century exhibits like the Juicy Salif by Philippe Starck. Through the juxtaposition of historical with more mundane pieces, Cormier's goal was to challenge the locals' idea of design through this unconventional presentation of history. Both the exhibits and the exhibition space catered to these non-linear historical narratives and (arguably) transcultural curation. In an interview for Architects Journal, Sam Jacobs said that "the fresh and evocative approach to the gallery's spatial organisation and display responds to the sensation of Shenzhen as a place of new possibilities for the future of design while drawing on the rich history and collection of the V&A" (Braidwood, 2017).

The result of promoting 'design' and the creative city of Shenzhen both the Design Society and the V&A Museum are engaged in reconstructing, but also erasing existing narratives from the past. As the precursor to the V&A, the Great Exhibition was a space that perpetuated colonialist positions (the way colonised subjects were presented), but this darker side of the V&A's history is absent in the entire production and branding process of the SWCAC and partnership. In general, new museum theory is concerned over the pressing issues of museum appropriation and repatriation of objects from non-Western cultures. Yet, none of this has been explicitly acknowledged in the brand and exhibition narratives at the SWCAC, whereas in national or centrally-managed museums in China, exhibits have been observed to use "a double strategy of maintaining the emotional resonance of Chinese victimhood at the hands of foreign imperialists, as well as provide the global-historical support for its expansionist projects", as demonstrated in her case study: *The Silver Age* (2019) exhibition at Xi'an Museum (Eberhard, 2020, p.169).

With consideration towards this brand-name partner, both parties engaged in the reconstruction of history requires a two-way conversation.

Overall, the *Values of Design* exhibition demonstrates how hybrid museums "can explore and redraw the existing boundaries of art-historical categorization through the application of a transcultural perspective" (Yang P., 2021, p.40). It presents a transcultural flow and circulation of objects that catered to this two-way partnership sought after by Design Society and the V&A Museum. The 'Other' is given the power to create their own history and own interpretation of objects, allowing the cultural objects to be given alternative readings based on the local culture.

(From L) A Turkish cup with a cover made in 1800-1875, an Egyptian water filter made in 900-1200 and a Chinese e-cigarette made in 2014 at "Values of Design" exhibition.

Figure 62. Seemingly oddly placed objects at the Values of Design by EyeShenzhen (Zhen, 2017).

Figure 63. Key exhibits highlighted in Values of Design Educators' Resources (Design Society, 2017d).

Figure 64. Juicy Salif by Philippe Starck (Wonder) and the 17th c. Celestial Globe (Communication) are among the exhibits ranging from historic acquisitions to present day (Design Society, 2017d).

d. The golden era of UK-China relations

Whilst *Values of Design* showed how the partnership between Design Society and the V&A Museum presented a pioneering way of working with China, a Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] signed between CMG and the V&A Museum in December 2013 is a reminder that SWCAC also fulfils the binary, nation-state narrative. With direct mention of the project, former-Prime Minister David Cameron said: "This pioneering collaboration between the world's leading museum of art and design and China Merchants Group is a fine example of British expertise fostering fruitful bilateral partnerships which contribute to the growth of the creative economy. I wish this innovative endeavour to be a resounding success and I applaud the leading role China Merchants Group and the V&A are playing in strengthening China-UK cultural relationships" (V&A Museum, 2014).

Despite the new business model or museum type proposed, the SWCAC is arguably still bound by nation-state interests; the V&A Museum and CMG represent the UK and China, respectively. The consistent theme to encourage the two-way conversation between Design Society and the V&A acknowledges the desire to appeal locally and globally, "to promote Chinese design to an international audience, as well as present the best international design in China" (V&A Museum, 2014). Additionally, it is also tied to the Cities of Design Networks under the UCCN. These findings support the hybrid museum in China as a blurred space that caters to both the cultural and commercial, the state and non-state, private and public functions, and must be seen as such.

Instead, hybrid museums like the SWCAC arguably function as new cultural platforms for global contact, networks and negotiations. The former Director of the V&A, Martin Roth, spoke of a "belief that cultural institutions act on a global stage, and that museums should reach beyond borders to engage with different nations, cultures, and audiences" (Cormier, 2017). Prior to the outpost, the V&A in London held a collaborative project—the "first UK overview of the Chinese painting tradition since the International Exhibition of Chinese Art at the Royal Academy in

1935" (V&A Museum, 2020)—entitled *Masterpieces of Chinese paintings: 700–1900*, which was held from October 2013 to January 2014. It also enjoyed good ties with the Capital Museum and the Palace Museum Beijing through joint research and curatorial exchanges as early as an MoU was signed between them in 2010. Below is a list and brief summary of exhibitions in the last decade (2010-2020) that evidence the V&A's two-way partnership with Chinese institutions (excluding events with Design Society) (ibid.):

- *Masterpieces of Chinese Paintings: 700–1900* (October 2013 to January 2014):
    - The show was the first UK overview of the Chinese painting tradition since the *International Exhibition of Chinese Art* at the Royal Academy in 1935.
    - Many of the paintings were shown in Europe for the first time.
    - On loan from the Palace Museum Beijing, Shanghai Museum, Liaoning Provincial Museum, Dunhuang Academy and Tianjin Museum.
- *Imperial Chinese Robes from the Forbidden City* (December 2010 to February 2011):
    - The exhibition showed three centuries of imperial robes worn by the emperors and empresses of the Qing Dynasty, the last ruling dynasty of China (1644–1911).
    - All objects were on loan from the Palace Museum Beijing.
- *China Design Now* (March to July 2008):
    - This seminal exhibition was presented at the V&A to coincide with the Beijing Olympics in 2008.
    - The exhibition featured designs and artefacts by emerging and established Chinese creatives and leading international designers from three cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

In mainland China

- *Chinese School Uniform* (April to July 2015).

- The display of the Shenzhen school uniform in China Galleries as part of *All of This Belongs to You*. The uniform was first displayed in the Rapid Response Collecting project at the Shenzhen Biennale in 2013.
- *Rapid Response Collecting* (December 2013 to January 2014):
    - a small display curated by the Architecture, Digital and Product Design section as part of the Urbanism and Architecture Bi-City Biennale in Shenzhen.
- *Splendours of India's Royal Court* (April to July 2013):
    - Shown at the Palace Museum, Beijing
- *Passion for Porcelain: Ceramics Masterpieces from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum* (June 2012 to January 2013):
    - This major exhibition was organised with the British Museum and the National Museum of China (NMC) as part of the UK Now Festival in China
- *Water into Art* (2012):
    - This V&A touring exhibition was presented at the Shenzhen Museum

The *V&A Annual Report and Accounts* (2012-2013) presented to the UK's House of Commons documented the V&A's global achievements under *International and National Work* and *International Touring Exhibitions*. On 16 April 2012, the V&A hosted "the first UK-China Summit" known as *People to People Dialogue* [P2P] "in the top tier of UK-China bilateral exchanges" (Great Britain. FCO et.al., 2016). The P2Ps that followed were organised "to celebrate ties between the two peoples," and "to boost trade, exports and investment during this golden era of collaboration" (ibid.). This forum not only promotes the best British companies and talent to China but also becomes a platform to strike new commercial agreements among various industries, in which the creative industries are given emphasis (Keane, 2009;2016).

These high-level exchanges encouraged collaborations between the UK and China's museums, which explains an increase in joint exhibitions between museums, notably *Passion for Porcelain* (June 2012 to January 2013) at the National Museum

of China, Beijing, in partnership with the V&A Museum and the British Museum. In 2006, over two hundred artefacts arrived in Beijing and Shanghai for the exhibitions *Treasures of the World's Cultures* at the Capital Museum of China and *Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum* at the Shanghai Museum.

As the V&A reports demonstrate, the expansion of the V&A Museum also serves a diplomatic function. The contract for a "historic partnership with museums across China" started in 2005, under Blair's tenure (Wang S., 2018, p.23). Following this, other joint projects between the UK and China saw an increase as the "golden era" was declared (First Strategic Insight, 2015)—famously coined by David Cameron and renewed into a "new phase" under Theresa May's government (Great Britain. HM Treasury and DIT, 2017). The MoUs signed between the UK and Chinese Governments focused on establishing a "global comprehensive strategic partnership" in key areas of trade and investment, technology, education and more (Great Britain. DCMS, 2015). To further encourage these collaborations, over £4 million in UK government funding was allocated to support collaborations with China between the two countries, a week after the historic state visit (Steel, 2015).

With China as its second largest trading partner outside the EU and the largest in Asia with £42.3 billion, the UK has been increasing its exports into the Chinese market, with an estimate of £16.8 billion in 2016 (Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi, 2016; Great Britain. DCMS and DIT, 2017). With the same aim to create an "enduring, inclusive and win-win cooperation" (Great Britain. DCMS, 2015), May signed new agreements in 2018 to boost both countries' creative industries and cultural sectors, collaborating in festivals, theme parks, architecture, and more. According to the UK's *Building our industrial strategy (Green Paper)* (Great Britain. HM Government, 2017)—a set of proposals for discussion and consideration set out by May's government— the role of the UK's creative industries in boosting the post-Brexit economy is acknowledged. In China alone, an increase in museum collaborations along with business agreements in the creative and cultural sectors had an estimated value of 2.14 billion yuan (China Daily, 2018). This is also timely as the urgency for British museums to diversify and commercialise came in a leaked

letter from the UK culture secretary Oliver Dowden, in which the government told museums to "take as commercially-minded an approach as possible, pursuing every opportunity to maximize alternative sources of income" (Grosvenor, 2020).

Figure 65. Serpentine Gallery Beijing by Jiakun Architects (Frearson, 2018).

To show that the SWCAC is not the only cultural product born from the golden era of UK-China relations, other notable projects include the Serpentine Pavilion Beijing [蛇形美术馆北京展亭]. Every year, the UK's Serpentine Gallery would have a world-renowned architect design a temporary summer pavilion at Kensington Gardens: notable names include Zaha Hadid, Sou Fujimoto and Ai Wei Wei. Being the first Serpentine Pavilion built outside of the UK, the programme in Beijing launched on 30 May 2018 as a collaboration between the Serpentine Galleries and WF Central (Beijing). The winning design was given to Chinese studio Jiakun Architects, with ARUP as technical advisors, and wholly supported by the Arts Council England (Mairs, 2018; Frearson, 2018). Continuing the Serpentine's

initiative of temporary architectural pavilions since 2000, the Serpentine Beijing will host a programme of public events with the Forbidden City as its backdrop.

Figure 66. Architect's impression of the Eden Project in Qingdao due to be completed by 2023 (Eden Project, 2022).

Similar to SWCAC in terms of its relationship with place- and city-brand, is the Eden Project in the former German treaty port city of Qingdao. Hoping to achieve the same success as the Guggenheim franchise model, this UK education and environmental charity is hoping to expand into the global market. The architecture behind the museum has been considered a potential catalyst for economic renewal and urban revitalisation of the city or region. In the spirit of regenerating the city, Eden Qingdao will be developed with the aim "to create a globally-renowned and iconic tourism attraction and centre which demonstrates the highest-quality sustainable construction practices" (Eden Project, 2022). The project is supported by China's leading and state-owned developer, Jinmao Holdings Limited, the Qingdao municipality and Britain's Building Research Establishment [BRE]. Britain's Grimshaw Architects, the architects behind the original Eden Project in Cornwall, will be returning to build the second Eden Project.

Figure 67. An artist's impression of San Weng provided by the Fujian Provincial Government (BBC, 2016).

A recent UK-China cultural collaboration could also be manifested in the form of a township or a kind of open-air museum. San Weng, also translated as Three Masters, in the city of Fuzhou will be paying tribute to celebrated British playwright Shakespeare, Spain's Miguel de Cervantes and China's Tang Xianzu; all three died in the same year, 1616. The new town will have three themed areas dedicated to each author. The plans for San Weng's Little Stratford include a replica of Shakespeare's birthplace Stratford-upon-Avon, complete with Shakespeare's home. Construction is expected to finish in 2022. Unlike previous replica towns like Thames Town (in Shanghai) and British Town (in Chengdu)—where British architects W.S. Atkins and Halcrow were limited to the role as conceptual designers—the Little Stratford section has the blessings of the Fuzhou Municipal Government, Fuzhou Culture and Tourism Investment Company Ltd, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS], the British Council and Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, as well as the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, which is a charity maintaining Shakespeare heritage sites at Stratford-upon-Avon and, now, the official consultants for the reproduction of two of the famous Shakespeare family homes (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 2018).

With Stratford-upon-Avon as one of the UK's most popular destinations for Chinese tourists (Morris, 2016), the production behind Little Stratford is further encouraged by the recent MoU signings between the UK and China, and it hopes to generate much traction, publicity and economic impact on the local region. Unlike ongoing debates of legitimacy of these 'copy towns' or simulacrascapes (Bosker, 2013 and 2016; Chubb, 2015; Wade, 2016; Chen L., 2018), it is ironic that this time, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is an active participant in its production at San Weng. It can be regarded as a legitimate copy. Furthermore, the postmodernist concept of the hyperreal taking the place of the real has manifested itself in one of the two Shakespeare replicas: the creation of New Place in the Stratford Quarter. Formerly Shakespeare's adult home, New Place has been lost since 1702, so the construction of the replica will be based on archaeological findings and records of the site. The Trust will also play a role in all stages of design, construction and interpretation of the original houses using traditional building methods and materials. This also legitimises the replica in China as authentic.

Based on the above projects, these cultural collaborations from bilateral exchanges show that the foreign cultural institutions share a close relationship with China's state government and local partners, who act as advisors and also as a policing agency (Lu, 2013). To conclude the key point of this section, what makes SWCAC (and the aforementioned projects) stand out from other projects is that the innate hybrid nature can be seen through both the transcultural and nation-state lens. The underlying production process and actors involved challenge the East-versus-West or UK-China dichotomy. Instead, it shows that "entangled cultures" (Welsch, 2001), global networks and bilateral exchanges have undeniably contributed to the rise of hybridising museums in China.

2011

2011年，深圳蛇口为建立文化机构进行最初规划。

In 2011 the first plans are made to establish a cultural institution in Shekou, Shenzhen.

建筑师槙文彦受邀设计海上世界文化艺术中心

Architect Fumihiko Maki is invited to design the Sea World Culture and Arts Center

2012

2012年01月03日

招商蛇口副总经理张林一行赴英国伦敦首次访问V&A，参观了V&A的丰富馆藏，并与当时新上任的马丁·罗斯馆长会面，双方交流了创立文化机构的诸多共识，极富合作热情。

03 January 2012

The deputy general manager of China Merchants Shekou and his entourage visit the V&A in London for the first time, to see the collection and meet with the former V&A director Martin Roth to exchange views on establishing a new cultural institution.

2012年02月21日

V&A与招商蛇口首次会面，招商蛇口副总经理与V&A前馆长马丁·罗斯

21 February 2012

First meetings between the V&A and China Merchants Shekou, with the deputy general manager of China Merchants Shekou and former V&A director Martin Roth

2012年6月24日

V&A馆长马丁·罗斯一行赴深圳首次访问招商蛇口，招商蛇口副总经理张林给予其热情接待，双方就进一步推进合作深入交换了意见。

24 June 2012

Former V&A director Martin Roth visits Shenzhen for the first time, to meet with China Merchants Shekou and discuss the future collaboration.

2013

2013年12月02日

招商蛇口与V&A在北京签署了合作谅解备忘录。时任英国文化、传媒和体育大臣、英国国会议员玛利亚·米勒共同见证了签署仪式。

02 December 2013

China Merchants Shekou and the V&A sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Beijing, witnessed by British Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sports Maria Miller, and the Director of the British Council and Minister for Culture and Education of the British Embassy Carma Elliot.

2014

2014年06月17日

在李克强总理上任后首次访问英国期间，招商蛇口与V&A在伦敦英国联邦外交事务部正式签署了合作协议。李克强总理和英国首相大卫·卡梅伦在签字仪式上开场致辞。

17 June 2014

During the first visit to the United Kingdom after Premier Li Keqiang took office, China Merchants Shekou and the V&A officially sign a cooperation agreement with the British Federal Foreign Office in London. Premier Li Keqiang and British Prime Minister David Cameron deliver the opening address at the signing ceremony.

2014年08月19日

海上世界文化艺术中心举办奠基仪式，著名建筑设计大师槙文彦先生、V&A馆长马丁·罗斯先生等嘉宾出席了奠基仪式。

19 August 2014

The groundbreaking ceremony of the Sea World Culture and Arts Center. Attended by former V&A director Martin Roth and the architect Fumihiko Maki.

2015

2015年01月

奥雷·伯曼被任命为设计互联馆长

January 2015

Ole Bouman appointed director of Design Society.

Figure 68. A timeline of key events documenting the key actors and events during 'The Making of Design Society' (Design Society, 2017a, p.98).

2015年10月21日
应中英两国外交部的邀请,招商局集团与V&A合作的文化项目参加了在兰卡斯特宫举办的"中英创意展示"活动。该活动是习近平主席访问英国的官方行程中的重要组成部分。

21 October 2015
At the invitation of the Chinese and British Foreign Ministries, the cultural cooperation between China Merchants Shekou and the V&A was featured during the "Sino-British Creative Exhibition" held in Lancaster Palace. The event was an important part of President Xi Jinping's official visit to the United Kingdom and presented eight creative cultural projects between China and the United Kingdom.

2016
2016年1月20日
海上世界文化艺术中心封顶仪式

20 January 2016
The highest point of the SWCAC's construction is reached, celebrated with a roof topping ceremony.

2016年03月09日
招商蛇口创建海上世界文化艺术中心,并联合V&A公布新型文化综合机构品牌"设计互联"。

09 March 2016
The official Brand Launch of Design Society. China Merchants Shekou and the V&A jointly announce the new creative platform Design Society and the Sea World Culture and Arts Center in Shekou, Shenzhen.

2016年11月20日
设计互联在深圳蛇口首次举办公共活动"去!设计社区节"。

20 November 2016
Design Society's first public event: 'Go! Design Community Festival', held in Shekou Shenzhen.

2017
2017年 03月
设计互联首次参与英领馆举办的驻地设计活动"你好深圳"。

March 2017
Design Society's first designer in residency program 'Hello Shenzhen', organised with the British Council.

2017年03月22日
设计互联在香港巴塞尔艺博会期间宣布开幕展览内容。

22 March 2017
Announcement of Design Society's inaugural exhibitions during Art Basel Hong Kong

2017年04月
深圳设计周期间,设计互联举办了关于深圳创意产业的活动。

April 2017
Design Society presents a feature program about creative industries in Shenzhen at Shenzhen Design Week

2017年12月01日 设计互联开幕
01 December 2017 Opening Design Society

Figure 69. A timeline of key events continued…(Design Society, 2017a, p.99).

iii. The architect: Maki and Associates

As argued by this study's theoretical framework, the museum's resemblance to a business or its 'market-driven' intentions indicate change—a new transition to another economic cycle and shifting political interests, locally and globally (Lefebvre, 1991; Marstine, 2006; Klingmann, 2007). The introduction of the World Wide Web, new technologies and new media have changed the way architecture is consumed and represented. The mediation of iconic architecture in new media draws from the same celebrity culture and even the 'brand crossovers' in China, vying to surprise and delight consumers with extreme marketing strategies (Content Commerce Insider, 2020). The museum has a new form of 'showing-and-telling' in ways that even position the architect as a brand (Bennett, 1995). Top architects have always been involved in the design of the contemporary museum: Richard Rogers (Pompidou), Frank Gehry (Guggenheim Bilbao), Richard Meier (Getty, MACBA), Daniel Libeskind (V&A, Jewish Museum Berlin), Rem Koolhaus (MoMA) and I.M.Pei (Louvre). Employing "starchitects" (Ren, 2011) in the museum or 'brandscape' process (Klingmann, 2007) will position architecture beyond the classic form or function but also as a symbol, an added value and a marketable commodity. They also become another element that is characteristic of hybrid museums in China at present.

The museum as a business also resonates in the museum architecture production process, particularly through the transnational actor: the architect. This additional actor has the most tangible effect upon the architecture form, the building programme and the design of museums in China. Using the case of the V&A outpost, this section looks into the role played by the brand-name architects in the wider production of culture and global cities in China—another factor that adds to the process of hybridisation in Chinese museums. Unlike *The Client* and *The Partners*, *The Architect* here has a clearer role as a transnational actor, operating without the nation-state boundaries. Iconic or signature architecture has long been used as a tool for branding multinational corporations (MNCs) and their buildings. They function as symbols of their corporate culture, values and philosophy. This

study's framework sees the museum as a transnational actor as it is able to reach across borders and strike deals with governments (Goff, 2017). Its commercial dimensions could also be compared to that of a commercial or corporate enterprise.

Hiring brand-name architects to design high profile buildings has been used as part of this branding strategy, "all of which increasingly follow the same recipes in creating what is now defined as the "global city" (Klingmann, 2007, p.267). In *Architecture as Branding* (2008, p.520), Ren finds that megaprojects are "a hybrid product of local investment capital, strong government intervention, and international architectural design". When compared to the real estate market in the West, China's real estate sector is largely a local practice since foreign investment firms are deterred by the country's strict regulations. Instead, they are financed by domestic investment capital (ibid.).

In China, the relationship between hybridising museums and place-, city- and national brand development has become synonymous with capital accumulation in the process of making China's global cities. Combined with support from local media, these signature buildings help promote powerful developers to influence national policy-making. In *Building Globalisation* (2011, p.57), Ren managed to set apart four major types of international architects enticed by the Chinese market: (i) 'starchitects', (ii) corporate architects, (iii) research-oriented architects, and (iv) dual-track Chinese architects. The 'starchitect' would be the group receiving the most media attention for its brand-name architect and eye-catching signature design.

In Charlie Q.L. Xue's book *Grand Theatre Urbanism* (2019), the study of the development of grand theatres from the 1950s up to the present day bears much resemblance to museum production and, consequently, the development of hybrid cultural spaces. Based on case studies from ten selected cities, the book contains works by various authors who look into the city-specific context. However, despite some regional differences, these cultural venues largely operate in similar

conditions. Generally, Xue acknowledges the role of cultural buildings in revitalising a city and generating the local economy through high culture, but found that "massive and extensive construction of grand theatres is a special phenomenon of urban development which demonstrates four characteristics" (ibid.): (i) urbanisation and city advancement, (ii) globalisation and competition, (iii) consumerism in cities, and (iv) the role of foreign architects.

As cultural venues, both the museum and grand theatres share similar functions as emblematic icons tied to the city's brand. On a superficial level, the 'starchitects' become part of the brand associated with the museum, in the process of gaining international publicity and commands global attention (Ren, 2011). Historically, the V&A Museum (formerly South Kensington Museum) launched competitions and invited brand-name architects for their architecture design. This included Kengo Kuma's design for the V&A Dundee and the V&A Museum's latest porcelain-tiled entrance and underground exhibition hall by AL_A (Mairs, 2017) (Figure 70).

The opening of the V&A's Dundee branch in 2018 allegedly saw 830,000 visitors through its doors and contributed £16 million in value to Dundee tourism (Hunt T., 2018). The signature building of "amphibious" and "semi-nautical" nature that sits by the River Tay "like the prow of a boat", is designed by another famous Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma (Figure 71) (ibid.). It is by no coincidence that the V&A is highly selective with the choice of location as well. Both Dundee and Shenzhen are designated as the City of Design under the UCCN; this truly solidifies the V&A's mission and claim to put design at the heart of its brand and ethos. This also coincided well with Dundee's plan to reinvent itself as a cultural centre. Transitioning from its traditional shipbuilding industry, Dundee is honing into the creative industries as a centre for digital media and the arts. The V&A Dundee serves as a museum dedicated to design and pays homage to the city's new and thriving design scene. Its founding partners include the University of Dundee, Abertay University, Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise; all of these institutions play a significant role in education and culture in the region.

Figure 70. V&A's newer porcelain-tiled entrance by AL_A (Mairs, 2017).

Figure 71. Kengo Kuma's V&A Dundee museum (Ravenscroft, 2018).

Figure 72. A scaled model of Maki's design for SWCAC is displayed outside the V&A Gallery (own photo).

These connections have shown how the architect directly contributes to transforming the city's image, but it is only made possible through the multiple networks with local state actors. For the SWCAC, Fumihiko Maki was chosen as the architect. Aside from the domineering "angular white-and-glass behemoth"

(Adams, 2017) façade by Maki and Associates, a scaled-down architectural model of the SWCAC is placed by the Reception desk on the ground floor, as to remind the visitor of another key contributor, whose presence is most experiential and visual. As though as an exhibit, this model is placed on a pedestal and boxed in glass, and has a label crediting Maki as the architect—indicating his important role in the architectural design of the SWCAC, especially in supporting the cultural-commercial building programme.

This has not been an unusual practice in Shenzhen. Early masterplans of the city in the 80s to 90s showed a history of hiring famous architecture firms. Cong Sun and Charlie Q.L. Xue's study of *Shennan Road and the Modernization of Shenzhen Architecture* (2020) between 1979 and 2018 observes that the development of high-profile civic to cultural buildings along this main road is arguably akin to an open exhibit of China's economic reform and Shenzhen's architectural modernisation. The number of non-Chinese architects involved was part of the design trends pertaining to the development of landmark buildings along this key road that connects the east and west of Shenzhen. Following this, the article on Shennan Road begins (i) in the early Open Door phase (1980–1990), where the search for a national form took flight, then into (ii) Deng's Reform and Opening-up phase in 1990–2000, before hitting the familiar timeline (iii) from 2001 to the present day. In addition to this, the authors attempt to classify and describe typical characteristics of these new buildings found in each phase at Shennan Road. The third phase is especially relevant to the upsurge of cultural facilities, government investment and foreign capital. Based on Sun and Xue's (2020) examination of ninety new buildings at Shennan Road, forty-six were designed by foreign architects. They compiled two tables illustrating the type of projects in which foreign architects were typically involved and where they came from (by region) (Figure 74). Interestingly, the redevelopment of Futian in the 1990s predominantly involved American and Japanese architects in the planning and design of landmark buildings (ibid.).
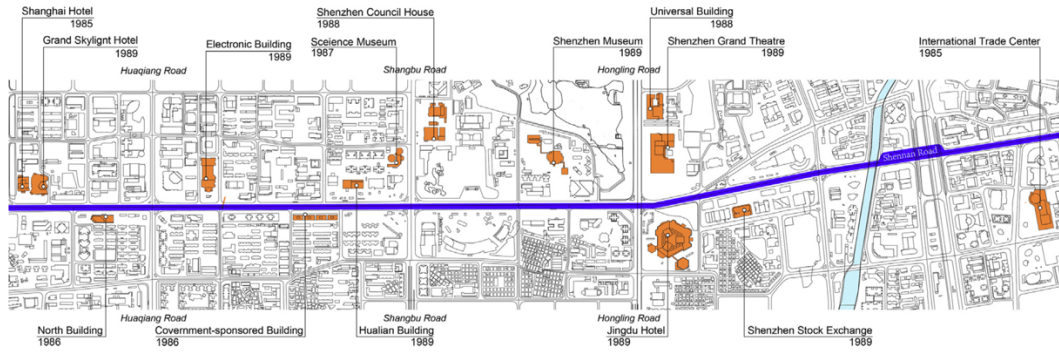
Figure 2   Buildings along Shennan Road completed in the 1979—1989 period. Drawn by the authors.

Figure 73. Buildings along Shennan Road considered to be the "first-generation skyscrapers" forming the main axis of the city, drawn by Sun and Xue (2020).
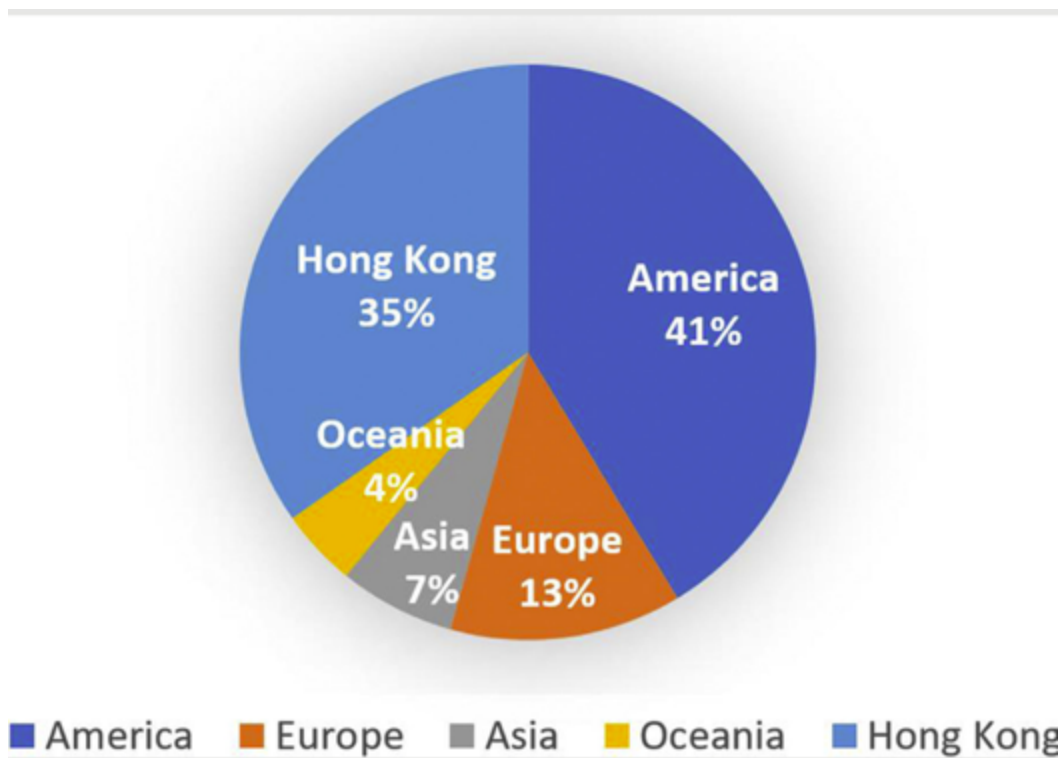
Figure 74. This pie chart shows foreign architects' works by region along Shennan Road. Between 1979 -2019, Sun and Xue (2020) observed that 46 out of Shenzhen's 90 new buildings were designed by foreign architects.

In Shenzhen's *Nanshan District Government Report* (2016), using culture and creating an "international image" are also part of its agenda to attract foreign investment. Foreign architects in favour of designing these grandiose cultural facilities have been used as part of the branding practice to create a spectacle and to standout from other cities. They also symbolise the very image of 'internationalism', according to international norms. Caroline Cartier's study on 'transnational urbanism' in the making of Shenzhen (2002)—although focusing

solely on the new city centre, the Shenzhen Municipal Center building—demonstrates that cultural production, signature architecture development and transnational actors are crucial formulas in turning the "generic city" of Shenzhen into a "world city" of many names, including the Creative City of Design (ibid.). She identifies the key aims and intentions of the Shenzhen Municipal Government, using them to demonstrate the importance of significant architecture in Tier-1 Chinese cities. Signature architecture is used to draw in key actors and investment through images of Shenzhen as 'global', 'modern' and open to investment (ibid.). Furthermore, Shenzhen's special status as an SEZ allows the city to possess greater institutional powers to plan its economy (and subsequently its creative economy) than most cities in China.

This can be explained via Ren's *Building Globalisation* (2011, p.14), whereby the author sought "to examine why private developers and government organisations show such clear preference for international architects". A notable example is SOHO China, another developer that uses signature architecture to market its properties, notably focusing on high-end residential projects like SOHO New town, Jianwai SOHO and Wangjing SOHO. Ren paid particular attention to the transnational linkages forged among different actors. The choice of avant-garde styles and brand-name architects are part of their brand and appeal to wealthy Chinese investors. In this process of capital accumulation, the symbolic capital of signature architecture design is transformed into economic and cultural capital.

Coming back to the site-specific case study of SWCAC, the *Nanshan District's Government Work Report* (2016) declared their joint aims with CMSK as being to "rebuild [a] new Shekou" with investment amounting to 60 billion yuan, with the aim to forge a world class peninsula bay". In the words of Nick Marchand (2020)—the Head of International Programmes at the V&A—the "real story is about the partnerships and environment that completes it". For the tangible "world class" image (PRC. Shenzhen Municipal People's Government [SMPG]. Nanshan District Government, 2016), Sea World and Shekou found their answer through the development of more cultural venues, parks, facilities, and more, as encouraged by

the *Shenzhen Civilization Manual* (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2019a). As a client who engages with brand-name architects, CMSK can also appear to be patrons of the arts or, as the narrative insists, "to promote our design spirit and encourage the public to make, create and connect with design" (Design Society, 2020b, p.68) for Shekou and support Shenzhen as a creative city (Mengoni, 2016a). Similar moments are occurring around Shekou, such as the OCT Shekou Fisherman's Wharf—a strategic area of the Bay developed by the OCT group (known for the OCT Loft project) and Shenzhen Xinxi Investment Co., Ltd (Figure 76) (GMP, 2022).

Figure 75. Wangjing SOHO designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, photo by Jerry Yin (Zaha Hadid Architects, no date).

In terms of understanding the value of international architects in constructing landmark buildings and cultural venues in China, Xue's book *Grand Theatre Urbanism* (2019) and Ren's *Building Globalisation* (2011) provide some insights. Both reviewed cultural buildings as a reflection of the state's ambition to create a distinct identity of a global city in China. Both also acknowledge that these buildings function as cultural venues and landmark buildings but largely believe that the production of space is controlled by the state as means to accumulate economic,

political and social capital. Whilst *Grand Theatre Urbanism* (Xue, 2019) pays attention to "grand theatres" as architecture type, much of the cultural production process in developing these cultural venues can be applied to the broader category of museums, opera houses and more. Regardless of type, cultural buildings have often been tied with the progression of urbanism and city status. Globalisation, meanwhile, drives inter-city competition, which increases the importance of establishing a distinctive image for the city through cultural centres, e.g. the Shanghai Grand Theater and the Guangzhou Opera House.

Managed by a dominantly state-owned company or one with a government background, assembly halls built after 1949 were of various sizes, but they primarily hosted CCP conferences, speeches, high-level meetings; however, they played host to major performing and entertainment events. According to Xue (ibid., p.xviii), the architecture of those halls bore a resemblance to a theatre with a stage and an auditorium. The urge to upgrade the image of the city via cultural facilities and the subsequent yearning to attain the international standard welcome an influx of 'starchitects'. In exchange, as part of the return investment, the starchitects' reputations are expected to drive economic revenue and place the Chinese city on the world map (ibid.). Moreover, brand-name architects and spectacular cultural buildings also represented the achievements of both the city and the officials.

To conclude this section, the international architect hired to design the museum (and its entire production process) belongs to a wider process of creating symbolic capital to communicate the various interests of the key actors, namely the local clients. The international architect functions as a brand and symbol for globalising 'place' and the city. Because of China's unique political context, the high-profile museums often become part of the wider city-branding processes adopted by many globalising Chinese cities. Like any other transnational actor, the 'starchitect' has a role and function within this process of hybridisation in museums, construction of new urban experiences, and also in the wider development of China's cities.

Figure 76. An artist impression of OCT Shekou Fisherman's Wharf along the Shenzhen waterfront and on Shenzhen Bay (GMP, 2022).

3.3 Conclusion

Looking beyond the visible façade, the aim of this chapter paid most attention towards the less visible, underlying transnational organisation structure that determined how the SWCAC is represented and later experienced as a brandscape. The chapter determined how the key actors played a crucial role in setting these foundations based on their own individual and collective aims. Based on the chapter's findings, the need to achieve these aims resulted in the museum taking upon multiple roles: as a brand, a business, a transnational actor, and a diplomat. The key publications from these actors made clear that these cultural entanglements form the foundations of a 'hybrid museum'.

At first, based on the history of museum development in China, CMSK and Design Society seem to have reinforced the creation of the SWCAC as a traditional site of power (Bennett, 1995; Foucault, 2001; Varutti, 2014), but the chapter demonstated that these state-led cultural developments have been affected by an interconnected and globalising system. As demonstrated by the way narratives are negotiated and constructed among the key actors at the SWCAC, foreign actors like the V&A Museum and Maki directly contribute to the historicising of local place narratives, in ways that do allow for a two-way dialogue. The SWCAC's localised traits are infused with key events of the past. For *(i) the client* and *(ii) the partnership*, their founding missions and their own history of 'design', the past would become reinforced in the branding and brandscape of the SWCAC at Sea World. However, despite the multiple voices contributing to the representation of the museum, both state and non-state actors are subjected to complement China's historically state-led cultural and urban development, as well as current ideologies.

Another discrepancy found through understanding this organisational structure is that the SWCAC is not exactly as novel as it is marketed to be. Hybrid museums may have been expedited during the globalising process, but China's long history of developing hybrid cultural venues argues that hybrid cultural buildings have been around for much longer, and are designed with multifunctional spaces to serve the

interests of both commercial and political needs. Therefore, hybridised museums like the SWCAC are both new and old concepts. Yet, it is new in the sense that cultural entanglements allow multiple voices to merge and enrich the development of museums in China. 'Hybridisation' itself may not be truly novel, but the museum is increasingly used as a new tool to assess the relationship between the local and global. After all, the museum is a Western construct and to an extent, is a product of colonialism in China, but this case study demonstrates how the Chinese are using the 'museum' to present their own narratives, with support from former colonisers.

CHAPTER 4: THE CULTURAL-COMMERCIAL HYBRID

4.1 Introduction

This study sees the phenomenon of hybrid museums and increasing museum collaborations beyond marketing ploys, as a reflection of broader economic and political shifts (Lu, 2014; Varutti 2014). The hybrid museum is arguably a product conceived by key actors who use multiple 'hybridisations' as means to adapt to the market and socio-economic realities. The previous section showed the less visible but important roles of various actors (i.e. CMG, Design Society, the V&A Museum and Maki and Associates) in producing and encouraging museum hybridisation at the SWCAC. To demonstrate this relationship between the actors (the less visible drivers) and the production of hybrid museums (the most visible product), Chapter 4 uses SWCAC's hybrid museum-mall building type as evidence and as the manifestation of the actors' interests, motives and goals within this partnership.

Designed as a "Museum-Theatre-Retail", SWCAC's multifunctional building redefines the roles and functions of the 'museum' (Maki and Associates, 2012). The aim of this chapter focuses on what the hybrid cultural and commercial programmes curated, marketed and developed at the SWCAC are trying to convey. This chapter pays attention to the key architectural features, architecture drawings and plans and building programmes to examine museum hybridisation at the surface-level, but also their underlying joint mission "to promote design communication and cultural exchange through both content production and platform building" (Design Society, 2017a, p.57). As an experiential hybrid space, this chapter's findings will reveal the key rationales behind the SWCAC's multifunctionality and its cultural-commercial programmes.

This chapter is based on a site analysis of the SWCAC in December 2019. This chapter is divided into three main sections: *4.2 The façade and the built form, 4.3 The building programme* and, *4.4 The three interior plazas*.

Findings are expected to support the blurring and entangling of networks, cultures and ideas at the hybrid museum. Hybrid museums can be seen as new contact zones for the local and global, the state and non-state, the culture and commerce, private and public, and high and low culture, which often results in increasingly multifunctional and blurred spaces. Overall, this phenomenon of museum hybridisation presents new ways of rethinking museum design for both mainland China and for museums in general.

Figure 77. The SWCAC and Shenzhen Bay (ArchDaily, 2017a).

In its key online articles (Design Society and V&A Blog), the SWCAC is marketed as China's first "design museum", "cultural hub" (Mengoni, 2016a) and "innovative model for international collaboration" (Design Society, 2017a, p.17). Although it barely uses "mall" to describe itself, the most recent key report does acknowledge its commercial interests, but also its difference from a "traditional shopping mall" by its "combination of art and commerce" (Design Society, 2020b). As neither fully a museum nor a mall, and neither public nor private, it begs the question of where this kind of hybrid museum fits.
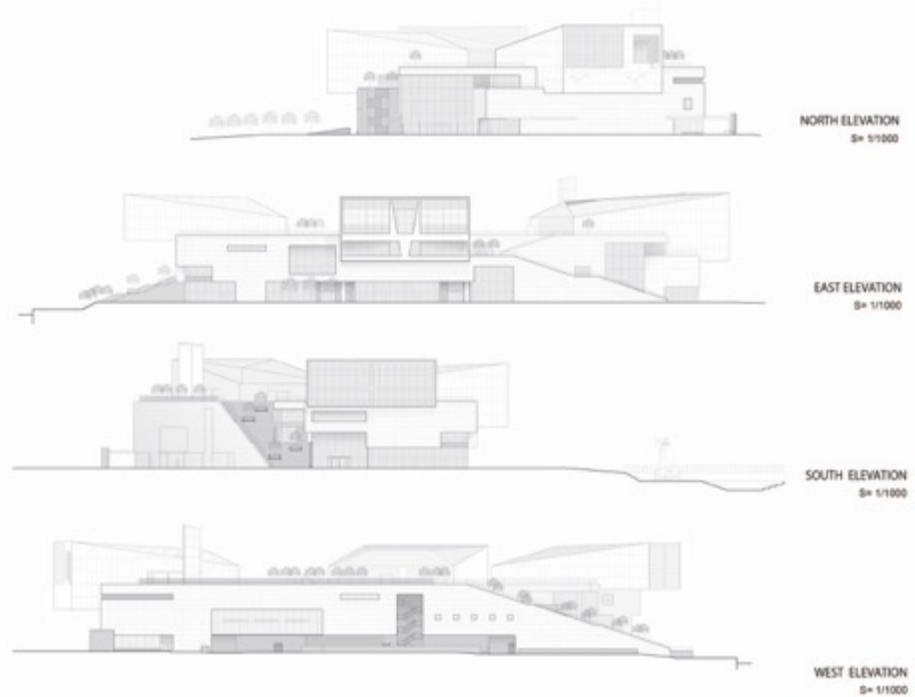
Figure 78. Architecture drawings of the SWCAC (ArchDaily, 2017a).

Location: Shenzhen, China

Completion Date: 2017

Building type: Museum, Theatre, Retail

Structural System: Reinforced Concrete, Steel

Number of Floors: 2 Basement + 4 Stories

Site Area: 26,161m^2

Building Area: 12,037m^2

Total Floor Area: 73,918m^2

Architect of Record: Shenzhen Capol International & Associates

Structural Engineer: ARUP, Shenzhen Capol International & Associates

Mechanical / Electrical Engineer: P.T. Morimura and Associates, Shenzhen Capol International & Associates

Project in collaboration with Fu Kecheng, Luo Bing, Kobayashi Maki Design Workshop

(Maki and Associates, 2012)

4.2 The façade and the built form

As a self-declared modernist, Fumihiko Maki of Maki and Associates continues his simple, consistent and straightforward architecture style in the design of the SWCAC. His buildings tend to utilise "the classic materials of the modernist age", which are metal, concrete and glass, but also extended to include mosaic tiles, anodised aluminium and stainless steel (Pritzker Prize Architecture, 2021). In simple terms, Maki's design for the SWCAC can be described as an "angular white-and-glass behemoth" with a wide exterior stairway alongside the building that extends up to the roof garden (Adams, 2017). Its form comprises a simple block as a base, and sitting on top of it are three smaller cantilevered volumes angled in three different directions.

However, beyond the "architecturally striking" landmark (Tsui, 2017), the design of the SWCAC is carefully constructed to reflect the client's corporate brand, as well as the place brand of Shekou. The following text description on Maki's website reveals the underlying complexities and design intentions behind the SWCAC (Maki and Associates, 2012):

> Shenzhen Sea World Culture and Arts Center was designed
> as a cultural core of a large-scale multi-use (retail,
> commercial, residential) development in the Sea World
> area undertaken by our client, China Merchants Shekou
> Industrial Zone Holdings. The site occupies the
> southeastern portion of the Shekou Peninsula and
> overlooks the ocean with beautiful views of the mountains
> of Hong Kong. In 2011, Maki and Associates was invited to
> design its first project in China. The building hosts a variety
> of cultural functions including a museum, theater, multi-
> purpose hall, and private art gallery, along with various
> culturally affiliated retail spaces.

The form of the building consists of a podium and a pavilion, with three volumes protruding to the natural features of the geography, facing the ocean to the south, the adjacent park, and the mountains to the north. The circulation loops around the internal atria, all of which are closely tied to the exterior plazas. Together, they provide a wide array of cultural experiences to the visitor. The park extends onto the roof garden via two grand stairways, creating a holistic public experience appropriate for a culture center.

This description reveals a more intimate relationship between SWCAC's architecture design and the wider place brand. The three views and circulation of the building show how the façade is considerate of the geographical features of Shekou.

In Maki's description of SWCAC, the building form can also be seen as a two-part composition: a podium and a pavilion. Describing one of his goals as "achieving a dynamic equilibrium that includes sometimes conflicting masses, volumes, and materials", Maki's interests in putting together "parts" and creating the "whole" also manifest at the SWCAC, as the form appears stacked together by disjointed blocks (Pritzker Prize Architecture, 2021). Each part has its own functions, but put together as a whole building, the various parts encourage the blurring of exclusive-inclusive, private-public, cultural-commercial spaces and local-global at various spatial intersections.

The following subsections highlight the two main parts that define the building form of the SWCAC: (i) the podium and (ii) the pavilion. In many ways, the findings argue that Maki has facilitated the process of hybridisation at SWCAC.

Figure 79. Own photo of the SWCAC taken from the waterfront route (South elevation).
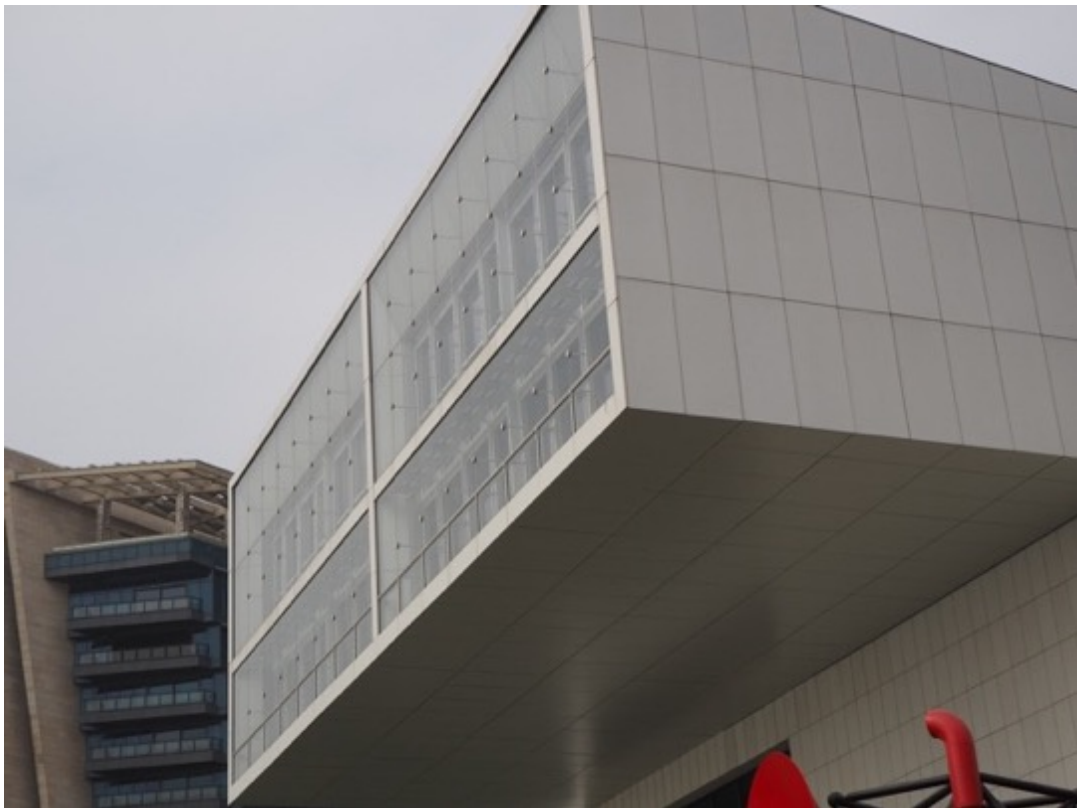
Figure 80. One of the three cantilevered blocks of the SWCAC (own photo).

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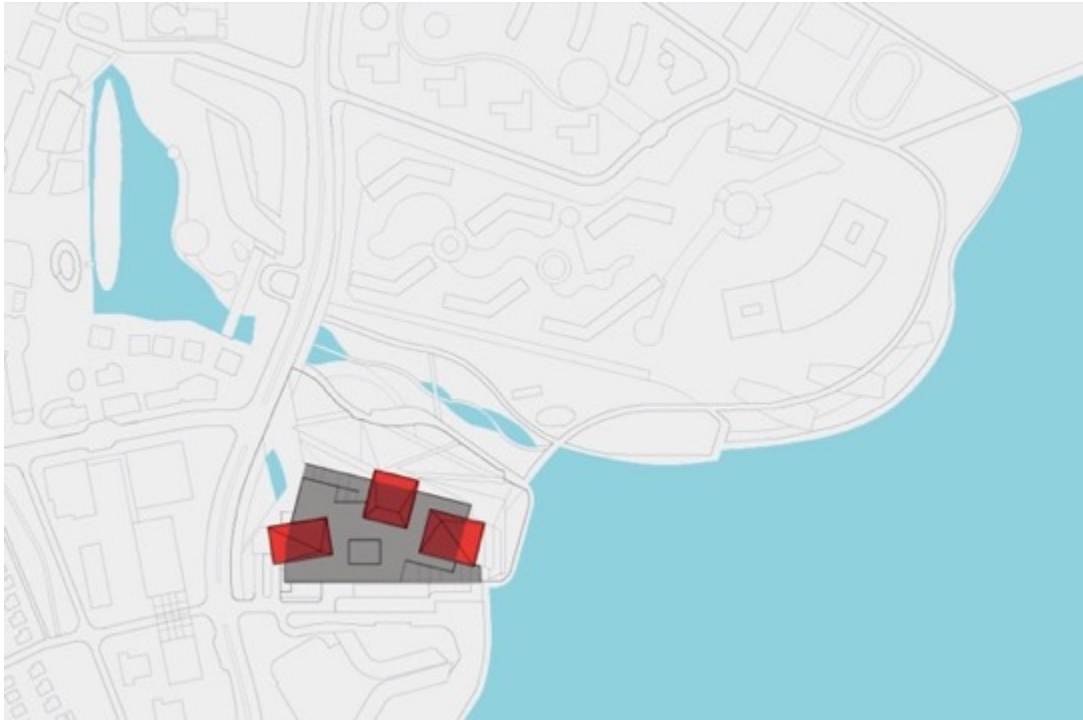
Figure 81. Self-annotated map of the SWCAC in context to the site. The 'podium' part is in grey, the 'pavilion' in red, whilst the water features are in blue (Site Plan from ArchDaily, 2017a).

The 'podium' recalls the existing tower-podium typology that is a dominant residential type in China. As a widely accepted typology for urbanising cities across the globe, the podium (on its own) can be described as the "lower levels of a tall building that are built up to or near the property boundary edges" with a clearly defined upper level (tower component) set back from the lower podium building edges (Australia. Victoria State Government, 2016). The integrated high-density block with retail provided a unique solution to combine residential and commercial functions, and private and public interest in a tight space. Literature concerning tower-podium buildings in China is sparse and "revolves around structural design and construction techniques" (Loo et al., 2022). A notable study is from Christopher Lee (2015) on the tower and slab block types found in Singapore, in which he establishes the type "as a heuristic device" that can "uncover the cultural, social and political reasoning behind the architecture of the developmental city in Far East Asia" (ibid., p.988).

Figure 82. Elements Mall in Hong Kong is an integrated podium with tower-block residences (left) (Fusion Interiors Group, no date) and an underground connection to the Kowloon MTR and Airport Express (right) (Benoy Architects, no date).

In a study that overlaps with the museum-mall type, Jonathan Solomon (2012) sees the podium shopping mall as a unique characteristic of Hong Kong urbanism and its high-density environment. The study sees the dense podium-type housing as a "global village" with its multiple networks to the city, residences, public transport, global and local cultures and over and underground (an example is the Elements

Mall in Figure 82). This integrated podium with the shopping mall is a common sight in rapidly urbanising Asian cities. It becomes part of the day-to-day and living experiences of the city. A more China-specific study by Surong Liu (2006, cited in Loo et al., 2022) sees three types of commercial buildings in China's residential district—a street-facing commercial podium, a centralised commercial centre and a pedestrian mall. This hybridisation of functions leads to blurred distinctions between the private-public areas, the residential-commercial zones, the horizontal-vertical forms, and the formal-informal structures.

Another notable characteristic of this integrated podium is that the retail and leisure functions are often found at the base. In a bid to get a return on investment, the retail functions are placed on the ground floor where they are most visible, becoming integrated into part of the public space and gaining the most footfall and access from the street. Unlike the typical vertical podiums that dominate Hong Kong's and Shenzhen's skyline, the SWCAC's low-level podium design has no residential functions. Instead, Maki implies that it serves an aesthetic or perhaps an abstract purpose by calling it a "sculptural podium" clad in white and green granite (ArchDaily, 2017a).
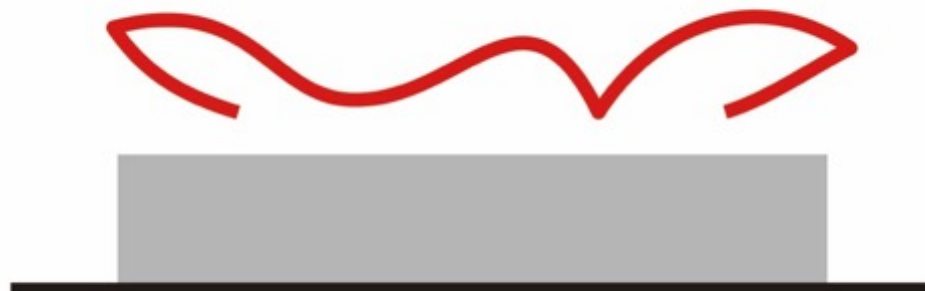
Figure 83. A concept drawing by Maki and Associates; SWCAC's podium base is in grey whilst the pavilion feature is marked in red (ArchDaily, 2017a).

At the opening of the SWCAC in December 2017, the Director of Design Society, Ole Bouman, presented the building as "a new podium for China to show its creative drive to the world and to nurture its quest for international inspiration" (Lynch P., 2017). In this context, the podium forms a foundational base that houses the hybrid museum-mall functions. Similar to the podium shopping mall, the mall element has direct access to the main street, whilst the 'pavilion' element of the SWCAC sits on top of the podium base as three cantilevered volumes (each containing a restaurant, multifunctional hall and theatre) (Figure 83).

Figure 84. (Right) Hillside Terrace, (top right) Fujisaware Gymnasium, (bottom right) Aga Khan Museum (Maki and Associates, no date).

What makes the SWCAC's 'podium' distinctive from the 'pavilion' is the blurring between private and public spaces. Glass as its material and its translucent qualities allow the base to look as though it is floating and inviting, rather than presenting a solid block podium that is closed off to the public. As expected of Maki's style and based on his previous works (e.g. Hillside Terrace Apartments, Fujisaware Gymnasium, Aga Khan Museum), the juxtaposition of transparency and opacity is

made possible with the choice of contemporary construction materials. In the case of the SWCAC, Maki uses glass, reinforced concrete, steel and granite tiles.

The use of glass at the podium level is indicative of these intentions, in which they act as both a window and wall. This self-annotated plan of SWCAC (Figure 85) loosely indicates key areas on the ground floor that are visible from the outside. The gradient shading (darker grey indicating hidden areas, mid-grey as less visible and light grey as fully visible) shows areas that are most visible. This visibility is given to selected retail stores (two furniture shops and the Design Society Store, the Park View Gallery and a restaurant). The Culture Plaza and the Waterfront Plaza benefit the most from their floor-to-ceiling glass entrances spanning levels 1F to 3F (Figure 86). Meanwhile, in contrast to the glass entrances, the opaque side of the SWCAC faces away from Wanghai Road and the park. This side marks SWCAC's private and more exclusive spaces: private offices, car park entry, loading bays, operations and the private galleries.
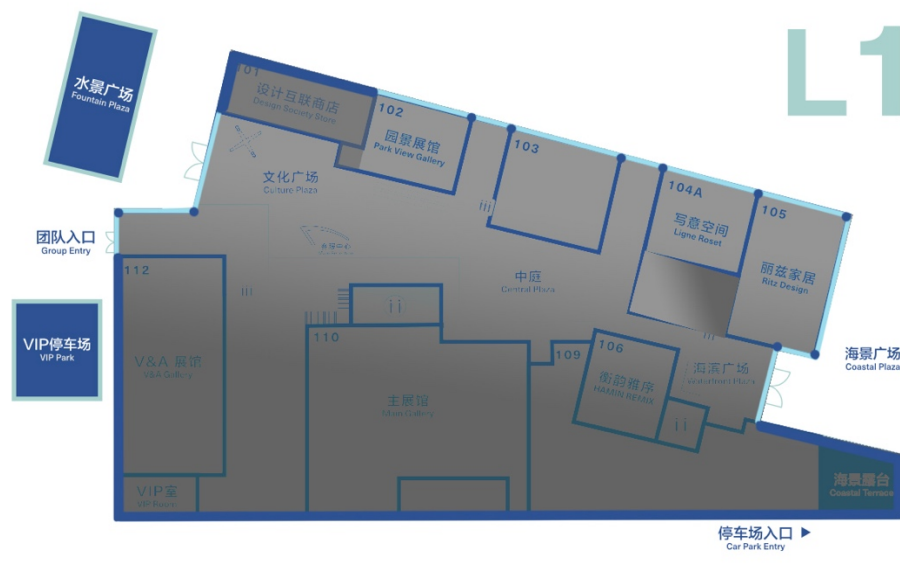
Figure 85. Self-annotated plan of the ground floor. The darker areas loosely illustrate non- or less visible spaces whilst the lighter grey are visible from the outside. The light blue lines also show where the glass features are located. (Floor plan from Design Society, no date a).

Figure 86. Own photo of the Culture Plaza entrance, facing Wanghai Road allowing visitors to peek into SWCAC.

The lightness and suspension effect of the floor-to-ceiling glass windows at the key entrances of SWCAC is not novel, as it is reminiscent (though not intentionally) of the Barcelona Pavilion by Mies van de Rohe for the Barcelona Universal Exposition in 1929. The Barcelona Pavilion became the pinnacle of modernist style as it blurs the use of glass as a window and wall, and thus creating visible and less visible spaces. Glass became a main architectural component rather than a window. As both a window and a wall, the use of glass in the SWCAC podium base also utilises its translucent qualities to blur the private and public spaces, outside from inside. In contrast to the clear glass, the pavilion's less visible and private spaces use marble and onyx to mark a contrast between the private and the public areas (Unwin, 2010, p.6). The solid walls inside have two main functions: first, they are used as framing devices to present certain views; second, they dictate the way a person move within the space.

Figure 87. The Barcelona Pavilion (Kroll, 2011a).

This design feature of using glass as a hybrid window and wall also facilitates the 'hybridisation' of the museum and the mall at SWCAC's podium level. Alongside the use of glass, the three interior plazas: the Culture Plaza, the Waterfront Plaza and the Central Plaza, also add to the museum-mall type. Out of the three, the Culture Plaza and the Waterfront Plaza are visible from the main entry points, i.e. through the main Wanghai Road and the coastal route.

Figure 88. Own photo of the Culture Plaza entrance, with the cascading water feature and Design Society Store in sight.
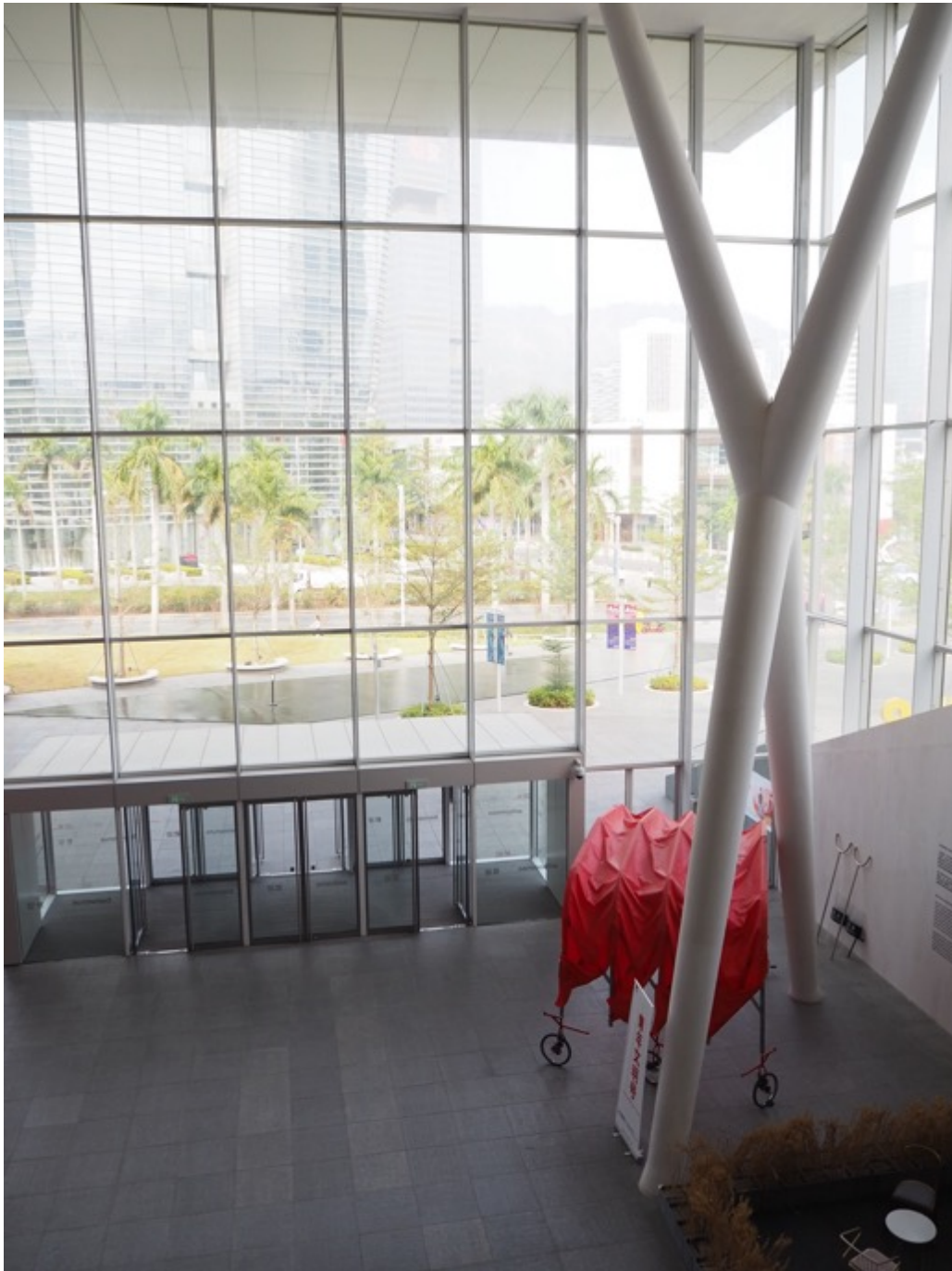
Figure 89. Own photo of the Culture Plaza.

At the Culture Plaza, the Design Society Store [设计互联商店] is most visible from the busy Wanghai Road. It also has a cascading water feature that directs the gaze towards the Design Society Store (Figure 88). It appears as though it is extended into the main pedestrianised street, considering how the main entrance at the Culture Plaza is designed in an offset manner. Because of the floor-to-ceiling glass entrance, it seems as though the Culture Plaza is held up by an X-shape pillar from

the outside (Figure 89). In contrast to this, visitors who are coming from the direction of the coastal route would also see the Waterfront Plaza's floor-to-ceiling glass entrance that allows full visibility of the main staircase and art installation hanging over the plaza (Figure 90).

Figure 90. The Waterfront Plaza entrance (own photo).
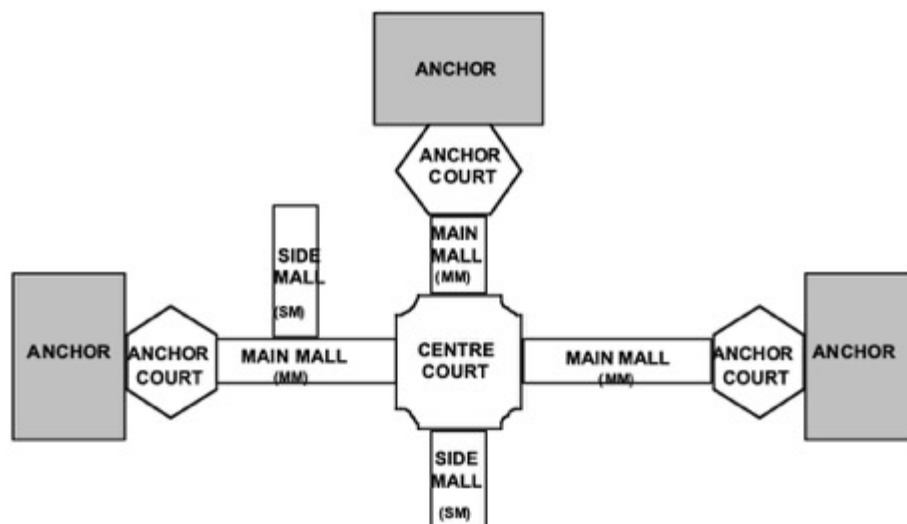
Figure 91. A diagram showing the basic design of a mall whereby the Main Mall leads to an Anchor (Fong, 2003).

With striking visibility from the main road and coastal route, the SWCAC seems to share the basic shopping mall layout that uses a "dumb-bell concept": using large competing "'anchor' stores at two ends working as 'magnets'" (Fong, 2003, p.231). In the case of the SWCAC, the shop window element of the podium places commercial activities (the Design Society Store and the furniture shops) in the Culture Plaza and Waterfront Plaza, whereby they can encourage the flow of pedestrian movement through these conspicuous entry and exit points. As a sculptural podium, it uses glass to allow key areas to be visible to the public gaze whilst juxtaposing the lightness of glass with more exclusive spaces hidden by the solid walls.

Other visible areas include the less conspicuous east entrance that leads visitors into the Central Plaza from the public park nearby. Here, the floor-to-ceiling glass entrance only spans two floors. However, as though a shop window display, this feature visibly puts forward one of the V&A's galleries at SWCAC; the appropriately named Park View Gallery (Figure 92). This exhibition space is also the only cultural space visible from the outside, whilst other exhibition spaces are placed in more private areas of the SWCAC and kept out of the public eye. Apart from the Park View Gallery, one of the restaurants also has this privilege of being visible to the public eye

Based on the façade, the allocation of these visible and less visible spaces does not create an impression that SWCAC is either a traditional museum or a traditional shopping mall. The Park View Gallery, restaurant and shops that are made visible in the public gaze openly present the SWCAC as a spatially ambiguous and hybrid building. Arguably, the use of glass in the visible and less visible qualities of Maki's building offers the public gaze some of its hybrid cultural and commercial programmes but these can only be fully explored when the visitors decide to enter.

Figure 92. Part of the Park View Gallery is visible from the park (own photo).

ii. The pavilion

DESIGN CONCEPT AXONOMETRIC
BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE AS ONE INTERGRATED DESIGN
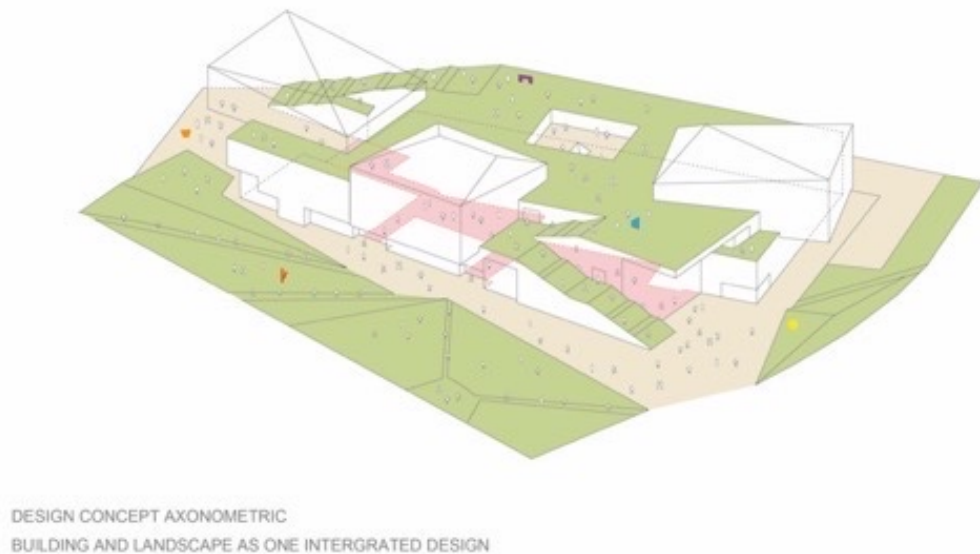
Figure 93. Axonometric drawing of the SWCAC, with emphasis on the three blocks and the folded grass leading up to the rooftop garden as though part of the garden (ArchDaily, 2017a).

> Backed by the Nanshan Mountain and looking out over
> Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong, this place, loaded with historical
> symbolism, will become a go-to spot for the culture and design
> hungry in Shenzhen and beyond, connecting audiences of
> different ages and backgrounds.
>
> Ole Bouman's introduction to Design Society for the V&A Blog
> (Cormier, 2017b)

The three blocks sitting on top of the podium of glass and granite are arguably the most distinctive features of the SWCAC. The 'pavilion' element of SWCAC is symbolised by three cantilevered volumes "protruding to the natural features of the geography, facing the ocean to the south, the adjacent park, and the mountains to the north" (Maki and Associates, 2012); each symbolically facing Hong Kong, inland Shekou and to the mountains. Since the three volumes are angled towards these key sights, their overall placement contributed to the asymmetry and angular

shape of SWCAC. Based on the appraisal of Maki's notable works (Pritzker Architecture Prize, 2021), his projects tend to build upon the character and place of the local area as well.

Figure 94. Images of the SWCAC at night show lighting placements that emphasises on the simplicity of the building's form (Architonic, 2017).

Each of the three volumes houses a theatre, a restaurant and a multipurpose hall, which further challenges the definitions of the 'museum' and also contributes to museum hybridisation. Whilst these three facilities are not as visible at ground level, visitors are able to enjoy private views of "the surrounding city/mountains, park, and the sea" (ArchDaily, 2017a). Each volume has its own distinctive architecture feature specially designed to accommodate their primary functions and utilise these scenic views respectively. According to the text description provided by Maki, "the theater is enclosed by a double-skin with exterior louvers, allowing views of the city and mountain from inside" (ibid.). Meanwhile, it adds that "the restaurant has a V-shaped aluminium element, while the multi-purpose hall is glazed with spider-point double skin overlooking the sea" (ibid.).

The 'pavilion', combined with the folded aluminium roofs of the volumes, is designed with the intention to create different shades depending on the angle of the sun. This "dynamic silhouette" of SWCAC symbolises "a large white ship in the harbor" (ArchDaily, 2017a), paying homage towards the waterfront area and Shekou's history as the first port to open foreign trade beginning in 1979. This silhouette, in its clean, pristine and unornamented design, makes a striking contrast to the commercial glitz and paraphernalia of the adjacent Sea World Plaza. To live up to this symbolic image of a white ship, GD-Lighting Design [GD]—a lighting design company from Hong Kong—was brought in to work on the exterior and interior lighting of the SWCAC. At night, the simplicity of SWCAC's form is retained through lighting placement that "emphasizes artistic conception instead of depiction and outlining"—a so-called "soundless beauty" (Architonic, 2017).

The lighting here emphasises "openness and connectivity, so that people, space and nature can have quiet dialogues" (Architonic, 2017). To achieve this effect, the three volumes are subtly lit from the base to ensure "the architecture style of plainness" is kept, and that the form of the building is not overemphasised (ibid.). The company's conscientious choices and placement of lighting have been awarded

the A'Design Award for Lighting Products and Lighting Projects Design Category, 2017-2018, which adds to SWCAC's brand value (A'Design Award, 2018).
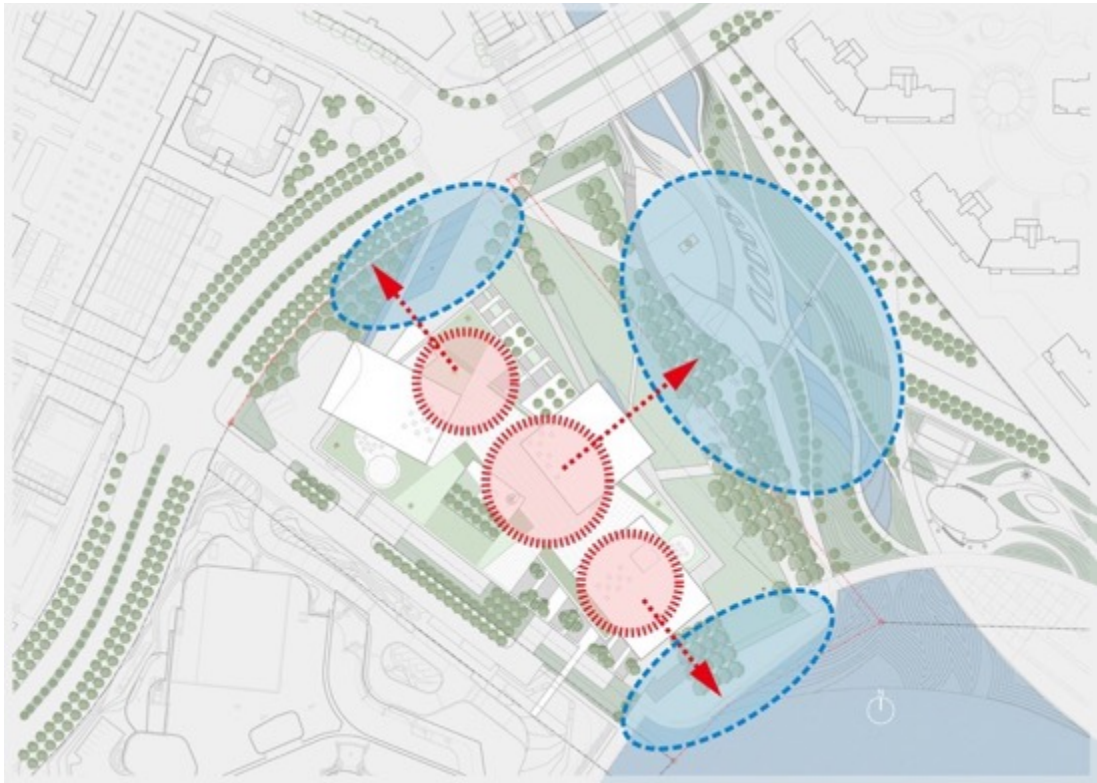
Figure 95. A diagram by Maki and Associates showing the three different views each volume is directed towards. The blue circles indicate public spaces around SWCAC, starting from the top: Wanghai Road/Sea World, the park and the waterfront (ArchDaily, 2017a).

The volume that faces the 'sea' (the multipurpose hall) is angled towards the direction of Hong Kong, which is especially symbolic since Shenzhen is to become a global leader in technology and finance, and "a showcase window" of Xi's vision of an ideal Chinese society (Xin and Leng, 2020). In celebrating the city's 40th birthday, President Xi Jinping stated an intention "to make Shenzhen a testing ground for policies that support what Beijing is trying to do, but which the government is not yet ready to roll out on a nationwide basis after four decades of experimenting with an illiberal political structure and a relatively free market" (ibid.).

Both the podium and pavilion are designed to house their respective functions: the podium contains the museum-mall functions and the pavilion houses the theatre, restaurant and multipurpose hall. Based on these observations, the museum

element is merely one of the many programmes at the SWCAC rather than becoming the main programme of the building. As China's "first design museum", the hybrid programmes at this multi-use building continue to challenge the idea of a 'museum', but findings show how the idea of 'design' covers a wide range of activities (V&A Museum, 2018).

4.3 The building programme

Design Society is a place to connect into spark new collaborations
between design and people, institutions, industry, commerce, and
daily life. The most obvious synergizer will be the Maki-designed
building itself, strongly rooted in a philosophy of designing
encounters at the essence of the architecture. Its collection of
galleries, shops, workspaces and restaurants, as well as its
generous public space, will provide the eco-system in which
mutuality will thrive and where visitors may transform from
visitor, to consumer, to participant, to maker and creator.

Design Society's Year Book (also published as *Design Society: The
Making of a New Creative Platform*) (2017a, p.47)

The previous section, 4.2 *The façade and the built form*, focused on the two-part
component of SWCAC: the podium and the pavilion. It showed how SWCAC is
presented as a multi-use development with multifunctional spaces rather than a
building that has a dominant museum element. This section will examine the hybrid
building programmes and key architectural features at the SWCAC, namely how
they encourage museum hybridisation and contribute to the general debate of the
'museum' (ICOM, 2018).

To place the hybrid museum within the universal understanding of the 'museum'
framework is a challenge. The same can be said with the hybrid museum in the
Chinese context. In Lu's *Museums in China (*2013), an overview is given of the
classifications of museums in mainland China, and the type of grading system they
go through under the State Administration of Cultural Heritage [SACH]:

1) Museums of social sciences: national and local museums of
    revolution, individual martyrs, sacred places of the CCP,

minorities' cultures, ecomuseums; private museums on the Cultural Revolution, on migrant workers and more.

2) Museums of humanities and the arts: national and local museums of archaeology, history, fine arts; memorial museums on individual artists, museums on textiles craftsmanship and various items of antiquities.

3) Museums of science and technology: national and local museums of architecture, geology, geography, fossils, natural history, agriculture, industries, marine science, earthquakes and more.

The SACH established the grading system in 2008 (Lu, 2013, p.206):

> … in order to standardise (of private and public museums) the classification and management of museums, and to facilitate better supervision … based on the quality and quantity of the collection, the size of the museum building, the number and academic quality of the staff, the comprehensiveness of its operational Department and facilities, the quantity and quality of the permanent and temporary exhibitions, opening hours, the number of visitors per year, the quantity and quality of published research works, and the reputation status at a museum among its peers as well as in society.

The museum classification ranges from I to III grade, with Grade I being the highest. The most coveted title is designation as China's 'national first-grade museum' [国家一级博物馆]. Beijing's Palace Museum holds a place among the 131 museums listed as national first-grade in 2017.

This classification brings up the most immediate question regarding the status of hybrid museums or Kunsthal-type museums (based on the Kunsthal Rotterdamn).

This is where the list provided by Lu is incomplete (2013, p.201). As the book was published in 2013, Lu was not able to gauge how the third phase of museum development in China would respond towards a rapidly changing market, new technologies and globalising architectural practices in the 21st-century.

It is especially hard to classify the SWCAC because of its ambiguous nature and its cultural-commercial programme ratio. Design Society's aim was "to establish a niche of 'cultural enterprise' that sustains itself through varied sources of income and initiatives, combining cultural and commercial prowess to establish a sustainable complex and entity" (Design Society, 2017a, p.57). This merger in culture and commerce is visibly an important element of SWCAC's business strategy, but at the same time, it still sets itself apart from the "traditional shopping mall in that their shops are cultural and art elements, it also pays more attention to the combination of art and commerce" (Design Society, 2020b, p.96).

The following subsections will show how these two formerly incompatible oxymorons (the museum/store) merge under SWCAC's roof (Klingmann, 2007). The first subsection *(i) The cultural hub*, focuses on the way the SWCAC is branded and developed as a multifunctional space from the outset, through various observations made from current architecture plans, former architectural entries to the literal language used to describe key spaces (Chinese and the English counterparts). How SWCAC is intended and branded further challenges the roles, functions and symbolic meaning of the 'museum' in China. Contributing to the latter half of this subsection on the museum's spatial ambiguity is the examination of *(ii) the hybrid programmes*. Not only are the type of shops at SWCAC examined, the way these stores are presented spatially also determined how the cultural entanglements and multiple voices harmonise within the museum-mall type. Glass is the key material used to selectively illuminate spaces, to blur the distinctions between a shop window and museum object, and to blur the 'museum gaze' with the 'consumer gaze' (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

L1

水景广场
Fountain Plaza

团队入口
Group Entry

VIP停车场
VIP Park

101
设计互联商店
Design Society Store

102
园景展馆
Park View Gallery

103

104A
写意空间
Ligne Roset

105
丽兹家居
Ritz Design

文化广场
Culture Plaza

客服中心
Main Reception

中庭
Central Plaza

104B
海上画廊
Haishang Gallery

112

V&A 展馆
V&A Gallery

110

主展馆
Main Gallery

109

106
衡韵雅序
HAMIN REMIX

海滨广场
Waterfront Plaza

海景广场
Coastal Plaza

VIP室
VIP Room

海景露台
Coastal Terrace

停车场入口 ▶
Car Park Entry

BUILDING PROGRAMME:
- EXHIBITION SPACES
- PAVILION (3 VOLUMES)
- RETAIL / F&B
- OFFICES (PRIVATE)

CIRCULATION:
- ROOFTOP GARDEN
- OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACES
- WALKWAYS

PLAZA:
- CULTURE PLAZA
- CENTRAL PLAZA
- WATERFRONT PLAZA

L2

201

202

203

207
深圳联合国教科文组织展馆
Shenzhen UCCN Gallery

210
公教空间
Learning Space

208
工作室 Studio

二楼中庭
L2 Central Plaza

丽兹家居
Ritz Design

204

小燕|巢
Xiaoyan | NEXT

Figure 96. Self-annotated map of SWCAC's floor plans (L1, ground level and L2, first level).

L3

L4

BUILDING PROGRAMME:
- EXHIBITION SPACES
- PAVILION (3 VOLUMES)
- RETAIL / F&B
- OFFICES (PRIVATE)

CIRCULATION:
- ROOFTOP GARDEN
- OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACES
- WALKWAYS

PLAZA:
- CULTURE PLAZA
- CENTRAL PLAZA
- WATERFRONT PLAZA
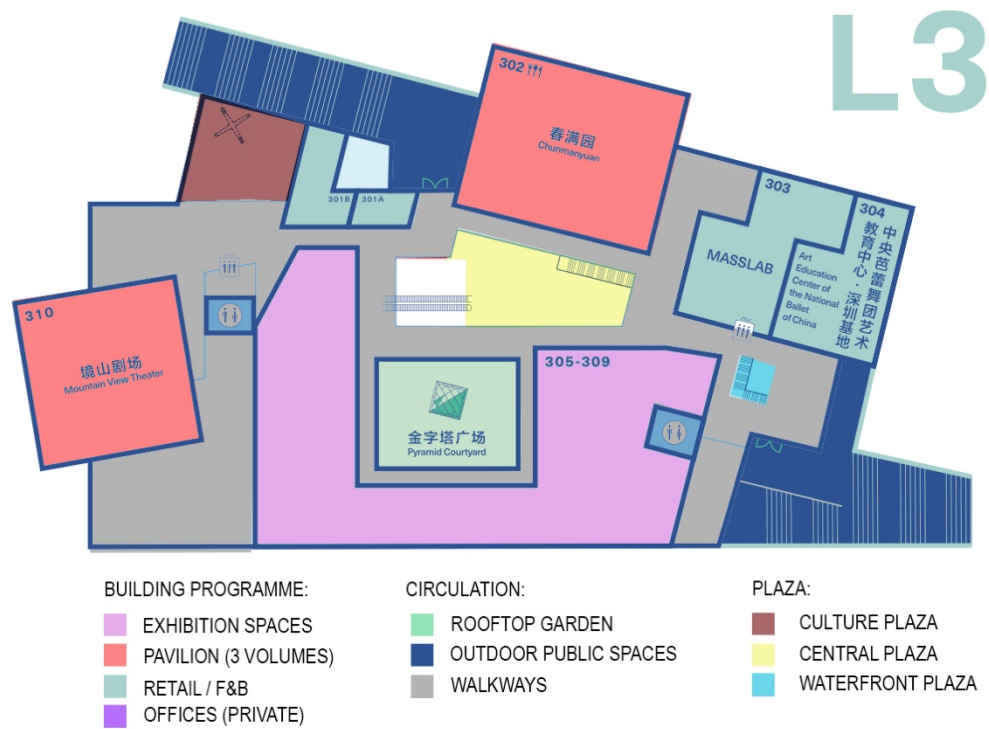
Figure 97. Self-annotated map of SWCAC's floor plans (L3, second-floor and L4, third-floor or the rooftop).

Although it is intended to be a museum of design from the outset, the Chinese characters for the SWCAC (hǎishàng shìjiè wénhuà yìshù zhōngxīn) [海上世界文化艺术中心] imply how this partnership between Design Society and the V&A Museum did not produce a conventional 'museum'. The difference between the traditional museum and the hybrid museum is arguably demonstrated in the Chinese characters denoting the two building types. Identifying and acknowledging the cultural difference and expectations of a 'museum' (bówùguǎn) [博物馆] or the 'cultural hub' (wénhuà yìshù zhōngxīn) [文化艺术中心] in China can help better understand the interest in hybrid museums and similar cultural venues. In turn, it expresses renewed understanding of the process of hybridisation within the Chinese museum context.

Firstly, the characters for 'museum' [博物馆] are not contained within the Chinese name of the SWCAC, whereas the V&A Museum is referred to as the 'V&A博物馆' in the Design Society annual report publications (2017 and 2020). This distinction would become detrimental to understanding the conception and expectations of hybrid museums in China. Recently-opened museums in China, as observed by Varutti (2014), pay more attention to narrative rather than the act of researching, collecting and preserving historical relics associated with traditional museums. According to Lu Jiansong (2012), the main difference between museums in China today and their predecessors is that the past (and not communist doctrine) is used as the source of political legitimisation and renewed interpretation of the past. Meanwhile, contemporary museums focus on education and public service and invest in state-of-the-art technologies and modern architecture (Varutti, 2014, p.41). Therefore, the characters for 'museum' are an indicator of a permanent collection and of historic artifacts, whereas the 'cultural hub' indicates flexibility and a brand-centred approach—the need to use architecture to create new urban spectacles.

SWCAC's Chinese name [海上世界文化艺术中心] literally means Sea World Cultural and Arts Center, word-for-word. Whilst the hǎishàng shìjiè [海上世界] directly refers to Sea World as a place, the following characters refer to the building type and its functions. Wénhuà [文化] denotes 'culture' or 'cultural', yìshù [艺术] denotes 'arts' and zhōngxīn [中心] as 'centre', 'core' or 'hub'. The character, zhòng [中], is the keyword that denotes 'in the middle' or 'centre'. Zhòng also bears a historical meaning as a sacred space in traditional Chinese architecture and town planning (Zhang, 2015). The centre can be interpreted as a spatial concept where it becomes a space for peripheral spaces to meet and intersect. The idea of the centre can be traced to ancient Chinese structures which surround a "cosmic center" (ibid.). The centre is so important that traditional Chinese residential housing (like the courtyard house) and architecture (like the imperial palaces) uses this cosmic model as means to retain the fundamental principles of zhòng.

In *The History and Spirit of Chinese Art: Volume 1* (2015), Zhang Fa explains that the sacred meaning of zhōng is "root[ed] in the identification of the center of the Big Dipper in the sky, the result of centuries of astronomical observations, carried out by a process called 立中 [lì zhōng] in prehistory." The pictographic origin of the stroke '│' in the centre line refers to the act of erecting a central pole or a flagpole. It acted as a historical marker and had a social function that brought people together under the same flag. As the cosmic centre went from a literal geographical centre to a political and religious centre, it also became a part of Chinese philosophy and its architecture history. From the altar, temple halls and burial sites to the planning of imperial cities, the evolution of Chinese architecture is grounded in these *zhōng*-centred ritual venues and their aesthetics, e.g. the three-by-three grid plan also holds fundamental principles of *zhōng.*

In today's hybrid museum context in China, *zhōng* is paired with *xīn* [心], a character representing a physical and also spiritual 'heart'. From the Beijing National Aquatics Center (*běijīng guójiā yóuyǒng zhōngxīn*) [北京国家游泳中心], Beijing World Financial Center (*běijīng huánqiú jīnróng zhōngxīn*) [北京环球金融中心] to the Shanghai K11 Art Mall (*shànghǎi K11 gòuwù yìshù zhōngxīn*) [上海K11购物艺术中心], the *zhòngxīn* [中心] can be used to cover a range of building types, no matter the scale or height, in the architecture context. On a larger scale, *zhōngxīn qū* [中心区] typically means the central district in a city. In many ways, the term *zhōngxīn* (as a noun) becomes spatially, geographically and functionally determined. Often, the building's name can begin with the name of the city in which it resides, followed by the name of the building and additional characters (e.g. verbs) before *zhōngxīn* (as a noun), e.g. the shopping centre is *gòuwù zhòng xīn* [购物中心]. The *gòuwù* [购物] (verb: shopping) + *zhōngxīn* [中心] (noun: centre) give specificity and denote the immediate function of the building type. For example, the K11 Mall in Shanghai [上海K11购物艺术中心] can be broken down as shopping (gòuwù) [购物] + arts (*yìshù*) [艺术] + centre (*zhōngxīn*) [中心].

As for SWCAC's last six characters (文化艺术中心), they can be translated as a cultural arts centre. These characters have also been used to identify other recently-opened cultural venues in China, e.g. the Guangxi Culture & Art Center [广西文化艺术中心] by GMP Architects (Han S., 2018) and the Fuzhou Strait Culture and Art Centre [福州海峡文化艺术中心] by PES-Architects (ArchDaily, 2018). As cultural venues, all of them are designed as multi-use spaces that include a combination of two or more of the following building facilities: exhibition spaces, co-working spaces for artists, offices, entertainment or leisure spaces, and/or if the scale allows, a theatre or multifunctional hall. In some of these cases, the cultural centre does not necessarily include the museum or the retail elements.

Based on these examples, the 'cultural hub' is as hybrid and vague as its intended meaning. Another unique example includes the WuliEpoch Culture Center [五里春秋泛文化艺术中心] with an ice-skating rink as the main attraction, surrounded by

many showrooms: VIP rooms, a meeting room, an archives room and one exhibition area (Figure 98). It claims to be a community centre as well. Therefore, the "public service" functions (Varutti, 2014, p.41) and landmark architecture share similar traits adopted by museums in the "market-driven industry" (Marstine, 2006). Klingmann's remarks on 'brandscapes' apply here, as these cultural centres are the epitome of "form followed by added value" (2006, p.69). In an exaggerated manner, cultural hubs in China contain a mix-and-match "of new oxymorons that erase former incompatibilities" (e.g. museum/store) under the wider processes of culture production (ibid., p.124).

When marketing the SWCAC, the word *zhòngxīn* [中心] aligns with the English text 'cultural core' or 'hub' in the bilingual annual reports and publications found on the key actors' websites (i.e. the V&A Museum, Design Society, Maki and Associates and SJS). In terms of understanding the intended function of the building, SWCAC has repeatedly described itself as a "design museum", "new cultural hub" (SJS, no date a; Mengoni, 2016a; V&A Museum, 2018) or "cultural centre" (Adams, 2017) dedicated to promoting 'design'. However, with *zhòngxīn* in its name, it supports hybridisation between the museum and the cultural hub (or with other functions), making it harder to classify the SWCAC as a clear 'museum'. However, the SWCAC is considered a cultural venue built in favour of the SOE and local municipal government—a common formula.

Figure 98. Floor plan of WuliEpoch (the skating rink (9) is surrounded by offices on the second-floor, whilst the exhibition space (3) is given less attention) (Han, 2019).

Figure 99. The Design Society uses the Chinese hanzi grid as logo, designed by Bruce Mau Design (Bruce Mau Design, 2017).

As a cultural centre at Sea World, Shekou, SWCAC's brand logo is also reflective of this need to be at the centre of the action, as "a place that inspires action, stimulating the growing design scene in Southern China" (V&A Museum, 2018). Designed by Canadian brand consultant and developer, Bruce Mau Design, the logo used a traditional Chinese *hànzì* [汉字] grid "in reference to China's rich cultural past, whilst promoting participation and creative leadership in the future" (Bruce Mau Design, 2017). The grid is noted for its symmetry and centre point, and various intersections. As described in *Design Society's Year Book* (2017a, p.23):

Continuing the pioneering spirit of Shekou, focusing the innovative drive of China Merchants, demonstrating the collaborative mind-set with the V&A, and experimenting with new cultural formats right at the opening, we are confident that our brand name 'Design Society' and our logo design (the dynamic Hanzi grid), will

become synonymous with the way we bring all of the above together in a new unique institution.

At the heart of this is the intersection of culture with commerce and, as Design Society describes, "a space for action that invites people to create and make the future" (ibid.). *Design Society's Year Book* also elaborates on the hybrid functions of SWCAC as a museum and a cultural hub for different visitors, promoting visitors to interpret SWCAC as they wish. Much of these underlying missions and aims contributed to the hybrid programmes at the SWCAC (ibid.):

> For such a visitor, it may look like a comprehensive design museum. It features multiple galleries, presenting ground breaking designs from the past, present and future. It has studios and education spaces, catering to the public's need for learning and interpretation.

> For another visitor, Design Society cultivates a genuine civic and community center, comprising a theater and many other event spaces, big and small, programmed by Design Society and others inspired by the many possibilities to use this venue and urban landmark.

Figure 100. The Design Society hanzi logo signage designed by Bruce Mau by the Culture Plaza entrance, visible from Wanghai Road (Bruce Mau Design, 2017).

Thus far, the process of hybridisation at SWCAC appears to encompass an innate part of the project, with support from key actors, and is designed and curated according to various needs. Classifying the SWCAC as a 'museum' under both ICOM and SACH's definitions is debatable. However, overlapping with the 'museum' is the more generic production of cultural venues in China, whereby culture is used to educate the public during the early Reform phase. The construction boom that swept through China in the 1980s saw a wave of cultural buildings and infrastructure projects that followed after the CCP took power in 1949, hoping to symbolise a strong stable government, starting with Shanghai and Beijing. The "fabulous cultural facilities and mega-structures" became the catalyst of new town centres in Chinese cities (Xue, 2019, p.v). Like the grand theatre projects, museums also participate in a "mission in urban renewal and new town construction" and how "they reflect the ambition of the city and its people in the tide of globalisation" (ibid., p.65). It also fits into the historic process and framework of modern China, in which these cultural venues signify a nation-wide response towards globalising forces.

According to Cong Sun, a contributor to Xue's *Grand Theater Urbanism* (2019), the first wave of cultural venue construction in Shenzhen began in 1983 (mainly along Shennan Road), with approval from the Shenzhen Municipal Party Committee and Shenzhen Municipal Government. Among the eight cultural facilities are two museums and a grand theatre. An early example of hybridised cultural venues in Shenzhen can be traced to the Shenzhen Grand Theater (*shēnzhèn dà jùyuàn*) [深圳大剧院]—believed to be "the first trial to combine cultural facilities with commercial design after 1949" and presented the image of a new theatre that evolved alongside globalisation (ibid., p.81). It also marked the first appearance of the name 'grand theatre' (*dà jùyuàn*) [大剧院] used to describe this type of theatre construction in China.

Sun (2019, p.81) describes this hybrid space as "the functional combination of the theater at the time represented a trend in the development of grand new theaters: a strong political atmosphere with few commercial features". The theatre would include galleries, cafés, cultural boutiques, Chinese and western restaurants, dance halls and semi-outdoor underground commercial streets (Figure 101). The theatre would also share a close relationship with politics, especially with the Shenzhen Cultural Bureau. Its space would cater towards performances by domestic and foreign troops, but also the governments major cultural festivals. From the outside, the 'grand theatre' (as a type) is monumental, whilst inside, they tend to contain various types of halls to accommodate different vents: concert halls, multifunctional halls, and so forth. Although never explicitly seen as a hybrid space, the incorporation of galleries, exhibition areas, lecture rooms into the grand theatre do share parallels with the more recent hybrid museums like the SWCAC. As one of the first hybrid cultural-commercial spaces in China, it is likely that Shenzhen Grand Theater's legacy of 'hybridisation' has expanded to encompass other cultural buildings like the museum, thus making hybridised museums a less recent phenomenon.

Figure 101. According to the Shenzhen Municipal Government's online portal (2022), "Shenzhen Grand Theater Art Festival is a large-scale comprehensive art activity, and it brings audiences concerts, symphonies, dances and dramas".

Other hybrid cultural centres in Hong Kong share similarities to the hybrid museum phenomenon. In *Grand Theater Urbanism* (2012), Xue argued that this hybridisation trend may have originated in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's performing art spaces in the 1970s showed an increase in cultural centres that brought together various types into one centre: town halls, auditoria, art museums, planetariums, restaurants, and so forth. From the Shatin Town Hall to the familiar K11 Art Mall of Hong Kong—"the first museum retail" in the world (The K11 Group, 2021)—Hong Kong's high-density environment seemed to have utilised the hybrid spaces efficiently.

Architecture 'hybridisation' also seems evident in the early design phases of the SWCAC, where consideration of hybrid programmes are included in the design brief. Before Maki's SWCAC was chosen, the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design's [BIAD] 2A2 Design Department had submitted a proposal for a culture and arts centre as well. Although it is unclear if CMG had initiated a public international design competition for SWCAC, available online sources do suggest otherwise (Cargo Collective, 2014; He S., 2016). As the first runner-up after Maki's winning entry, BIAD's 2A2 Studio also produced a multifunctional complex that catered to both cultural and commercial programmes "based on art museums, high-end

business, and equipped with the artwork storage function as a whole" (He S., 2016).
It seemed to have adopted a similar podium-pavilion form, with emphasis placed
on highlighting the views of Shekou.
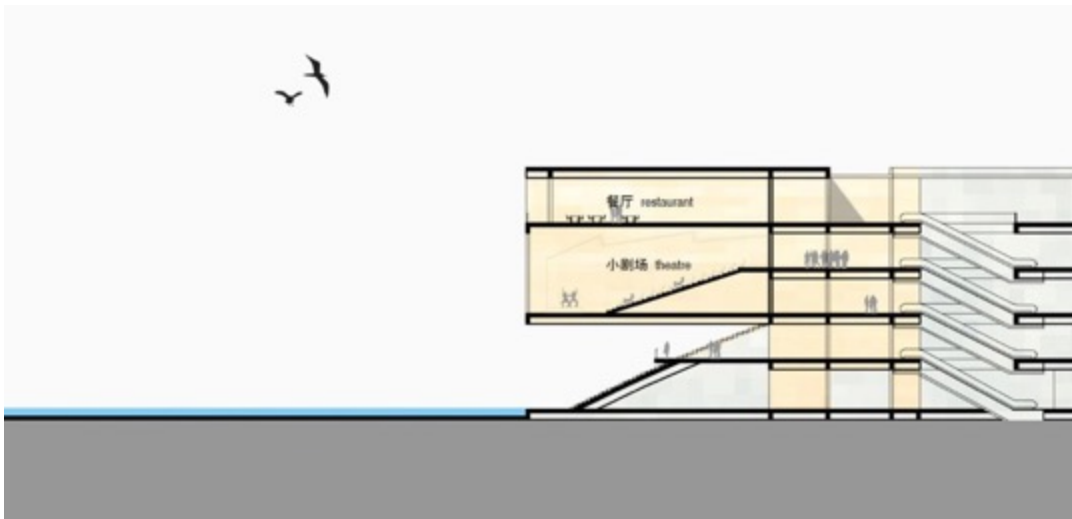
Figure 102. BIAD's design for the cultural hub (He S., 2016).
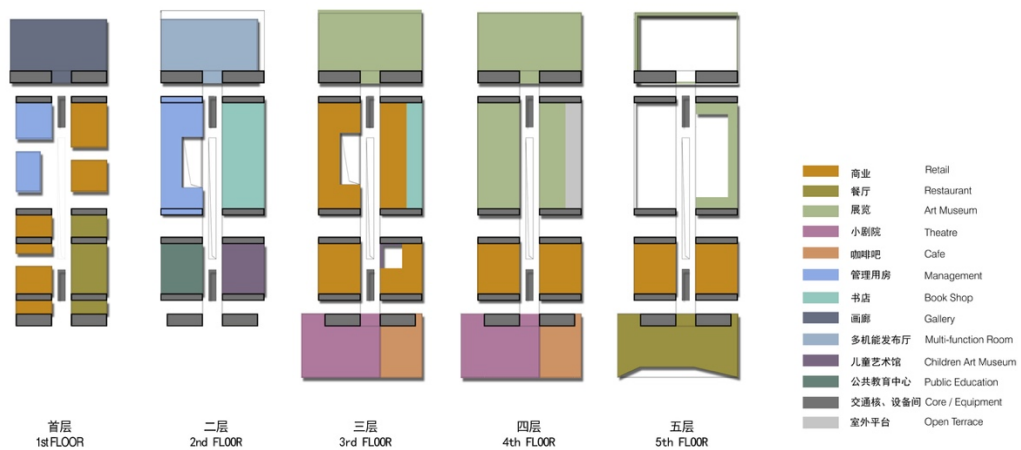
Figure 103. BIAD's floor plans (He S., 2016).

Whilst both are given the same site area of 26,161 square meters, the building area of Maki's is more compact at 12,036 square meters (Maki and Associates, 2012), whilst this alternative utilises 28,778 square meters (He S., 2016). With its commanding presence, it had five floors that also contained a hybrid programme of galleries, cafés, retail, theatres and more. However, based on the floor plan (Figure 103), the retail is more spread out across each level (it becomes more mall-like), unlike Maki's design where the retail sections are mainly concentrated on the ground and first-floor. Their plan placed emphasis on designing indoor and outdoor spaces to accommodate crowds in squares, courtyards and a roof terrace—largely making accessible and flexible public spaces to connect the programmes. In describing the plan for the hybrid museum (ibid.):

> The first and second floor is primarily business-oriented, combined with galleries, museums and stores, with reference room, administrative office and restaurants; the third floor contains business, galleries, theaters and bookstores; the fourth and fifth floor is arranged with a large exhibition space, business, theater and ancillary service facilities. In the south, taking full advantage of the seascape resources, the first and second floor connects with the big outdoor steps, forming a sharing space with seascape; on third floor

it is a theater of two-layer [*sic*] high, with the stage facing sea [*sic*]

to be decorated flexibly in the background of sea [*sic*]; the

restaurant on the fifth floor has an open view, convenient for

people to appreciate seascape and feel the breath of the sea.

As a hybrid museum, BIAD's design catered to the public gaze and turns the museum into a public leisure space, as though part of the park. BIAD's design made use of the seascape, the coastal route along Shenzhen Bay and the connection to Wanghai Road. The façade has three main components, namely (i) a simple rectangular block containing the galleries, (ii) a wide, tapered stairway alongside that allows visitors from street level to travel up to the fourth-floor exhibition hall, and (iii) the wide wall (of a similar height to the main building) dividing the museum from the large artificial lake.

The key view toward the sea (south) and the adjacent park (east) would share similarities with Maki's vision for the cultural and arts centre, but many viewpoints are made to surprise the crowd. Based on the design and description of the project, the water features, circulation (the public stairs), and the views of the mountain and the sea are key features that define this project. The top of the landing would become a viewing platform for visitors to gaze out into the sea. Public sitting areas and platforms contain spaces to display outdoor sculptures along the way up. Based on the placement of statues and also mock-installations around the proposed building, the key idea was to allow public spaces to be open exhibition spaces. Where the grass and terraced platforms are, this proposal had an artificial lake spanning across the site, parallel to the main building. With the assumption that most traffic will be from the eastern side (the park and water features), the water square is also designed to be "an exhibition space" according to the architects' statement of the general layout (He S., 2016). There would have been a large arch over the side entrance, framing the view of the public park (Figure 104).
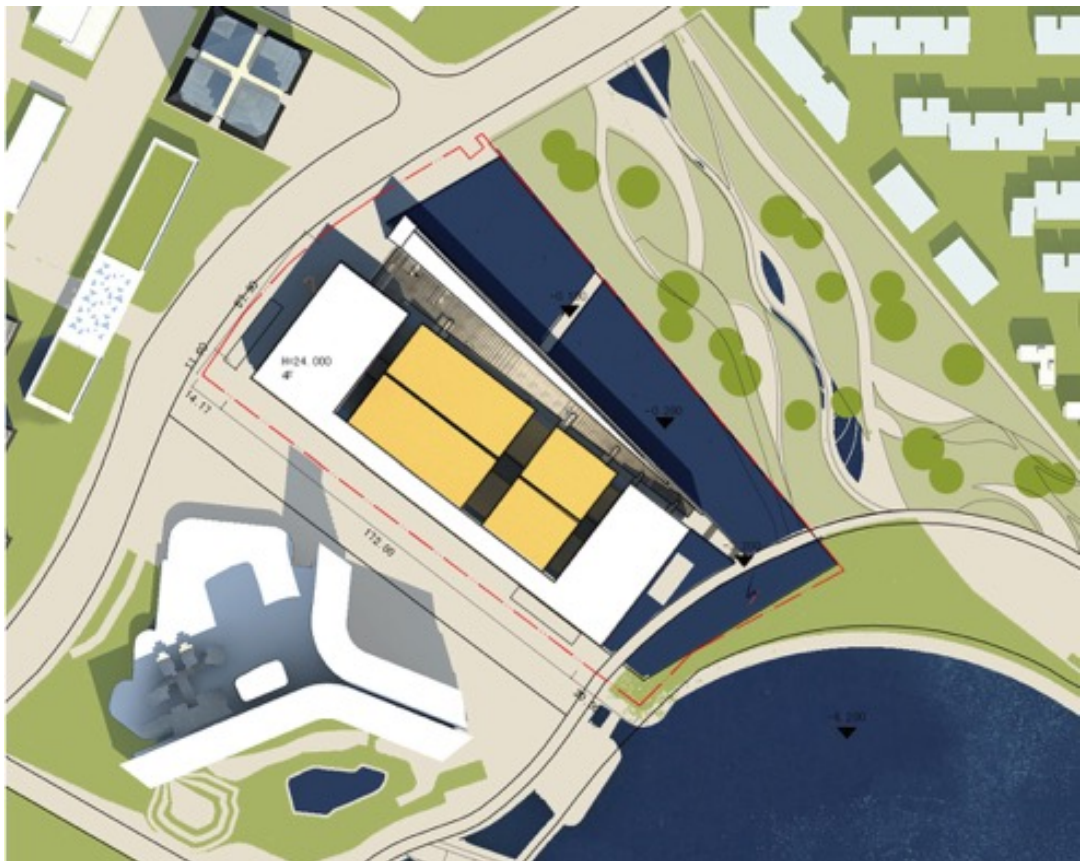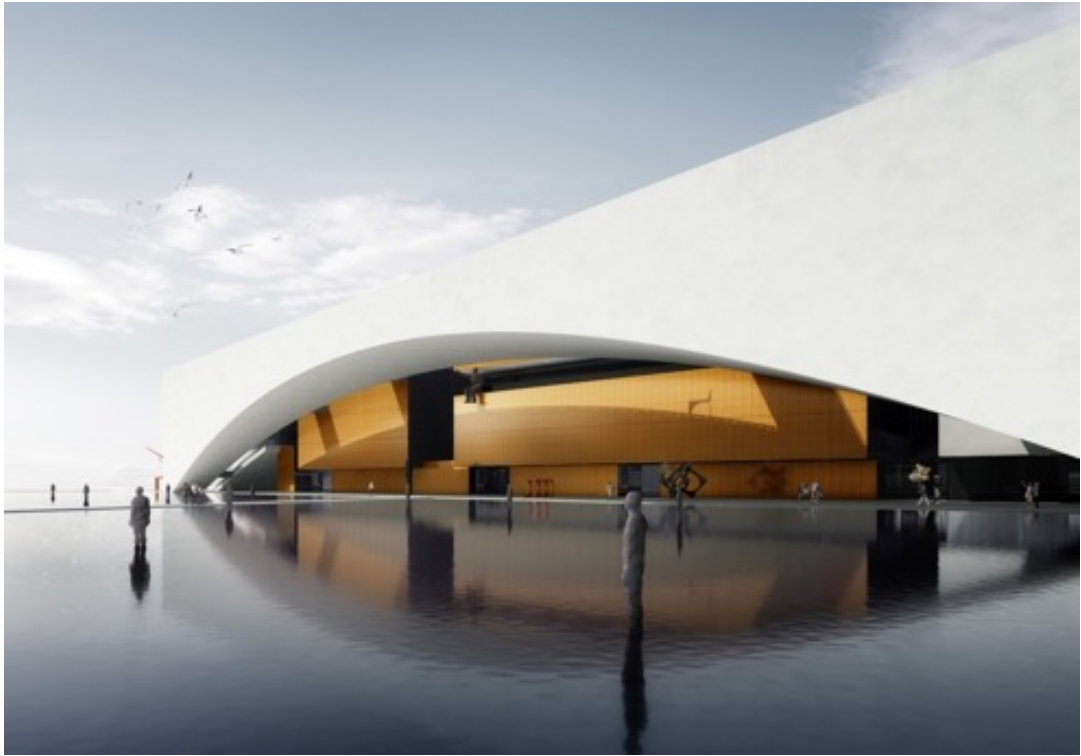
Figure 104. (Above) The entrance by the water feature. (Below) A plan view of the building (He S., 2016).

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Figure 105. A grand stairway that has art installations and benches (He S., 2016).
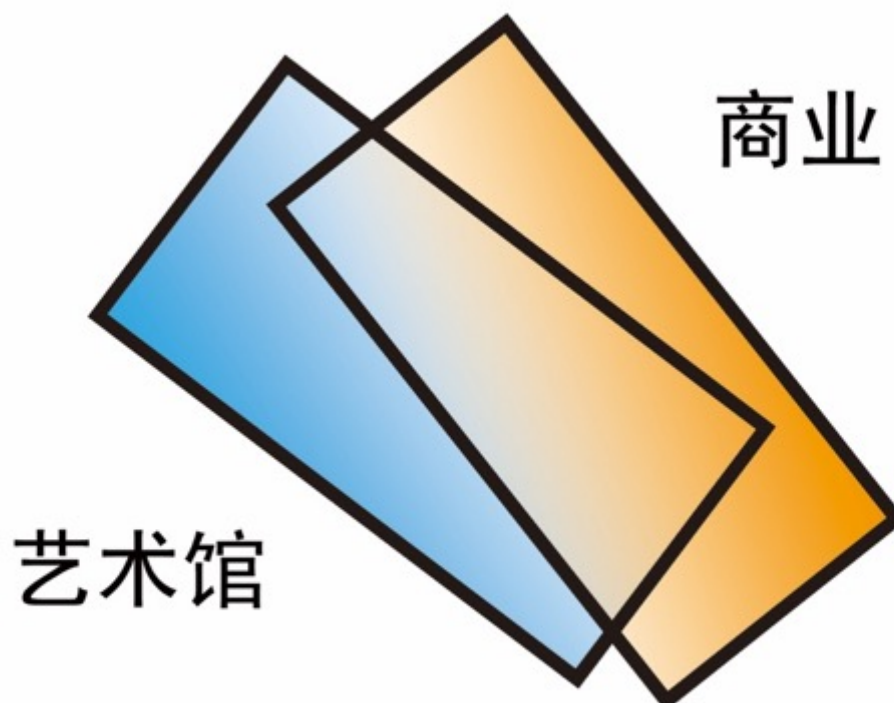
Figure 106. A simple conceptual diagram of intersecting interests 艺术馆 (art galleries) with 商业 (commerce).

As the most explicit form of hybridisation at SWCAC, the hybrid cultural-commercial building programmes are the most tangible and experiential modes of promoting 'design', but 'design' is in the image of the actors' who have developed them. Consequently, a thorough examination of SWCAC's highly curated building programmes can reveal much about the actors' interpretation and understanding of 'design', and how they brand 'design' for a specific social group.

In the project description provided by Maki and Associates, a conceptual diagram (Figure 106) showed two overlapping rectangular blocks; one is labelled as 'art gallery' (*yìshùguǎn*) [艺术馆], and the other is 'commerce' (*shāngyè*) [商业]. This simple diagram proves the actors' early intent to include an intersection of cultural

and commercial programmes for this project. Thus, as intended, the SWCAC has traits of both a museum and a shopping mall, while not quite belonging in either.

In a V&A Blog entry on Design Society at Shekou, Design Society's director reassures readers that SWCAC "may look like a comprehensive design museum" with its multiple galleries, studios and education spaces (Cormier, 2017b). In contrast to the museum and educational spaces, Design Society utilises the community-centred, multi-use and visually striking traits of China's cultural venues, as thus described (ibid.):

> Design Society also cultivates a genuine civic and community centre, comprising a theatre and many other event spaces, big and small, programmed by Design Society and others who gain from the many possibilities to use this venue and urban landmark.

The SWCAC's high-profile partnership with the V&A Museum and hybrid programmes utilises global networks, transnational architecture production, brand-name actors and market demands. Based on personal site observations made in 2019, the SWCAC's hybrid programme also contributes to the creative city ecology, in which the partnership with local and global brands helped "optimize[ ] its ecosystem of culture and commerce…" in the face of the global pandemic (Design Society, 2020b, p.96). In an email correspondence, Cormier (2019) expressed that one of the challenges posed at Design Society was trying to have its local visitors get over "the expectation that a fancy museum from London would show only very rare and expensive pieces of art". The aim is to use additional activities centred around 'design' to facilitate a two-way cultural consumption between the cultural hub and visitors.

To examine this hybrid ecosystem of culture and commerce at the SWCAC, the following site observations are divided into three subsections: *(a) Museum*, *(b) Theatre* and *(c) Retail*.

For its 'museum' element, the SWCAC has two main galleries for large-scale temporary exhibitions: on the ground floor (level 1F) are the V&A Gallery (*V&A zhǎnguǎn*) [V&A展馆] and the Main Gallery (*zhǔ zhǎnguǎn*) [主展馆] (Figure 107), and the park-facing Park View Gallery (*yuán jǐng zhǎnguǎn*) [园景展馆] (Figure 108). Based on the site visit in December 2019, exhibition spaces included the Shenzhen UCCN Gallery (*liánhéguó jiàokē wén zǔzhī zhǎnguǎn*) [联合国教科文组织展馆] (level 2F), the Haishang Gallery (*hǎishàng huàláng*) [海上画廊] (Figure 109) (level 1F) and Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening (*shékǒu gǎigé kāifàng bówùguǎn*) [蛇口改革开放博物馆] on the second-floor (level 3F). During 2020, W.one Space (*wàn yī kōngjiān*) [万一空间] (level 2F) was introduced as a new addition in the *Design Society Review* (2020b).
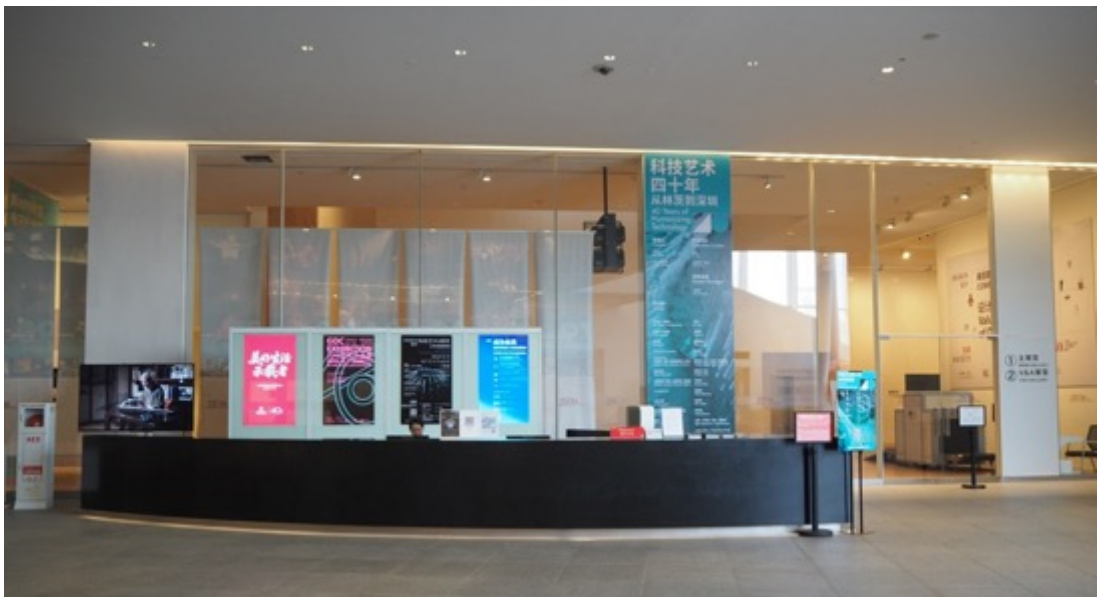
Figure 107. At the Culture Plaza, the reception desk is placed in front of the V&A Gallery and Main Gallery (own photo).

Figure 108. Park View Gallery entrance only accessible from the Culture Plaza (own photo).

The type of museums found at the SWCAC shows how the local-global and state/non-state interests are achieved. Although the key highlight of the SWCAC is the partnership between Design Society and the V&A Museum, the V&A only has the V&A Gallery and the Main Gallery to its name. Because the actors' focus is on the historic partnership between China's SOE and a world-renowned cultural institution, the presence of other galleries at SWCAC is deemed less important to this hybrid museum narrative. Design Society's annual reports (2017a, 2019 and 2020b) did document these more obscure galleries and the key events held.

Whilst the V&A Gallery and Main Gallery mainly held joint exhibitions with (although not limited to) the UK's V&A Museum, other galleries at the SWCAC include a wider range of interests from local artists to a state-supported museum—ultimately creating the bridge between the local and global, and the state and non-state. The Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening is a museum on level 3F that is

supported by the client, CMG and the local state municipal government. Among all the galleries at SWCAC, this houses a collection of objects that support the Reform history of Shenzhen and archives a collection of photos documenting urban development over the forty years of China's economic reform. It also has a more traditional 'shrine-like' museum quality, based on the way that objects are curated and history is presented in a chronological, historical framework (Marstine, 2006).

Figure 109. The Haishang Gallery on the ground floor is fully visible from the Central Plaza due to its fully floor-to-ceiling glass window (Design Society, 2020b).

Supporting the Shenzhen's creative city-brand is the Shenzhen UCCN Gallery, dedicated to temporary exhibitions that directly contribute to promoting 'design'. During the site visit in 2019, there was an exhibition held to showcase the winning entries for the graphic design competition. In *Design Society's 2020 Review*, it held a large-scale photography exhibition to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Shenzhen SEZ, entitled *Witnessing A Legend*.

In contrast to the state-supported museum, the Haishang Gallery (Figure 109) comes across as a hybrid museum-store. Like many of the gallery spaces and shops, glass is used to blur the distinctions between the museum or mall, as confusion arise over what is being displayed and what is being sold. In this case at the Haishang Gallery, the glass caters to both functions. Based on the text descriptions on Design Society's website and annual reports, the Haishang Gallery described its aims to promote "international culture and art exchange, leading and cultivating the public in art appreciation of Chinese calligraphy and painting, helping collectors to hold art fairs and artwork auctions and providing Chinese calligraphy and painting investment opportunities" (Design Society, 2020b, p.101). It is unclear what kind of service they are offering, apart from appraising art, organising events and taking on a consultant role.

The *Design Society's 2020 Review* categorised the Haishang Gallery under the heading: 'Store' (*yì gòu*) [艺购], alongside other shops like the Design Society Store. However, in terms of design, the Haishang Gallery presents itself more like a traditional art gallery; therefore, this site observation will discuss this gallery as such. In terms of presenting its works, selected paintings are hung up on clean white pillars and walls, and a downward spotlight is used to highlight each piece. The gallery also utilises the floor-to-ceiling clear glass windows to allow full visibility of the artwork from the Central Plaza of the SWCAC.

Figure 110. W.one Space (Design Society, 2020b, p.96).

The latest addition also catered to local artists and SWCAC's transnational networks. The newly-minted W.one Space on level 2F is described as a new art gallery founded by "three Generation Y art practitioners" during the Covid-19 pandemic (Design Society, 2020b, p.96). This gallery aimed to "melt the boundaries between present, future and the past by mixing contemporary and ancient art under the logic of aesthetic research, thus bringing together arts of different countries, different periods and different forms to interact and express in unity as ONE" (ibid.).

What all the exhibition spaces have in common is the lack of permanent exhibits or historic artefacts (except the Museum of Reform). Instead, the galleries optimise space through dominantly open-plan exhibition spaces. To cater to this flexibility, most of these spaces are designed as blank slates with moveable partitions. GD, the

lighting design company, took this into account and specially designed remote-controlled lamps and lanterns to make point arrangement via accurate analogue computation (Architonic, 2017; A'Design Award, 2018). That way, the light fixtures can adapt to each event accordingly. In many ways, it takes after the increasingly popular 'Kunsthal model', popularised by Koolhaas and his firm OMA. Built in 1992, the Kunsthal is a collection-less museum that is based in Rotterdam, noted for its collection of galleries and halls that cater to multiple events happening "singularly or collectively" under one roof (Kroll, 2011b). In short, the Kunsthal is made from "a series of spatial conditions and juxtapositions that even though programmatically different and separate begin to reveal themselves to one another to create a seemingly unified system" (ibid.). In many ways, the design of SWCAC also shares this Kunsthal spirit in the way the hybrid programmes are co-existing under a unified system managed and developed by Design Society.
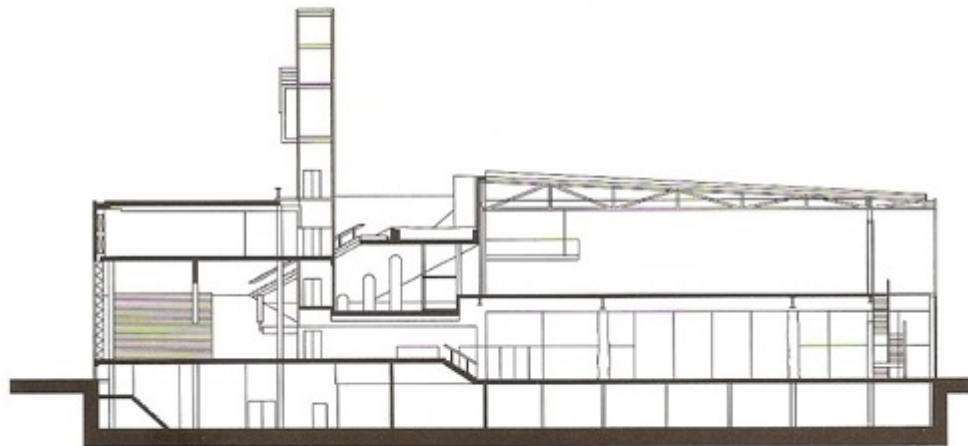
Figure 111. A section of Kunsthal Rotterdam showing a multipurpose halls and galleries (Kroll, 2011b).

This temporary nature of the galleries at SWCAC can also be deduced in the Chinese language. The earlier subsection, *(i) The cultural hub*, considered the different expectations linked to the 'cultural hub' [文化艺术中心] rather than a 'museum' [博物馆] in the Chinese context. In this subsection, museums without (permanent) collections can be differentiated based on the Chinese characters for 'gallery'

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(*měishù guǎn*) [美术馆] and 'museum' (*bówùguǎn*) [博物馆]. The *měishù guǎn* can also be used for museums; however, the characters (*měishù*) [美术] denote 'art', whilst the characters for 'museum' denote culture and artefacts (Jacobson, 2011). The former can be translated as an institution for fine arts; Jacobson also considers the open-plan and collection-less type gallery in this category. Since Maki's diagram (Figure 106) uses the characters *měishù guǎn* to denote 'art galleries', it can be implied that the source of SWCAC's hybridisation lies in the temporary nature of these art galleries. The SWCAC also sets out the difference between the two types in its programme. The Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening contains the characters *bówùguǎn* [博物馆] in its name [蛇口改革开放博物馆], which denotes a traditional 'museum' that may be of national interest, and containing historical, archaeological or art collections.

In China, the multifunctional type of hybrid museum has become popular, even among mega-collaborations. Claire Jacobson's book *New Museums in China* (2014) lists out selected high-profile museums across the country, and whilst it maintains a comprehensive list of new museums, she noticed their 'multifunctionality' or 'openness' as a common element among them. Moreover, it is the foreign architects who help construct these types. However, being too 'open' has its concerns as well. Chipperfield, the architect of the West Bund Center in Shanghai (housing the Centre Pompidou outpost)*,* highlighted this issue during an interview (Hickley, 2019). With a predetermined collection, the Shanghai local authorities "did not even know what should be placed inside", except that it needed three multifunctional halls "that can be used for anything" (ibid.). This seems to be the case for the SWCAC as well. In a video introducing the V&A Gallery at Design Society, Shekou (V&A Museum, 2018), Cormier said that the V&A team were "given a very simple brief, which was, to be given a space here at Design Society and to curate a gallery". Again, the function of a museum is blurred with the multi-use development of a typical cultural venue in China (Xue, 2019). The indecisiveness of the local client and the current development of cultural venues in China seem to be

hidden contributing factors to the rise of hybrid museums; it becomes part of the process of hybridisation.
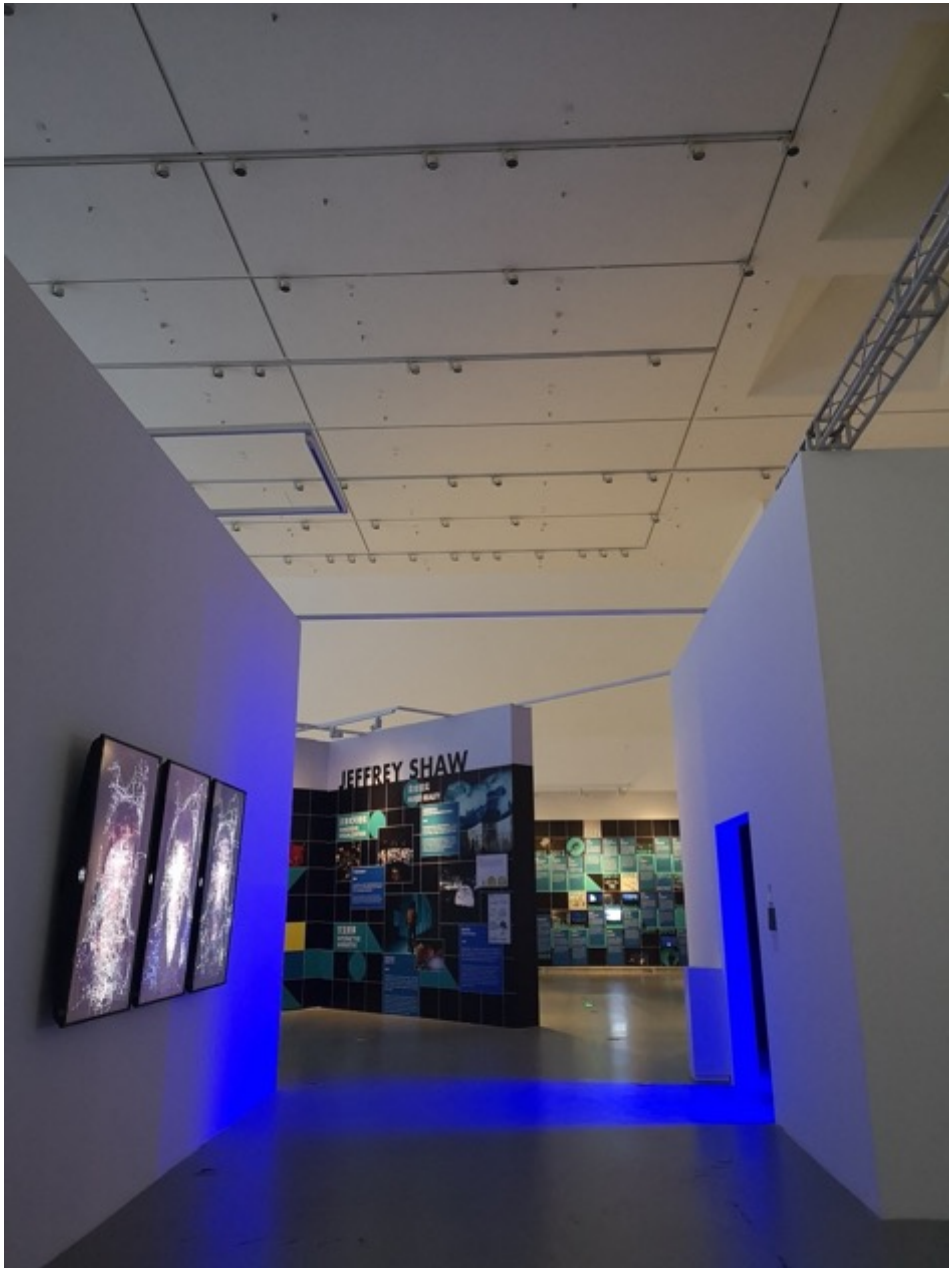
Figure 112. The Main Gallery showcasing its flexible space and lighting fixtures (own photo).

Figure 113. Mountain View Theater (Design Society, 2020b).

Although Maki describes the SWCAC as part 'Theatre', the building only has one main theatre that has a permanent stage, lighting fixtures and auditorium chairs (the Mountain View Theater). It belongs to the 'pavilion' part of the SWCAC that consists of three volumes: Mountain View Theater (*jìngshān jùchǎng*) [境山剧场], Horizon Hall (*shìjiè tīng*) [视界厅] and Chunmanyuan (*chūn mǎn yuan*) [春满园].

To an extent, each volume facilitates the hybridisation between state and/or private functions. The Mountain View Theater is the smaller 328-seat auditorium,

accessible on both levels 3F and 4F of Culture Plaza. As its name suggests, this theatre occupies the volume that has a view of the Nanshan mountains and also a good view of the Sea World Plaza from the rooftop entrance (level 4F). It is best suited for music events and concerts. Meanwhile, the Horizon Hall is designed with more flexibility. It has a floor area of 700 square meters, with views facing Shenzhen Bay and towards Hong Kong. According to Design Society, it is the "sole press conference hall in the city with a 180-degree ocean view" (Design Society, 2020b, p.64). Overall, SWCAC hosted many corporate events in these halls, open-gallery spaces, from the automobile, fashion, real estate, telecommunication, technology, game and education industries. Notable brands that had their product launch, press conferences and VIP dinner parties at the SWCAC include the Miss World China Pageant, BMW, Benz, Volvo, Honda, OPPO and McDonald's (ibid.).

Figure 114. The Horizon Hall is transformed for the Miss World China Pageant event (Design Society, 2020b, p.65).

Figure 115. An empty Horizon Hall (Maki and Associates, 2012).

The third volume is taken up by Chunmanyuan (Figure 116), described as "the top venue of business banquet and romantic wedding feast in Shenzhen because of its contemporary Chinese style, charming ocean view and excellent food and service" (Design Society, 2020c, p.99). Owned by Shenzhen Chunmanyuan catering management service group, this is their 16th branch, also known as the Linhaiwan restaurant. This is where state and private events can be catered.

Whilst the Chunmanyuan caters for large-scale events, two restaurants at SWCAC accommodate individuals and smaller groups. Situated next to the Mountain Hall Theater (the level 4F entrance), is The Purple (*zǐyuàn*) [紫苑]—a different type of restaurant, described as being a tribute to Chinese teahouses and cuisine. This restaurant is described as providing "delicious cuisine with home-grown vegetables and food", which the chefs create a sense of homeliness by keeping "the original flavor of the ingredients in its food and present[ing] them to its customers" (Design Society, 2020d). From watching a music concert to attending a wedding, the process of hybridisation at the SWCAC is in line with the expectations of the (postmodern) museum, whereby each programme can be made into an attraction on its own.

To categorise the multi-use development at SWCAC as either a 'museum' or a 'cultural hub' is challenging enough, but considering how the Mountain View Theater takes up one of the three blocks of the 'pavilion' shows a lesser role is placed in the 'Museum-Theatre-Retail' label (Maki and Associates, 2012). Instead, the 'Theatre' element (or the lack of it) proves that the SWCAC resembles that of a grand theatre type described by Charlie Xue's *Grand Theater Urbanism* (2019)—the emphasis is place on blank, multifunctional halls.

Figure 116. Chunmanyuan Hall (Design Society, 2020b).

Figure 117. The Purple (Design Society, 2020b).

Figure 118. Rooftop Garden designed as though part of the park. Each three blocks can be accessed via the rooftop, as seen in the L4 entrance (own photos).

c. Retail

Figure 119. Design Society Art Store from Wanghai Road and Culture Plaza entrance, and the maneki-neko being installed in December 2019 (own photo).

Based on the types of shops curated and managed by Design Society (data from 2019 and cross-referenced with 2020), all share a common goal of using 'design' as the main catalyst of consumption. Reminiscent of the 'shrine-like' museum curation, the idealised kind of 'design' (envisioned by Design Society and the V&A) can be seen and experienced through these stores (Bennett, 1995; Marstine, 2006). Although the V&A team challenged this idealised image of good 'design' through the inclusion of seemingly mundane objects in the two *Values of Design* exhibitions, these stores at SWCAC project a different narrative. Since Design Society curates these shops, the selected stores will reflect Design Society's corporate brand and desire to create a building programme that "give[s] the floor to multiple voices" (Design Society, 2017a, p.47). By examining the hybrid offerings available at the SWCAC, it is possible to see how glass reinforces this spatial ambiguity that houses multiples voices through its transparent properties.

Beginning with the most visible form of the museum-mall, the use of glass on the ground floor deliberately shines light on key retail spaces. From personal site observations, SWCAC's retail stores are isolated on the ground floor (level 1F) where they are most visible and accessible: these include the two Design Society stores, Ritz Design, Poliform and the Attract Art Restaurant. The most important store is given the most conspicuous placement. Starting with one of the Design Society stores, the Design Society Art Store is located by the Culture Plaza entrance (also the main entrance). It faces towards Wanghai Road, mostly visible through its floor-to-ceiling glass window—a blurred shop window/museum display that invites the "tourist gaze" or passers-by to look at the merchandise sold (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Above the entrance to the shop is a large sign indicating 'Design Society' with the hànzì grid logo (designed by Bruce Mau Design), and a welcoming cat sculpture in the shape of the auspicious *maneki-neko* (known as the beckoning cat from Japan that has become an icon for prosperity in East Asian cultures) (Figure 119).

Figure 120. Objects for sale displayed on a white pedestal, with the sign 'Do Not Touch' (own photo).

Figure 121. Design Society Art Store that can be seen from Wanghai Road (own photo).
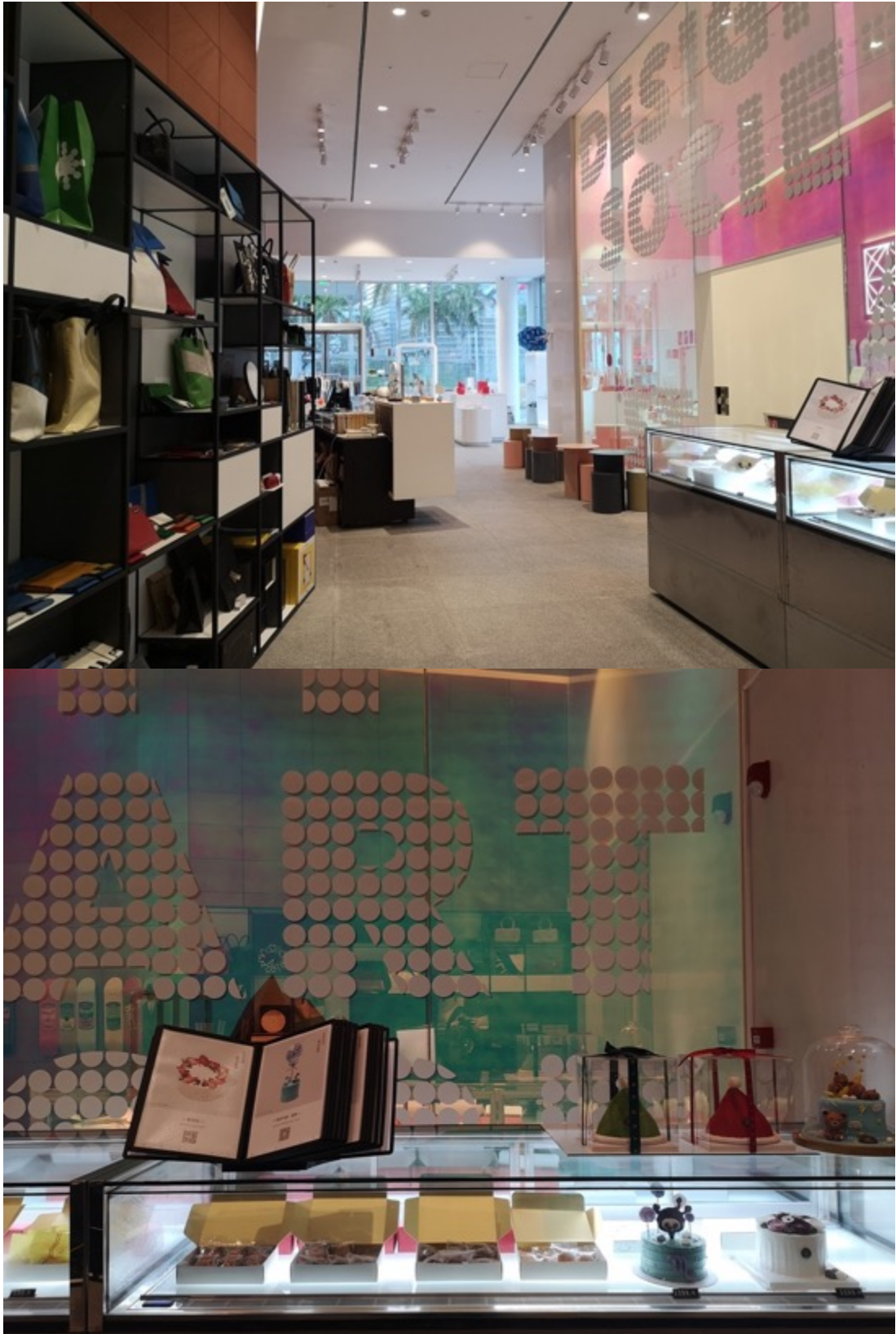
Figure 122. Further into the Design Society Art Store, where it is less visible from the outside. (Bottom) a counter selling Western cakes and madeleines (own photos).

Owned and operated by Design Society itself, this shop "offers related merchandise of culture and art books, children's books and education books, international brands, cultural and creative goods, merchandise of independent designers and innovative household items" (Design Society, 2020b, p.100). From the outside, the shop is dominantly white and grey, brightly lit by the natural light coming through the glass from outside. With over fifty brands, the main shop floor exhibits a range of products on top of white pedestals (of different heights), whilst the other products are displayed on shelves mounted to the wall. The shopfront also has its own customised shelf that snakes around the shop window, but designed without obstructing the light coming in through the glass. In effect, it imitates a similar blank-slate art gallery—the epitome of the compatible oxymoron museum/store.

As described in *Design Society's Year Book* (2017a), this store is focused on creating an experience through the activity of shopping for highly curated art products: household items, artwork painted on skateboards, office stationery, bags, posters, coasters, reusable and collapsible coffee cups, bento boxes, scarves, clothes, umbrellas, and more. The products are arranged in a way that retains the traditional museum-style of curation—spaced out and labelled, but without the glass casing. Although displayed without this glass barrier, the spacing between items and the *Do Not Touch* sign on some pedestals remind the consumer that the items of merchandise are like valuable exhibit pieces. Occupying a less visible position at the store is a counter selling customised fondant cakes and madeleines—a French-inspired cake shop.

Although a museum shop itself is not a novel idea, it is the way Design Society curates and presents the merchandise that is interesting. Together with the other stores at SWCAC, it becomes hard to distinguish between the 'museum' and the 'mall', what is presented and what can be consumed. Therefore, this makes this hybrid element similar to the K11 Art Mall in Shanghai, where the art works or installations are blurred with the merchandise.

Figure 123. Design Society Book Store (own photos).

The other Design Society store that is not visible from the outside is the Design Society Book Store. It is only visible once visitors enter through the Culture Plaza. Unlike the Art Store, the Book Store sells a comprehensive range of V&A merchandise and art books alongside more curated items (Figure 123). In contrast to the white-box type curation of the Art Store, the Book Store is earthy, warm and uses wood to display items. Despite a warmer colour palette, the bookstore (as observed in 2019) does not just have books but also displays more sellable merchandise. As is the case in the Art Store, the merchandise is displayed on shelves as though exhibition pieces and lit up with their own individual spotlight. The main floor area uses uneven light brown pedestals to display its merchandise, whilst the wooden shelves lined up against the wall. Curated items among them include artist reference books, V&A catalogues, official V&A merchandise like the popular William Morris prints available as an art book or as wearable scarves and tote bags—this time with explicit reference to the V&A partnership. Moreover, they are items that can be easily purchased online via Tencent's WeChat—China's most ubiquitous app-for-everything.

Whilst the main website (www.designsociety.cn) does not have an e-commerce platform connected to its stores, Design Society manages a WeChat account that keeps its Chinese followers updated on the latest events and blog entries, and the virtual e-store grants easy access to purchase the products online. Given the target audience of WeChat, the site is in Chinese. Under Design Society's WeChat Mini Programme (like a business profile), then *Services* and, later, the *Design Society Store* [设计互联商店], products sold at the Design Society stores can be searched in the Search toolbar. The page filters or categorises its products in the following headers: *furniture*, *books*, *stationery*, *food*, *toys* and *clothing*. There is also a special category entitled *Exhibition Derivatives* [展览衍生专题], which is designed to present complementary merchandise based on its current and past exhibitions.

The importance of merchandising and the role of the museum shop in China can be understood within the context of China's marketing trend for *wénchuàng* [文创]

products (literally translated as cultural creations)—creative and cultural products that suit the local tastes. According to James Campbell, co-founder of TONG (a cross-cultural agency connecting iconic global brands with their Chinese consumers), "for brands seeking out Chinese partners to collaborate with, it's tempting to go down the… big, loud, or weird… the flash-in-the-pan moment" (TONG and Jing Group, 2021). China's national museums, The Palace Museum and the Dunhuang Research Academy have collaborated with a range of partners, from Oreo cookies and Lenovo to e-commerce platforms such as JD.com and Pinduoduo, to develop and sell merchandise. The British Museum also collaborated with popular Chinese beauty brand Zeesea to create makeup products based on the theme of Alice in Wonderland and Enchanting Egypt (Zeesea Cosmetics, 2022), in line with their own collections. Several global names like the Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam also sells its souvenirs via licensed partners to connect them to Chinese consumers.

Figure 124. Zeesea x British Museum Enchanting Egypt eyeshadow palettes collection (Zeesea Cosmetics, 2022).

Another product of this demand for cultural creations includes *Museum & More*, a "one-stop museum gift shop" created by Alfilo Brands, which is newly opened in Shanghai's Metro City Mall (Whiddington, 2021a). It offers products inspired by Chinese heritage and also world-leading museums (ibid.):

> Since opening e-commerce shops [for international museums], we've created popular merchandise and marketing events online. Now, we want to extend our beloved museum IP to the offline shopping experience for our museum fans in Shanghai. This offline experience is the first one-stop museum shop in Shanghai and we decided to bring all of our beloved brands and products closer to our customers.
>
> Statement from Alfilo Brands

The idea behind this museum gift shop in the Chinese market heralds a new phase of museum development based on cultural collaborations and museum partnerships. Since signing with Alfilo Brands (an IP and retail firm), museums like the V&A have collaborated with domestic fashion labels and other international brands to create a series of *wénchuàng* goods (or cultural creations) for Chinese consumers, and have been selling them on other popular e-commerce sites in China, such as Taobao and Tmall. Seeing such opportunities in the Chinese market for cultural goods and museum merchandise, the Design Society shop recently opened the Design Society Shanghai Store, based in Shanghai Sunlang Garden City, a mixed-use development in Shanghai comprising offices, retail spaces and a hotel.

Figure 125. Own photo of the Van Gogh SENSES store at the Shenzhen Airport Departure Hall (taken in December 2019).

Figure 126. One of many items of Van Gogh merchandise sold on the Van Gogh SENSES website (2021). These masks are given the seal of approval by Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands.

Figure 127. Design Society Store in Shanghai (Design Society, 2020b).

Figure 128. Poliform's front door reads "one-stop solution for luxury lifestyle" with the names of brands pasted on its window, showcasing the range of luxury furniture brands they own (own photo).

The merchandise sold at both Design Society stores shows a curated image of 'design' as Design Society sees it to be. However, in line with the traditional Foucauldian sense of control and social aspirations, the other building tenants at the SWCAC seem to represent and retain 'design' as a product of high culture. Similar to luxury housing trends in China, Western brands and furniture still hold a high value and symbolic meaning as good designs (Bosker, 2013). What these curated items sell are dreams and an idealised lifestyle through the consumption of design—limited to the middle strata and above.

Glass continues to blur this distinction between cultural objects on display or for sales. Site observations took note of other stores at SWCAC: (i) HAMIN REMIX (level 1F) is a "premium designer brand for women's and men's high-end clothing" under Shenzhen Hamin Silk and Apparel Limited Co., (ii) Ritz Design/Poliform [丽兹家居／旗舰店] (on levels 1F and 2F) (Figure 128) is a luxury furniture store visible from the

waterfront and park route, and (iii) Ligne Roset [写意空间] is a franchise luxury furniture store from France.

Another restaurant, the Attract Art Restaurant [招引艺术餐厅] (visible from the park), also displays the Design Society's curation of 'design' for the public eye. In contrast to the formal multifunctional hall of Chunmanyuan and the "artistic dining" experience at The Purple, the Attract Art Restaurant brands itself as a new kind of dining experience—"as a gallery-based restaurant to integrate molecular cuisine and contemporary art" (Figure 129) (Design Society, 2020b). From the dining experience and unique menu to the unusual interior decoration, this restaurant presents gastronomical and 'design' experiences as exclusive.

Figure 129. Attract from the outside, visible from the park (own photo).

Thus far, the commercial programmes are centred around physical products that can be bought and even consumed. Meanwhile, SWCAC's cultural programmes balance the commercial elements with educational experiences that can be bought and learned. In contrast with the experiential dining and retail stores, some of SWCAC's tenants comprise leading national institutions. The use of glass to blur the cultural and commercial spaces continues, making it harder to distinguish between

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cultural objects or services being displayed or sold through the shop window features. The inclusion of Xiaoyan NEST [小燕画院·巢] (part of the Xiaoyan School of Art) and the Shenzhen Art Education Center of the National Ballet of China [中央芭蕾舞团 艺术教育中心·深圳基地]. For the art school, its shop window/museum display elements allow its art to be displayed through glass either as merchandise or an exhibit, whilst the full glass windows of the ballet school allow visitors to watch ballet dancers during practice—the classic watching-and-being-watched scenario (Foucault, 1995; Bennett, 1995). Across from the ballet centre is a Ballet Café (not shown in the Floor Plan) (Figure 131) in the form of a mini pop-up van; it sells both the ballet centre's merchandise and coffee. Besides the luxury furniture and museum merchandise sold, the presence of national cultural institutions reminds us that the business ecology of SWCAC relies on 'hybridisation' to balance the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests.

In accordance with making Design Society a "new cultural platform" and "urban landmark" for Shenzhen, in-between spaces include workspaces for artists- and designers-in-residence on the first-floor (2F) (Design Society, 2017a, p.19). It also includes an educational centre for children aged 2.5-8 years old. Advankidz [爱游益思] is described as the "first brand flagship store … to create professional courses suitable for the training of international children's logical thinking ability, so as to build a space for high-quality parent-child growth and interaction" and to cultivate "children's problem-solving thinking ability, the thinking habit of active and independent thinking, and the emotional management ability of patience, focus and frustration" (Design Society, 2020b, p.97). Another educational centre, the SuYin Qin Society [音琴舍] teaches traditional Chinese instruments, ranging from the *gǔqín* [古琴] (a seven-stringed finger-picked instrument) and *gǔzhēng* [古筝] (a 21- or 25-stringed plucked instrument) to the cucurbit flute.

The education function of the 'museum' is also planned around engagement with local school children and residents. A list of past events from Design Society's

annual reports (2017a; 2019; 2020b) showed its outward engagement with students from primary, secondary and tertiary levels, establishing incubator and accelerator programmes, organising family workshops and building relationships with schools, universities and communities. Overall, these education functions also determine the hybrid design and allocation of spaces within the SWCAC. For instance, the opening week alone (2–3 December 2017) catered to families in the V&A Family Studio drop-in sessions, where over 240 children and parents participated in the art workshops. Other activities also involved 350 children in a collaborative activity "building lightweight structures exploring the connections between nature and engineering" (V&A Museum, 2018)—a programme originally designed by engineers at ARUP for the V&A Museum in London, but recreated in Shenzhen with the help of engineers at ARUP's Shenzhen practice.

As a museum-mall hybrid that is designed to cater to "multiple voices" (Design Society, 2017a), the spatial ambiguity of the SWCAC utilises commercial elements in ways that respond differently to the Western 'post-museum', whereby the focus is on developing better frameworks to address critical and current issues surrounding postcolonialism, racism, feminism, migration and more.

Figure 130. The Shenzhen National Ballet of China on the second-floor (3F), with curtains drawn and the dance floor visible from the outside (own photo).

Figure 131. The Ballet Café in the evening (own photo).

4.4 The three interior plazas
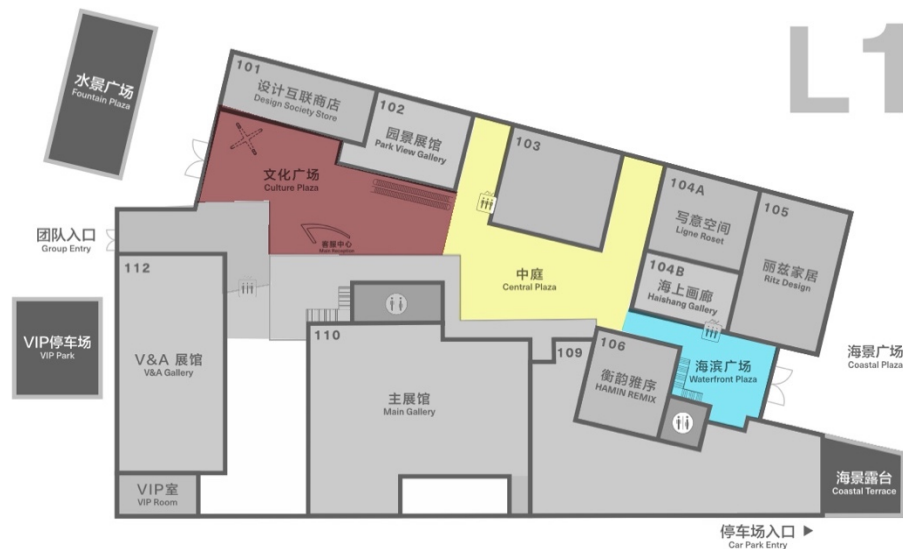
Figure 132. Self-annotated floor plan showing the three plazas (Design Society, no date a).

SWCAC's podium and pavilion components are fundamental to its architecture form, but they are seen as separate parts that divide the museum-mall (podium) from the halls and theatre (pavilion). Overall, the retail areas are located on the ground floor (level 1F) and at the most visible points of the SWCAC, whilst the exhibition spaces are spread around from levels 1F to 3F, leaving the remaining 4F as the rooftop garden and the pavilion component. The key architecture features that connect the two components (the podium and the pavilion) and the cultural-commercial programmes at the SWCAC are the three interior plazas: the Culture Plaza, the Central Plaza and the Waterfront Plaza.

The conceptual diagram in Figure 106 with overlapping blocks represents the cross between the 'art gallery' and 'commerce' programmes. It also represents an equal "one-to-one culture and retail floor area ratio" (Maki and Associates, 2012). The manifestation of this merger resulted in the creation of three plazas along the main axis of the building. The Culture Plaza (Figure 133) is a 16m-tall, glazed entrance that serves as the main entry point from Wanghai Road, with direct access to the V&A Gallery, the Main Gallery and the two Design Society stores. Meanwhile the

Waterfront Plaza (Figure 134) has views of the sea, access to the two furniture stores and a central staircase leading up to the multipurpose hall, whilst the Central Plaza (Figure 135) "is a dynamic atrium consisting of retail spaces and a courtyard" (ArchDaily, 2017a). For visual and symbolic purposes, each plaza is designed with different materials and colours: the Culture Plaza is coded in red Indian sandstone, the Central Plaza in white Sivec marble, whereas the Waterfront Plaza is coded in blue Azul Bahia granite (ibid.).

Figure 133. The Culture Plaza with the entrance to the Design Society Book Store (far left) and the Park View Gallery (next to it) (own photo).
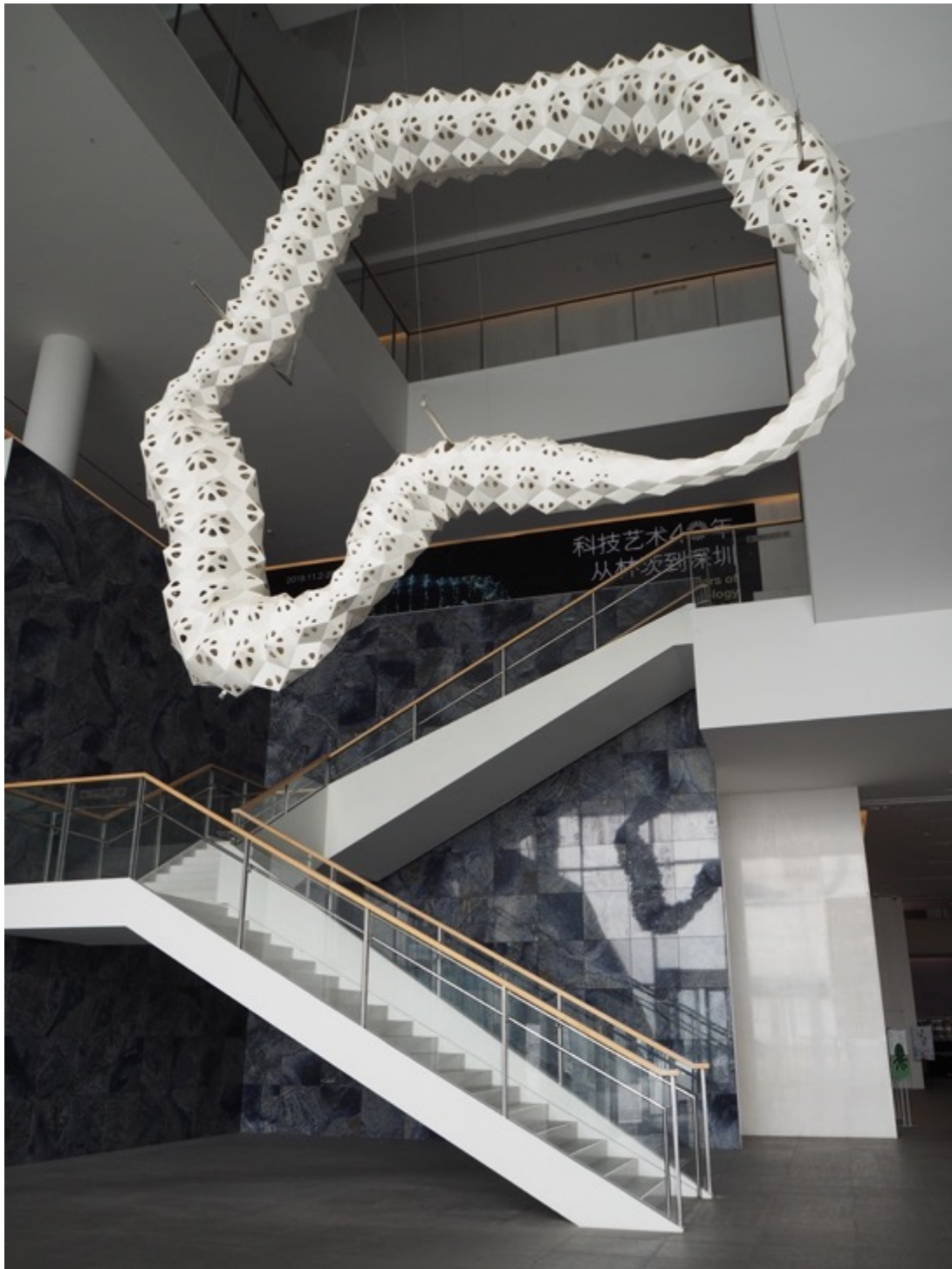
Figure 134. The Waterfront Plaza distinguished by the blue granite and staircase (own photo).

Figure 135. The Central Plaza (own photo).
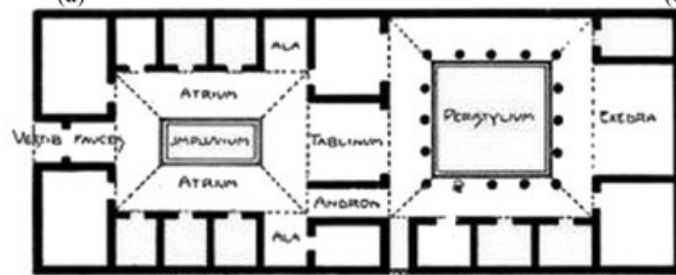
Figure 136. Examples of a Roman atrium (Vethanayagam and Abu-Hijleh, 2019).

Figure 137. Example malls with atriums in the UAE: a) Mall of the Emirates, b) Burjuman Center, c) Wafi Mall, d) Dubai Mall, e) Mercato Mall and f) Times Square Mall (Vethanayagam and Abu-Hijleh, 2019).

Whilst the floor-to-ceiling glass windows from the Culture Plaza and the Waterfront Plaza use natural light to create a blur between the indoor and outdoor spaces, the Central Plaza uses the internal atrium's vertical skylight and the openness of the plaza as a connective feature linking the entire building programme. In the historical canon of Western architecture, the term 'atrium' typically describes a large open-air or skylight space that is surrounded by rooms on all sides. It was the centrepiece of an ancient Roman home that provided natural light and ventilation, whereas traditional 'piazzas' (from which the word 'plaza' is derived) were used as a public open space and marketplace in medieval towns. It is typically a convening space that connects to major buildings and monuments, eventually becoming a typical urban feature of Roman cities. Over time, these two architectural typologies

came to apply to semi-public and indoor spaces, and even in shopping mall architecture design.

Figure 138. The directory plastered on the wall at Central Plaza (own photo).

The self-annotated map (Figure 132) has colour coded the three different plazas. The floor plan also demonstrates how the Central Plaza at SWCAC functions as the main connector between the Culture Plaza and Waterfront Plaza. Visitors approaching from the main road will find themselves starting from the Culture Plaza (which is the main entrance, facing Sea World), then the Central Plaza and finally coming out through the Waterfront Plaza (which faces the seafront of Shenzhen Bay). The monthly event directory (plastered on the wall), reception desk and locker rooms are readily visible upon arrival from Culture Plaza (Figure 138). However, it is the Central Plaza which plays host to a variety of public events and benefits from the vast, cavernous space. The skylight of the Central Plaza allows soft natural light through the triangular glass dome, which becomes part of a decorative feature on the rooftop garden (Figure 139) (the other internal atrium is at the Main Gallery).

PLAZA SKYLIGHT
ROOF GARDEN
COURTYARD
PARKSIDE STAIR
3F ENTRY
CENTRAL PLAZA
MAIN GALLERY
1F MUSEUM ENTRY
CULTURE PLAZA
SMALL EXHIBITION
GREEN PLATE
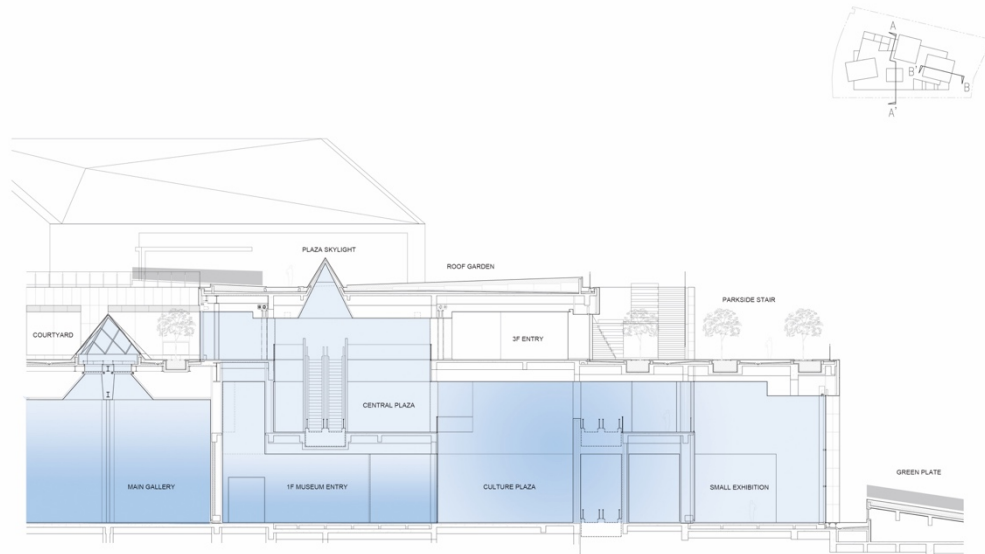
A-A' DETAILED SECTION
S=1/200

Figure 139. Self-annotated section of SWCAC that shows the amount of light allowed into the building. The light blue colour indicates the most amount of natural light coming from the pyramid skylight and the floor-to-ceiling glass of the Culture Plaza entrance.

The Central Plaza's internal atrium strengthens the connection between the cultural and commercial programmes through this shared semi-public space. The hybrid design of the indoor plazas can also function as an open exhibition space. During the site visit in 2019, the Central Plaza had a pop-up exhibition, *The Choice of Leipzig—Best Book Design from All Over the World* that utilised the wider floor space and taller atria for optimising viewing (Figure 140). The calculated design and vantage points at SWCAC control the consumers' gaze. Considering Maki's portfolio and appraisal, the use of glass for the podium component and shop window elements are not the only features that use "light in a masterful way" (Pritzker Architecture Prize, 2021). The internal atrium of the Central Plaza also continues Maki's interest in searching "for a way to make transparency, translucency and opacity exist in total harmony" (ibid.).

Figure 140. Central Plaza hosting a pop-up exhibition (own photo).

As the SWCAC is in partnership with V&A Museum, bilingual signs and names are indicative of these local-global intentions. However, based on the floor plans, this study's findings indicate a slight discrepancy between the English and Chinese equivalent of 'plaza'. Whilst the term 'plaza' is consistent in the English names of all three plazas, the Chinese characters given to the Culture Plaza, the Central Plaza

and the Waterfront Plaza use two different characters to denote two different functions. In the Chinese language, the Culture Plaza is named *wénhuà guǎngchǎng* [文化广场] (literally characters denoting 'culture' + 'square'), the Central Plaza as *zhōngtíng* [中庭] (literally 'middle/centre' + 'court'), and the Waterfront Plaza as *hǎibīn guǎngchǎng* [海滨广场] (literally 'sea front' + 'square'). The characters *guǎngchǎng* [广场] are used to describe the plazas at SWCAC; in Chinese, they denote an indoor and outdoor space. *Guǎngchǎng* is also used in a variety of spaces to differentiate between other building type, e.g. *guǎngchǎng* [广场] (plaza) + *gòuwù* [购物] (shopping) + *zhōngxīn* [中心] (centre) can mean 'plaza shopping centre' to describe a shopping building type in China.
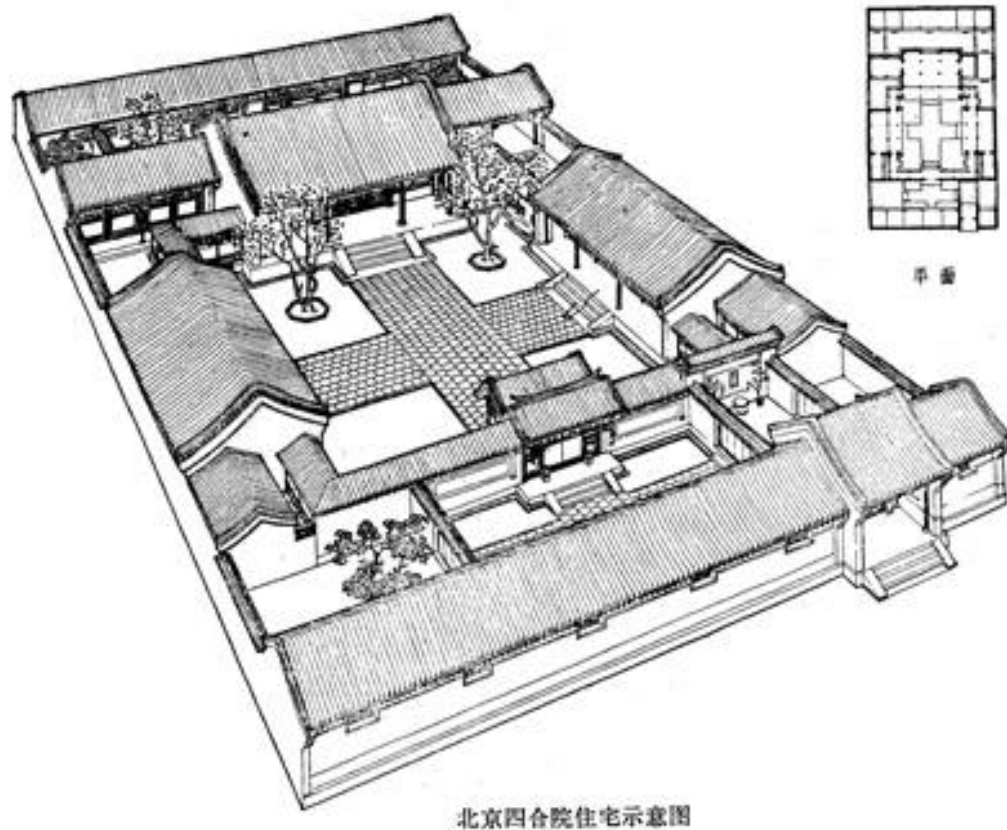
Figure 141. A Beijing courtyard house (traditionaleastasia, no date).

Meanwhile, unlike Culture and Waterfront Plaza, the Central Plaza uses a different name: *zhōngtíng* [中庭]—possibly alluding to its internal atrium feature, which causes this hybridisation between the inside and the outside. *Tíng* [庭] has a long

history of being used as the main courtyard in traditional Chinese architecture from rural courtyard houses and imperial palaces to humble gardens. With the main house and entrance on the central north-south axis, traditional Chinese architecture is centred around the courtyard—a generally wide, open yard surrounded by halls on all sides. It can be seen in the basic form of the traditional Chinese residence, *sìhéyuàn* [四合院], which is also known as the courtyard house in English. Both the Chinese courtyard and hybrid atrium-plaza design at the Central Plaza seem to share similarities in connecting and blurring the indoor-outdoor and public-private spaces.
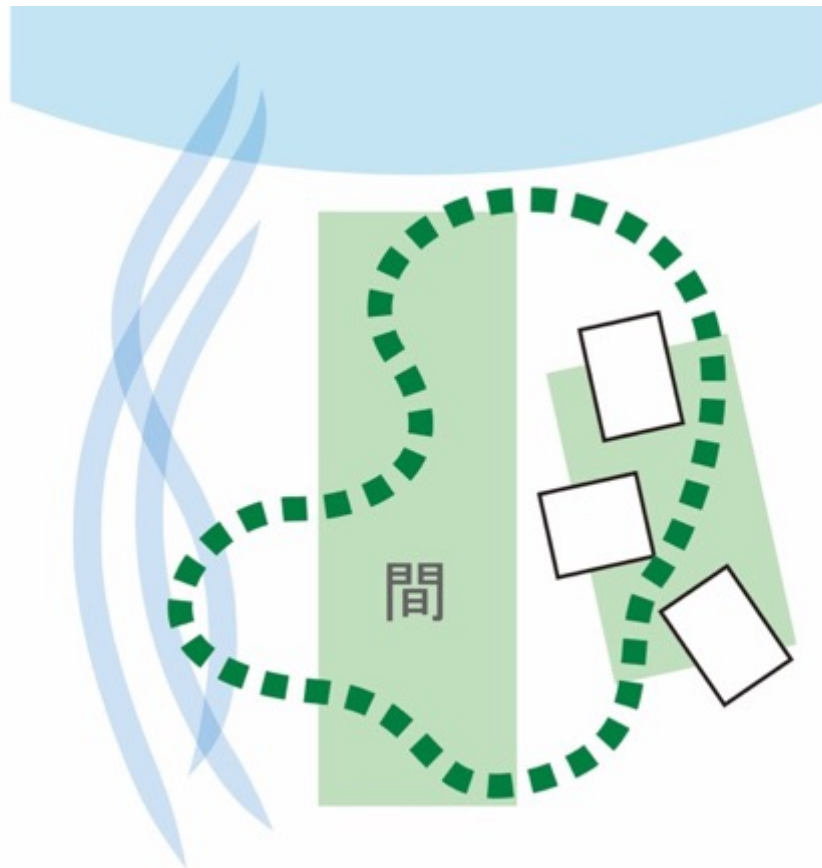
Figure 142. Simple diagram of the continuous circuit that Maki aimed to develop, by blurring the rooftop garden as part of the park nearby (Maki and Associates, 2012).

Complementing the plazas' connective functions and adding to the building's circulation are the two grand stairways accessible from either side of the podium entrances, which extend to the rooftop garden. In a text description, Maki

describes this architecture feature as an important part of the building's circulation, to complete the "holistic" experience of the SWCAC (Maki and Associates, 2012):

> The circulation loops around the internal atria, all of which
> are closely tied to the exterior plazas. Together, they provide
> a wide array of cultural experiences to the visitor. The park
> extends onto the roof garden via two grand stairways,
> creating a holistic public experience appropriate for a culture
> center.

It is designed to allow visitors to travel from the park or waterfront route and onto the rooftop. To provide the impression of continuity with the public park, the greenery continues up to the roof garden in the form of large green plates of folded grass. Each has a landing that allows access into the building; these side entrances lead into either one of the main plazas. Overall, "visitors can freely walk in a continuous circuit" because these stairways and plazas contribute to the blurring of inside-outside and private-public spaces (ArchDaily, 2017a).

Figure 143. One of the grand stairways by the Waterfront Plaza entrance (own photo).

Figure 144. One of the grand stairways (facing Wanghai Road) leading up to the rooftop of SWCAC (own photo).

4.5 Conclusion

Based on this thorough examination of the SWCAC's hybrid programmes (mentioned in *Museum*, *Theatre* and *Retail*), 'hybridisation' adds symbolic and cultural value to the building. This chapter started with the assumption that the SWCAC should be seen as either a 'museum' or 'cultural hub', but findings prove that the overlapping traits and interests make it hard to categorise the SWCAC, since it can fit in many. To an extent, this study supports the idea of a new type of museum emerging within the context of China—a type of hybrid museum. Based on the key architectural features, architecture drawings and plans and building programme of the SWCAC, the site analysis supports this study's idea that the museum is akin to a "transnational actor" as an institution active across borders (Goff, 2017).

From the curation of the SWCAC's cultural-commercial programmes to the process of branding and developing the architecture, this hybrid museum is arguably a product born from the blurring between private and public, the state and the non-state, the local and the global spaces. Overall, the SWCAC's architecture design, building programme and brand development have considered "a multi-faceted program of exhibitions, events, courses and other formats for these audiences" (Design Society, 2017a, p.19). With functions as an "innovative brand" and "culture operator for China" (Design Society, 2020b, p.15), the SWCAC's flexibility, multifunctional and "commercially-minded" approach provides a solution that responds to the call for diversified museum offerings advocated by the ICOM president during International Museum Day 2021 (Grosvenor, 2020; Garlandini, 2021). In many ways, it shows that it is possible for new museums like the SWCAC to survive even without a permanent collection or historical or cultural value, but relies on experiential value and hybrid programmes that can adapt to the rapidly changing market. Because of their wider functions as a brandscape (built by CMG), the programmes designed at the SWCAC will directly and indirectly contribute to

the Nanshan District Government, the Shenzhen Creative City Network and the Shenzhen Municipal Government.

The type of products and lifestyle curated and sold by Design Society are evidence that 'design' and 'culture' are exclusive, in ways that seem familiar to a Foucauldian museum on a civilising mission. To an extent, it is an exclusive space marketed towards the "creative class" and social elites, and packaging an idealised lifestyle through its building programme (Florida, 2012). At the same time, this outpost model did create a "totally new way of working in China" (Design Society, 2017a). The outpost model and the process of hybridisation at the SWCAC present unique solutions that utilise a host of actors and networks, but hybrid cultural-commercial programmes have been around since the Reform and Opening (Xue, 2019; Sun and Xue, 2020).

CHAPTER 5: PLACE BRANDING SEA WORLD AND 'SHEKOU'S STORY'

5.1 Introduction

Figure 145. A self-annotated map of the commercial zone of Sea World (in grey); key points are labelled and coloured.

Part 2's final chapter (representing the final type of hybridisation in hybrid museums) teases out the tensions between the local and the global, and how the hybrid museum responds through its relationship with Sea World as brandscape. As a part of Sea World's brandscape, the SWCAC was built as a cultural core to complement this large-scaled development plan, which has been owned and developed by CMSK since 1978 (CMG, 2015; Luo, 2017). Within a short walking distance from the SWCAC is the commercial zone of Sea World Plaza—a thriving, bustling tourist destination known for its ex-pat community, international dining and bars. As Ole Bouman, director of the Design Society, is quoted as saying, Shekou is the "birthplace of China's modernization" (Adams, 2017). Therefore, like the development of the SWCAC, the decisions that key actors made to develop the Sea World Plaza will impact how the national significance of Sea World, Shekou is curated and experienced through the urban environment.

Chapter 5 situates the SWCAC as a museum tied to China's top-down processes of developing culture and production of a global city. Despite this, the images chosen to develop this brandscape includes the use of foreign architectural styles, the presence of global franchises and complementary cultural events to represent China's economic reform, 'openness' and CMSK's success within the Sea World brand from 1979 to the present day. The multiple "spectacles" (Eco, 1986; Baudrillard, 1994) and "signs" (Venturi, Brown and Izenour, 1997) used to frame Sea World Plaza reveal conflicting local and global interests. The museum narratives at the SWCAC will demonstrate how the meanings of the urban developments at Sea World Plaza have been changed and localised over time.

This chapter examines Sea World (namely the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza) as a brandscape that blurs the open-air museum with an entertainment district, but retaining the underlying themes of hybridisation between the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests. The following subsections will identify key urban characteristics of Sea World that are shaped by the aforementioned hybridisations through *5.2 Representing the Reform and Opening-up*, and *5.3 Branding 'Shekou's Story'*.

5.2 Representing the Reform and Opening-up

The chaos of the local-global has never been more experiential than at Sea World. The image developed at Sea World is a significant part of the 'Shekou's story', and subsequently the Chinese Dream. In contrast to the orderly park and clean form of the SWCAC, Sea World presents itself with a theme park-like atmosphere through the image of faux-Western shopfronts, global franchises, and so forth. On a superficial level, Sea World is an active marketplace with a chaotic mix of faux-European façades and global brands, but these images present the most visible and experiential form of entanglements between the local and global, and the cultural and commerce, in urban space. It is as though bits and pieces of the foreign are stitched together into the local fabric of Shekou to form a new and constructed history by CMSK.

Overall, this subsection observes how these foreign images represent CMG's success and Deng's Reform and Opening-up. The subsection first questions the unusual choice of using the Minghua cruise ship—a foreign vessel—as Sea World's place-marker. Historical archives suggest that urban developments around this icon over the 1980s, 1990s and 2010s changed to suit its historic and symbolic significance of Sea World. This also included early intentions to merge culture with commerce to complement this repurposed vessel. To commemorate the forty years of reform in Shenzhen and in China, this historic moment was to become documented and legitimised in the Museum of Reform at the SWCAC. The second half of this subsection shows how the exhibition displays and museum narrative at the Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening [Museum of Reform] legitimise CMG's successful Shekou Model and new interest in Xi's BRI.

The overall site analysis suggests that these foreign images (icons, urban layout, duplitecture and global franchises) are used not merely as a design trend but as a deliberate decision made to capture the history of place and hybridising culture with commerce. Klingmann's concept of brandscapes (in particular) will make the connection between museum production, place brand and the global city. As

summarised in Chapter 2, this concept sees the potential of branding in architecture and help explains the spatial flexibility, blurring functions, market-driven and synergistic urban effects of the hybrid museum (Eco, 1986; Zukin, 1993; Evans, 2003; Klingmann, 2007). The site analysis conducted in December 2019 will be supported by Nanshan District Government work reports (bilingual version), key publications under CMG (mainly in Chinese) and articles found online to show how the museum (and cultural production) is tied to the production of the Chinese city.

Lastly, to avoid confusion, the commercial area (marked in grey in Figure 145) and the entire place of Sea World share the same name in English and in Chinese, 海上世界. To ensure this distinction can be made in this study, Sea World Plaza (named by CallisonRTKL) will refer to this particular commercial zone, whilst Sea World in general is for the broader area containing the SWCAC, the commercial zone, residential zones and more.

Figure 146. The underpass that connects SWCAC (and the Sculpture of Nüwa) to Sea World Plaza. On the far right is a children's arcade under the bridge (pastel shopfront) (own photo).

Figure 147. The Minghua cruise ship docked on the artificial lake of Sea World Plaza (own photo).

When making the journey from the SWCAC to Sea World via the underpass (Figure 146), the shift from the orderly cultural zone into the outdoor commercial zone is instantaneous. A sunken plaza has an outdoor directory of Sea World, and

promotional posters of bars and restaurants can be seen. Once the visitor climbs up the stairs to go back to street level, there are fast-food outlets (KFC, McDonald's, Starbucks) and restaurants serving international cuisines in a range of (so-called) old and new façades. Taking a central position with an unobstructed view is the Minghua cruise ship—a place-marker and symbol of Deng Xiaoping's market reforms—docked on the artificial lake that currently houses a floating hotel, a nightclub and a German bar on its top deck. Surrounding the ship is a wide selection of restaurants and entertainment facilities, housed in an eclectic mix of multiple architectural styles: from higher-density, mixed-use buildings to low-density quasi-European shophouses. At night, this dark lake turns into a musical fountain, well-engineered to match the beat of the music and the impressive pyrokinetic display. The pedestrianised routes almost force the visitor to walk around the lake where the cruise ship is docked to get to the north or south end of Sea World.

Figure 148. The Minghua cruise ship and Nüwa statue are painted on the wall at Sea World Metro Station (own photo).

Designed by CallisonRTKL—an established "global architecture, planning, and design practice" (CallisonRTKL, 2021b), whose main headquarters are based in Baltimore, United States—this current commercial zone of Sea World was part of a massive facelift to convert old factories around the area (like the nearby Nanhai E-Cool from the former Sanyo factories) and rebrand Sea World in the 2010s. The

reason for first introducing the Minghua is because of its synonymity to the place brand of Sea World, as well as the historic and symbolic value it holds for both Shenzhen and the CCP. This much is evident in the spatial layout that positions the Minghua cruise ship (Figure 145) at the centre of Sea World, on an artificial lake framed by dining and leisure spaces. It is so iconic and symbolic of China's Reform and Opening-up that the Sea World metro station [海上世界站] (Line 2) has a wall painting dedicated to the Minghua cruise ship, alongside the Nüwa statue in front of the SWCAC (Figure 148). Both are place-markers that are immortalised in history as remnants of the old Shekou in the 80s and 90s.

Figure 149. Minghua cruise ship arrives in Shekou, 1983 in (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.68).

The irony that a retired French leisure vessel is now the new icon for Shekou and symbol of China's economic reform—its original functions extended from beyond dining and entertainment—will be questioned here. On the surface, this eclecticism of Sea World seems a part of China's copycat or shānzhài [山寨] culture that gained notoriety in Shenzhen itself, and that this theme park atmosphere is simply another design trend driven by commercialism. However, these intentions to historicise and commercialise Sea World are not recent. To commemorate the fortieth anniversary

of China's Reform and Opening-up, the following publications by CMG (Xu and Liu, 2018; Xu, Liu and Di, 2018; Zhong, 2018) chronicle the development of Shekou, part of which includes the early beginnings of Sea World from the 1980s. These texts (available on CMSK's website) included the historical significance of the Minghua cruise ship, from its arrival to the present day.

From the outset, Sea World was intended to be a transitional point from Shenzhen to Hong Kong. The Minghua was bought by the Shekou Industrial Zone from COSCO Guangzhou (who bought it from France, where it was once owned by French President Charles de Gaulle) for the sole purpose of providing "one-stop lodging and entertainment to business people from Hong Kong, who used to arrive in the morning and return at night" (Xu, Liu & Di, 2018, p.68). In August 1983, the luxury vessel that once sailed around the world arrived near the coast of Shekou. Since docking on the now-former Bay Six, the ship has not been moved and served its purpose as a floating hotel. In *Snapshots of Time: 40 years of Development* (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018), the arrival of the Minghua cruise ship at the Shekou Industrial Zone is made synonymous with the early beginning of Sea World. As one of the co-founders of this industrial zone, Yuan Geng's plan for Sea World was to use entertainment and leisure to transform this port into a site of consumption, which he envisioned as "China's Hawaii" (Xu and Liu, 2018).
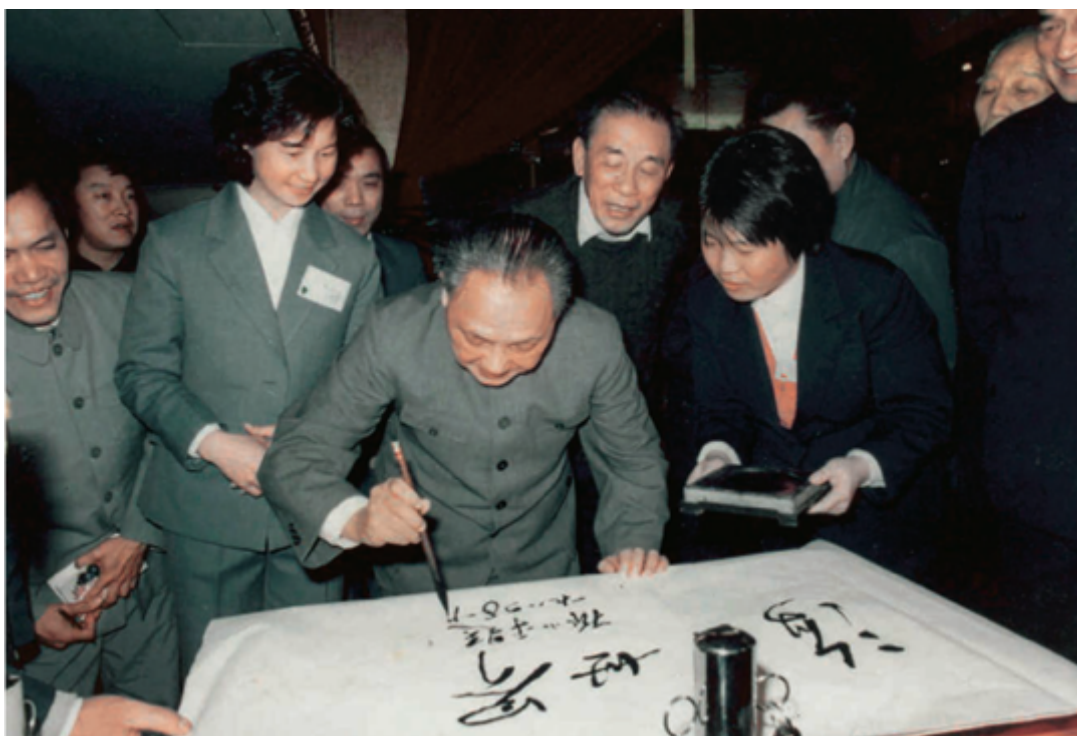
Figure 150. Deng Xiaoping writes the four characters of "Sea World" with a brush, aboard the Minghua (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.85).

Figure 151. The famous words written by Deng during his visit (ibid., p.227).

Figure 152. The Minghua docked at Bay 6 in mid-1980s (ibid., p.113).

The Minghua's existence became tied to the place of Sea World and to the Reform and Opening-up during the historic state visit by Deng Xiaoping. On 26 January 1984, Deng boarded the Minghua cruise ship and wrote down the name 'Sea World' [海上世界] with a brush. These words have been immortalised at the ship's entrance (Figure 151). This also became the defining moment (and a source of huge publicity) for CMG's Sea World. A couple of days later, Deng wrote down the famous statement in Guangzhou: "The development and experience of Shenzhen has proved that our policy to establish the Special Economic Zone is correct." From then on, the former cruise ship that used to sail around the world has become a symbolic landmark that witnessed the beginning of China's integration into the world system.

The ship has also witnessed the various urban changes that occurred over the next few years. In 1989, the Sculpture of Nüwa (currently in the sunken garden next to the SWCAC, easily accessible via the underpass) and the bathing beach (translated as 海滨浴场) were built to the west of the Minghua. In Figure 153, the late 1980s photo shows a largely isolated ship with unobstructed views of the mountains

beyond and the isolated Nüwa statue on an island. The sculpture was designed by artist Fu Tianchou around 1989 as an embodiment of Shekou's people. The original island was originally a public leisure space known as Nüwa square, but the area around this was levelled in the 90s and redesigned in the 2010s (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.92). The original function as a leisure space is retained at present, with a sunken garden and undulating paths designed by Maki and Associates. However, the statue has a newly added function as another monument symbolic of the old Shekou.

Figure 153. The Minghua in the late 1980s with the newly added Sculpture of Nüwa on an island (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.72).

Figure 154. A loose self-illustrated plan of Sea World in the late 80s, with the most recent addition of the Sculpture of Nüwa on an island. Along the western coastline is the bathing beach (where the Oyster Farm used to be).

Both the sculpture and the Minghua continued to serve their original functions, and the urban plans that followed developed around these intentions. The Minghua still functions as a hotel and entertainment space, that is designed to give the Chinese "a sense of embarking on an international cruise, destination: the good life" (O'Donnell, 2012). It was in 1994 that Sea World extended its area on reclaimed

land; a land that the SWCAC, high-end residential areas and the waterfront route along Shenzhen Bay currently occupy. The photo taken after 1995 (Figure 155) shows that the Minghua sits inland but is surrounded by new entertainment and commercial spaces, including a golf course.

Figure 155. The Minghua in the mid-90s with a golf course and Sculpture of Nüwa no longer surrounded by the sea. In the far-right corner is a more familiar sight of Western-styled architecture providing dining and entertainment (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.74).

This process of hybridisation between the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests demonstrate how it has been a part of Sea World's identity in the earlier phases of development. According to the Shenzhen-based artist-ethnographer Mary Ann O'Donnell, whose observations and documented work on Shenzhen's development have been a part of the V&A's eight-part *Unidentified Acts of Design* blog series, Western restaurants and Mediterranean-styled shops were built around Minghua, "constructed around a vaguely Portuguese plaza" (O'Donnell, 2012; Mengoni, 2016b). More specifically, it is based on Senado Square or Leal Senado in Macau. Despite the added commercial areas, Sea World Plaza of the mid-90s was affected by serious water pollution which led to the closure of the bathing beach. The ship fell into disuse and was even considered for demolition. However, the 2010s marked a new change as CMG

began upgrading old Shekou factories, developing over the reclaimed land and rebranding Sea World as "a new upgrading landmark in Shenzhen" (CMG, 2015).

Figure 156. A self-annotated map of Sea World in the 90s. Wanghai Road is newly built over reclaimed land. Nüwa square used to be surrounded by water but is now surrounded by reclaimed land. The Minghua is surrounded by reclaimed land and is next to a golf course.

The current commercial zone of Sea World Plaza is part of this redevelopment in the 2010s. Its grand opening was held on 20 December 2013. This time, the Minghua no longer sat on a dry dock but on an artificial lake with palm trees around it, along with a newly transformed space of faux-Western architecture, dining, global franchises and a host of dazzling colours to light up the sky at night. Undulating paths and bridges allow for seamless circulation that connects both the Minghua and the Nüwa, as they did in the past. It continues to live up to its history of internationalism constructed by the main client—CMSK—whilst using the Minghua and the Nüwa to trigger memories of the past.

Figure 157. The Minghua in the 2010s with the construction of Sea World underway. The Western-styled architecture was levelled (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.75).

It is evident that new urban projects and parks were built around the existing two icons: the Minghua and the Sculpture of Nüwa. This also included the commercial and cultural zones of Sea World and the SWCAC, respectively. With the support of the current Nanshan District Government, CMG introduced the "port-park-city" [PPC] development of the Shekou Model; "the port in front, the (industrial) park in the middle and the city behind" (Pairault, 2019). In this 2010s phase of

development, the bathing beach was levelled and a 15-kilometer waterfront route was planned for Shenzhen Bay.

In the span of forty years, the urban developments from the 80s, 90s and 2010s show a consistency of Sea World Plaza as an early kind of brandscape, with entertainment and leisure spaces build around the Minghua. Based on the available photos and documentation above, the place brand and image association of the foreign become much more than just superficial replication of symbolic forms but also convey "authentic, meaningful and engaging" places—ideal traits that Klingmann's brandscapes advocated (Klingmann, no date).

To summarise this subsection, the developments demonstrate how hybrid programmes and foreign architecture styles have been part of this urban fabric much longer than expected. The foreign architecture styles and icons associated with the history of Sea World and China's economic reform are given new symbolic and localised meanings that have deviated from the original functions.

ii. Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening

Figure 158. The entrance of the Museum of Reform at SWCAC. Inside, the visitor is confronted with a wall sculpture commemorating Deng's first inspection tour in 1984. Photo by China Plus (Chang, 2018).

Figure 159. Panoramic wall sculpture of Deng Xiaoping and other leaders during the Southern Tour visit, whilst Yuan Geng is seen explaining the development plans for Shekou in the 2018 opening exhibition (ibid.).

Figure 160. Photos of the exhibits at the Museum of Reform (Heaver, 2018).

Whilst the latest developments at Sea World Plaza help legitimise Shekou's history through the urban experience, the role of the SWCAC adds to this narrative by promoting CMG as the agent responsible for this transformation. The entire raison d'être of SWCAC was to solidify Shekou's spirit of economic reform in its hybrid programmes, but the most formal expression is manifested on the second-floor (level 3F) of the SWCAC, at the Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening [中国改革开放蛇口博物馆] [hereby shortened to Museum of Reform]. The photos and texts from *Snapshots of Shekou* (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018) are used as part of this museum's displays, with contributions from locals and accounts from those who worked at the Shekou Industrial Zone. Because the museum was closed when I visited the site in December 2019, the following analysis also relies on other secondary sources made available on the Design Society website (Design Society, 2018) and first-hand accounts from journalists (Chun, 2018; Heaver, 2018; Kwok, 2018; O'Donnell, 2019).

Figure 161. Former workers of the Kaido Toy Factory posing in one of the dioramas whilst holding the manufactured Donald Duck toys at the museum (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.138-139).

Opened in December 2017 (but later reopened in 2020), this is marketed as the first history museum dedicated to displaying the Reform and Opening-up of China since the 1980s. It also features more information about one of the founders of the Shekou Industrial Zone—Yuan Geng—as the visionary who initiated this transformation. The museum also features a large wall sculpture commemorating Deng's first inspection tour in Shenzhen in 1984, as well as historic moments of state leaders hearing reports from Yuan Geng. Since 2016, the project organisers have been collecting objects that are relevant to the Reform and Opening-up in China—from workers' uniforms, to bicycles and letters, along with everyday household objects based on the collective memories of ordinary Shekou workers. Based on this curated wall of objects, the material objects are presented in glass cases (real or replica) and the exhibition texts are presented as evidence for state agendas. It has become common to see the museum interpreting objects to create and disseminate narratives of the Chinese nation.

In contrast to the transcultural curation of the *Values of Design* (see Chapter 3), the exhibition space and objects at the Museum of Reform retain the familiar

traditional displays and linear narratives expected of a Foucauldian, 'shrine-like' museum (Marstine, 2006). Sponsored by CMG and built by CMSK, this museum "serves as a platform to help people better understand the Shekou Industrial Zone and the history of reform and opening up through exhibits, historical representations and interactive experiences" (PRC. Shenzhen Municipal People's Government, 2021). Based on secondary sources, the objects are on display alongside a series of boarded panels and carefully curated images; the primary mode of display uses objects, manuscripts and photos according to the following themes: 'tide' [潮], 'creation' [创], 'opening' [开], 'breaking' [闯] and 'potential' [势] (Chun, 2018; Heaver, 2018; Kwok, 2018; O'Donnell, 2019). In terms of narrative, the museum begins with the history of Shekou, Deng's patronage, Shekou's business-model, CMG's role in promoting the Reform and the lead up to Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative [BRI].

The Museum of Reform contains other types of museum display to best showcase this relationship between the museum and the Chinese state. Through various dioramas, visitors can jump back in time by entering the curated frames for a quick photo opportunity. Figure 161 shows one of the dioramas of the Kaida Toy Factory in which former employees enjoyed a 'reunion' at their former workplace, whilst holding the toys they used to manufacture. Even local museums in lower-tiered cities such as the Ningbo History Museum also contain a walk-through replica 'old town' marketplace in one of its rooms. Other museum display examples in China also allow visitors to 'walk into' a recreation of the room where the first Communist Party of China National Congress was held in 1921, at the Site of the First National Congress of the Communist Party [SFNCCP]—a renowned historical attraction in Shanghai's Xintiandi (Figure 162). It may be worth observing that SFNCCP also had a relief sculpture depicting key figures of the early CCP at the entrance of the museum, suggesting a formula that may be at work in museums of national interest. These dioramas, sculptures, reliefs and wax figures all play a key role in educating and recreating key moments in a city's history in this highly curated space of the museum in China.

The wax figures and dioramas recall Baudrillard and Eco's study of the simulacra and simulation. In Eco's *Faith in Fakes* (1986), the first essay talks much about wax museums, modern art museums to Disneyland: hybrid architectural types of interest in this study. The collection of essays also suggests a memorialisation of the past that is preserved and "celebrated in full-scale authentic copy" within this American obsession with fakes (ibid.). Although this view largely documents highly-commodified sites in America, the past continues to be constructed into a tangible spatial experience that is still relevant to museum development today. This reconstruction of the past becomes a consistent observation in Eco's *Travels in Hyperreality* (1986), where he takes his readers on a journey throughout the United States, pointing out several wax museums, blurring genuine-replica museum displays to full-scale reconstructions of historic rooms.

Figure 162. (Left) a recreation of the room where the First CPC National Congress was held in 1921 (Yoshihiro, 2021); (Right) The Memorial Hall and also entrance to the museum with reliefs of key leaders (Foursquare, 2019).

Among them, Eco's cites the Museum of the City of New York as one of many museums "full of little crèches in glass cases", pointing towards a nativity scene reproduced within it to full-scale reproductions of a 1906 drawing room (1986, p.8). More importantly, he refers to the diorama as "one of the most effective and least boring of didactic mechanisms", whose aim was to "establish itself as a substitute for reality, as something even more real" (ibid.). Against an illustration or

photograph, the diorama is more vivid and more 'real'. The full-scale reproduction of the Johnson Oval Office at this museum is the main highlight for Eco. The presentation of the reconstruction is displayed separately from genuine pieces, whilst the perfect replica is labelled as a reproduction—in which case the explanatory panels would make the distinction. It becomes most confounding when full-scaled reconstructions fuse the original and copy, sometimes making it difficult to distinguish which were originally part of the room and which serve as fakes.

Although the Museum of Reform at SWCAC is one case, recent museum exhibitions and developments in China suggest a continuation of this trend of viewing the past through the lens of idealised citizenship, instead of reconstructing it. In Kirk Denton's *Exhibiting the Past* (2014, p.3), the book sees "museums and memorial sites [as] implicated in a highly politicised process of memorization and representation of the past, and are dealt with by multiple ideological forces including Maoism, liberalism and neoliberalism". In tandem with the phases of museum development in China (Lu, 2014; Varutti, 2014), the state cultural heritage industry has worked to support the Chinese Communist Party's [CCP] ambitious overseas development program—the Belt and Road Initiative [BRI]. In 2013, at forums in Kazakhstan and Indonesia, Xi Jinping outlined the CCP's BRI as the 'new Silk Road' patterned upon ideological-historical image of the ancient Silk Road (Eberhard, 2020). Since the BRI was announced, exhibition and cultural sites have increasingly drawn from this past image of the Silk Road to establish the template for modern international commerce.

Figure 163. The refurbished section on Xi's BRI (Kwok, 2018).

Figure 164. The refurbished section that pays homage to Xi's father (ibid.).

The announcement of the BRI saw an increase in exhibitions, and its texts are explicit about making these connections. The politicisation of objects and the Chinese museum would play a role in propelling the ideological-historical imagination of the Silk Road. In line with these state narratives, the agenda of the

BRI has also been curated into the cultural products and exhibition texts at the Museum of Reform at SWCAC. With a history of China's economic reform as well as ties to current maritime activity, the past (imagery of the ancient Silk Road), the present (the BRI) and the future image of the city are legitimised into this museum narrative, under the roof of a high-profile collaboration with the V&A Museum.

Whilst the Museum of Reform opened in December 2017, it later closed in June 2018 for upgrading work in preparation for the anniversary exhibition to celebrate the forty years of China's Reform and Opening-up. When reopened in August 2018, according to a Wall Street Journal journalist (Chun, 2018), the centrepiece sculpture of Deng's Southern Tour visit at the entrance was "replaced by video screens showing local development and a beige wall adorned with a quote from President Xi Jinping". This study observes a new narrative being introduced based on the newly refurbished gallery and concluding section of the Museum of Reform. As the section's introductory text says: "Comrade Xi Jinping has raised the banner of reform… A new era of ideological liberation is sweeping through China" (ibid.). This latest addition is dedicated to Xi's BRI, and even includes a section dedicated to Xi's father, Xi Zhongxun. The wall display contains more photographs and texts pay tribute to the elder Xi as a former Guangdong party chief who steered economic reforms from 1978-80 (Figure 164).

Figure 165. CMSK's early headquarters offices consisted of eight houses from local oyster farmers, near Bay 6, where the Minghua was going to be docked. This area is now known as Nanhai E-Cool. (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.53).

Figure 166. The corrugated metal office CMSK used as headquarters in 1979 (ibid., p.54)

The exhibition at the Museum of Reform quotes a popular local folk saying from the period: "Bao'an [former name of Shekou] has only three treasures – flies, mosquitoes and Shanjing oysters"—which became a common rags-to-riches story associated with Shekou and the city-brand of Shenzhen (Chun, 2018). In the words of Tony Bennett (2006, p.525, cited in Varutti, 2014, p.59), the museum bears the "capacity, through the studied manipulation of the relations between people and things in a custom-built environment, to produce new entities that can be mobilized—both within the museum and outside it—in social and civic programmes of varied kinds". This zero-to-hero scenario is key in the brands of SWCAC, Shekou and Shenzhen.

Regardless of the shifting narratives, the Minghua cruise ship, the Sculpture of Nüwa, the Museum of Reform and the place of Sea World all complement the more subtle kind of 'red tourism', referring to visiting sites that have historical and cultural significance to the ruling CCP's history, including famous figures and exemplary personages. As Covid-19 had restricted overseas travel, red tourism has grown rapidly, making such consumption as a reinforcement of political agency and citizenry more available and accessible. In this case, the entire space of Sea World is arguably an open-air museum that memorialises the past: CMG's Yuan Geng, Deng Xiaoping's patronage and his Southern Tour, and—at present—a new era promoting Xi Jinping's brainchild, the BRI. The SWCAC and its Museum of Reform have become the cultural stamp that legitimises this entire narrative, with support from high-profile transnational actors: the V&A Museum, Maki and Associates and CallisonRTKL. Although unlike other typical red tourist sites and the 'shrine-like' exhibitions, Sea World is an interactive and experiential space built upon through simulacra and foreign images.

Only remnants of the fisherman boats at Shenzhen Bay waterfront remind visitors of the sleepy fishing village of Shekou—a nostalgic memorabilia of the past—but even this scene has been constructed and (re)constructed from the 80s to the early 2010s. The original bay, along with the oyster farm that became the site for SWCAC, ceased to exist. The original oyster farms were bought out by the CMG as they took

over in the 80s, converting them into low-density housing and makeshift offices (Figure 166), but even they were demolished over time. The only remnant of early CMG is now replicated in the Museum of Reform, with a very clean reconstruction of the makeshift, corrugated container office and in various dioramas.

Figure 167. The replica of CMG's office in the 80s (Chang, 2018).

5.3 Branding 'Shekou's Story'

Figure 168. Aerial view of Sea World, taken from Shekou Sea World Plaza (CallisonRTKL, 2021a).

The previous subsection is anchored upon the past as a valuable urban memory of the rapid changes surrounding the Minghua and the Sculpture of Nüwa. This section, *5.3 Branding 'Shekou's Story'*, pays attention towards the urban development that surrounded the Minghua cruise ship in view of the Reform and Opening-up history, and the place brand of Sea World Plaza. Overall, the site analysis of Sea World Plaza, CMG's publications on Shekou and the Museum of Reform's exhibition observe more than one narrative behind 'Shekou's Story'. The brandscape of Sea World arguably contains hybrid localising and globalising narratives besides Deng's historic Reform and Opening-up; it also includes Xi's Chinese Dream, CMG's 'China's Hawaii', Nanshan District Government's world-class vision and Shenzhen's image of a global city.

Sea World's brandscape serves as a living urban memory of a past that is constructed according to the state's official history. Inscribed into the Nanshan District Government policies, urban development and culture have played a large part in developing Nanshan into a "world-leading" and innovation-driven place, and into Shenzhen's overall city-brand as a 'miracle city' (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2016). The hybridisation between the local and global at the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza reflects the local district's policy to reflect 'openness'.

Therefore, the brandscape of Sea World Plaza is more than just another fantasyland of eclectic architecture styles and global franchises. The international-style architecture is the most blatant symbol of a globalising city and of 'Shekou's Story'.

To better understand the SWCAC's relationship to the place brand of Sea World and Shekou, this section is divided into three subsections: (i) *Constructing 'Shekou's Story'* (ii) *Duplitecture as message* and (iii) *"City is a museum": creating 'China's Hawaii' through global brands*. Site observations see the chaos of the Sea World as a "fairground", but foreign signs demonstrate how their original meanings have changed to accommodate the top-down narrative process during the development of Sea World (Foucault, 2001).

The first subsection, *(i) Constructing 'Shekou's Story'*, demonstrates a heavy top-down narrative that determines the museum narratives at the Museum of Reform and in the design of Sea World Plaza. From Deng's Reform and Opening-up, Xi's Chinese Dream, CMG's 'China's Hawaii' to Nanshan District Government's world-class vision for Shekou, these narratives have become part of the 'Shekou's Story'. The second (ii) *Duplitecture as message* sees new meanings given to the foreign architecture styles at Sea World Plaza. The eclectic mix of foreign architecture and even copycat architecture may look out of place from the local place identity but the key state actors have envisioned this as a part of 'Shekou's Story'. As a high-controlled environment that is constructed based on localising and globalising narratives, the subsection justifies new symbolic meanings given to these foreign architecture styles at Sea World Plaza.

The final section (iii) *"City is a museum": creating 'China's Hawaii' through global brands*, recalls the explicit use of foreign forms dating back to the early reform years, when Yuan Geng hoped to establish Sea World as a resort-city: "China's Hawaii" (Xu and Liu, 2018, p.104). The experiential value seems to lean on the theme of travel; thus, the Minghua cruise ship, accompanied by foreign architecture forms, create a simulated space whereby visitors are able to travel from one country to another in one location. As an open-air museum of a kind,

many urban features and cultural events are choreographed around the Minghua—
well-curated as a collection of memories and signs that may not have existed in the
past. Yet, the presence of global brands reminds us that certain dreams are being
engineered at Sea World, and only for those who can afford them.

The overall findings argue that the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza (as cultural and
commercial facilities) are tools used by CMG and the local municipal government to
legitimise their history and reinforce their ideologies, whilst fulfilling localising and
globalising interests. As a result of these top-down narratives, new public cultures
are born. The multiple narratives behind 'Shekou's Story' would become
commodified and reimagined in this site of consumption, entertainment and
leisure.

i.   Constructing 'Shekou's Story'

Studies of China's museum development often analyse the representation of the (political) past as a common trope (Lu, 2014; Varutti, 2014; Eberhard, 2020) and as means to educate and reinforce ideology. The Museum of Reform would later use the same chronology (from fishing village to metropolis) in these texts to present the past via exhibits and objects. However, the previous subsection demonstrates how the Reform is no longer limited to Deng but is shared among other key state actors, i.e. Xi Jinping, CMG and the Nanshan District Government. There are many underlying narratives behind 'Shekou's Story' [蛇口故事] that help shape the localised brandscape of the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza.

Firstly, the recent displays at the Museum of Reform present a new kind of reform spearheaded by Xi Jinping. In *Shekou: Where the Dream Started* [蛇口：梦开始的地方] (Xu and Liu, 2018), the unique connection between Shekou and China's wider national history is soundly established in the preface's title: 用"蛇口实践"讲好"中国故事"（loosely translating as 'fulfilment of Shekou's practice is a good Chinese story'). Following this grandiose title is a quote from Xi Jinping (on working hard and advancing towards development), before its main content uses the same fishing village-to-city narrative to associate with Shenzhen's rapid growth. The implications of this text suggest that the 'Shekou's Story' [蛇口故事] and the grand visions of Xi's Chinese Dream [中国梦] are synonymous. The translated saying goes: "walking into Shekou, into 'Shekou's Story', is to enter the great era of China's reform and opening up!" [based on 走入蛇口，走入"蛇口故事"，就是走入了中国改革开放的大时代！].

Considering the refurbished exhibits at the SWCAC's Museum of Reform, the hybrid museum in China can also be used as a mouthpiece to promote Xi's ideology. Xi's Chinese Dream [中国梦] has become significant in the place brand as it is a term directly associated with Xi Jinping, who came out with the slogan after becoming

the CCP's leader in 2012. The term could also be found in the Shījīng [诗经] (an anthology of classic poetry) in *Flowing Spring* [下泉], where the Song dynasty poet woke up in despair from dreaming of the former Western Zhou dynasty. With reference to classic literature, the 'Chinese Dream' is a patriotic metaphor for Xi's desire to 'rejuvenate' the Chinese nation.

In many ways, the new urban forms of Sea World (namely the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza area) celebrate and present the past (Deng's Reform) and the present (Xi's Chinese Dream), but under a commercial guise. These new forms (manifested in the cultural hub and commercial zone) are presented as evidence and relics of another era, and also current representations of the past. In the words of Zukin (1995, p.3), "the cultural power to create an image, to frame a vision, of the city has become more important as … traditional institutions …Whether they are media corporations like Disney, art museums, or politicians, they are creating new spaces for public cultures". Observations and policy direction seem to be in favour of hybrid culture and commercial spaces becoming the fuel of the rejuvenation, just as the previous Shenzhen masterplans of the Futian CBD had eradicated the past (former urban villages) "in order to establish a new representational form" (Boyer, 1996, p.6).

Figure 169. Architect's drawing of OCT Shekou Fisherman's Wharf along Shenzhen Bay, to the East of SWCAC (GMP, 2022).

Secondly, the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza are driven by the Nanshan District Government's own aims for Shekou and Nanshan District. The existence of the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza presents a strong underlying desire of the Nanshan District Government to develop a "world-class innovative coastal central urban area" in the next five years (leading up to 2020) (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2016). This includes an increase of cultural facilities and brandscapes, e.g. OCT Shekou Fisherman's Wharf along Shenzhen Bay, as a part of the Fifth Shenzhen Urban Renewal Plan of 2012 (Figure 169). Just as the plan-led development at the major Shennan Road had used foreign architects to develop civic buildings and cultural venues (Sun and Xue, 2020), similar redevelopments are happening at Wanghai Road, a major coastal road dividing the Sea World Plaza from the SWCAC. Both the Nanshan District Government and CMG have unveiled plans to reconstruct Wanghai Road to ease traffic in and out of Shekou with a two-tiered underground system, and more architecture projects are expected to convey the idealised image of Shenzhen Bay as "the center of [economic] headquarters in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2019b). Therefore, considering the key actors behind the

development of Sea World Plaza, this brandscape in China is inevitably tied to these top-down processes.

In the Chinese context, foreign icons are signs of modernity, 'openness' and affluence, as discussed in Chinese consumer studies and high-end housing developments (Pow and Kong, 2007; Firat and Ulusoy, 2011; Bosker, 2013; Wu F., 2014). New urban forms (including leisure spaces: shopping malls, theme parks and museum environments) are associated as signs of modernity. In the *Nanshan District Government Work Report's* (2016) 'Main Work in the Next Five Years', Point I (5) had envisioned using franchise stores to develop sites of consumption by encouraging retail giants to move their headquarters to Shenzhen Bay, build malls and support "experiential business streets" [体验式商业街] citing Sea World, Coastal City and Happy Coast as examples.

'Shekou's Story' no longer belongs to the museum as part of the city's memory but can be experienced as part of the urban space as a brandscape. Because of the local-global interests, key actors frame Sea World Plaza as a hybrid site of consumption that contains remnants of Deng's Reform with Xi's Chinese Dream. Even among Shenzhen's CBDs, signature buildings and cultural facilities, the brandscape at Sea World Plaza is architecturally distinctive. The result of these tensions between local and global interests is seen via the architecture and urban development at Sea World Plaza. CMG's Yuan Geng actively modelled Sea World Plaza after the resort cities or "toy cities" (Eco, 1986), with the Minghua as the clearest sign and metaphor of his intentions: a French leisure boat that once took passengers around the world. Urban development over the years showed clear intent on becoming a site of leisure (the nearby Nanhai Hotel, the bathing beach, Nüwa Square and Western restaurants of the 90s) instead of a transit point between workers travelling to and from Hong Kong. At present, the 'experiential business street' would centre around nostalgia and non-local cultures to develop new public cultures of consumption, which appear incongruous as a foreign past is used to convey Sea World's brand.

Figure 170. Leal Senado Building (in the background) opposite the Fountain at the Senado Square in Macau; the tiles patterns can be seen at Sea World (Macau. Cultural Affairs Bureau, no date).
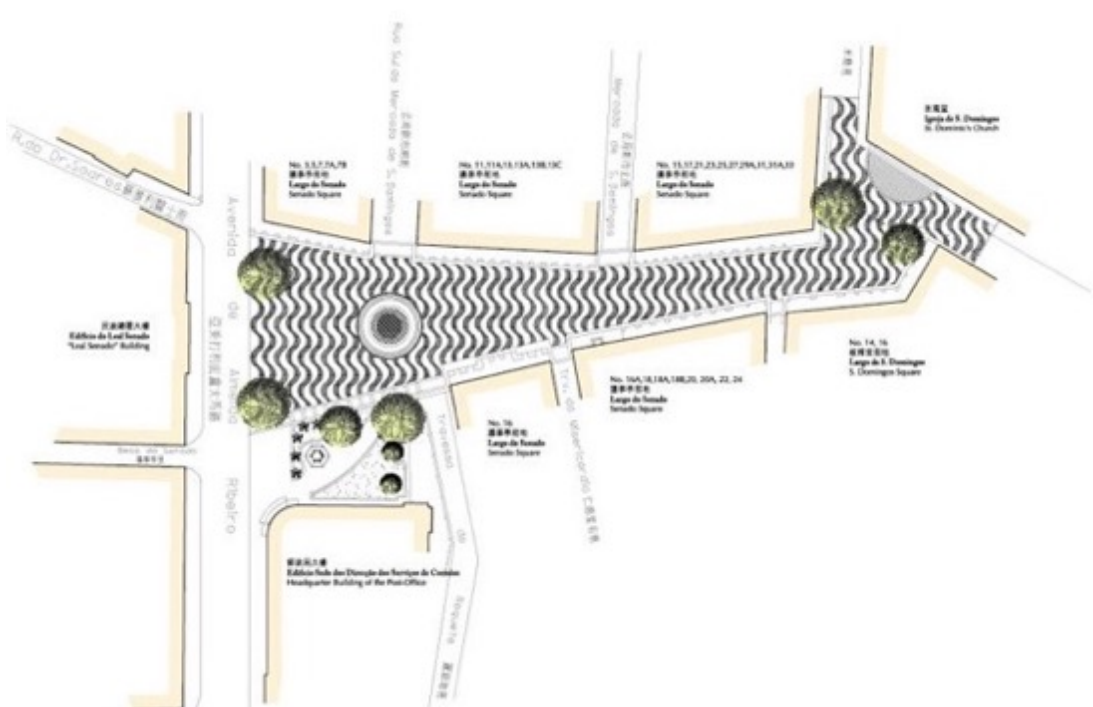
Figure 171. Site plan of Senado Square, the circle depicting the fountain and the undulating tile pattern stretches across the pedestrianised area (ibid.).

According to Mary O'Donnell in The Architecture Review (2012), the pre-2010s layout is said to be modelled on UNESCO's Senado Square in Macau. Its most distinctive feature is the elongated triangular-shaped (or funnel) plaza that connects the historical Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro at the wider end and St

Dominic's Church at the narrowed end (Figure 171). As a former historical centre and meeting point for Chinese and Portuguese merchants for centuries, Senado Square has a predominantly pastel-coloured neoclassical architecture and has retained its Classified Monuments or Classified Buildings of Architectural Interest: the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau Building, the Post Office Building and the Santa Casa de Misericórdia (Macau. Cultural Affairs Bureau, no date).

Figure 172. Self-annotated maps of (left) Leal Senado and Sea World Plaza (right). The funnel-shaped squares are marked in green.

The side-by-side comparison (Figure 172) of these two public spaces shows that present-day Sea World has a similar funnel-shaped square with the Minghua cruise ship at the wider end (Wanghai Road) and a connection to Sea World Metro Line 2 and Xinghua Road at its bottleneck. Both are wide pedestrian-only streets that would later widen in consideration of the key monuments at the square. At Senado Square, a permanent fountain feature was added in front of the historic Leal Senado Building—formerly the seat of Portuguese Macau's government—at the widened end of the public square. Sea World Plaza also seemed to share a similar pavement pattern design (contrasting black-white waves) and a round centrepiece

at the end of the widened square. Instead of a fountain, there seems to be a round bass relief depicting the current plan of Sea World, but the site visit in December 2019 showed flexibility as a temporary Christmas float was placed over this roundel.

Figure 173. Own photo of the Christmas float that is at the end of Sea World's main street; in place of the fountain.

Figure 174. Own photo of the indoor shopping arcade.

Superficially, the foreign forms have no relation to Deng's Reform or Xi's Chinese Dream. Designed by US-based architecture firm, CallisonRTKL, the current image of faux-Western shopfronts, international restaurants and global brands are deeply rooted in the future goals set out by the *Nanshan District Government Work Reports* (2016; 2019b) that continue to build around the construction of an international Nanshan, engineering better quality of life and bringing in foreign investment (from tourism and mega-events to collaborations). Complementing the repurposed Minghua cruise ship are rows of dining and entertainment spaces that do not share a uniform look. Instead, they come in mix-and-match structures, ranging from a generic international-style dining, a leisure centre enveloped by a wave-like glass shell, to rows of colourful 17th-century Dutch or Danish townhouses on the main street (Figure 175). There are also surprising moments of familiar sights: arches from the Tower of London (Figure 176) to the arches of Doge's Palace in Venice (Figure 177).
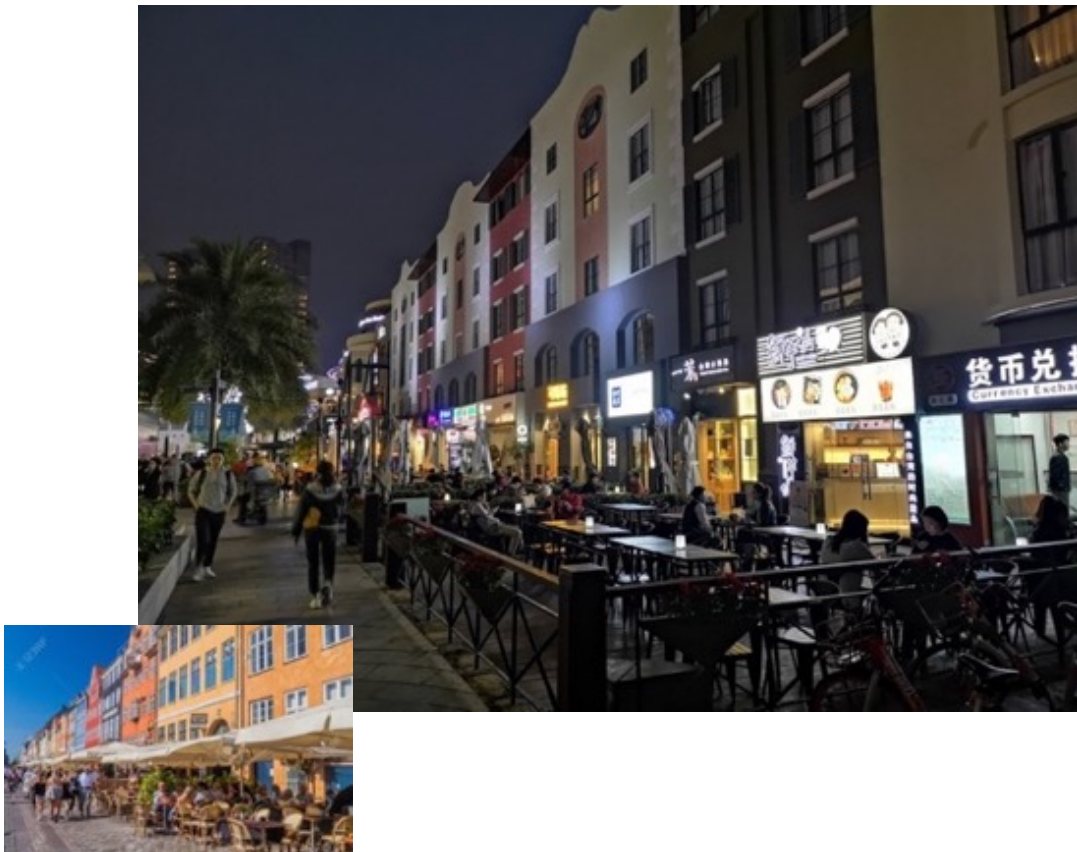
Figure 175. Own photo of Sea World's main street at night; inset photo is of Nyhavn district, Copenhagen, Denmark (Mathess, 2016).

The mixture of architectural signs and styles almost appears aspatial; that is, neither truly-Chinese nor associated to a particular place. The choice of adopting these forms could be traced to the framework of Nanshan District Government policies, which is reflective of national interests. In the 2016 *Nanshan District Government Work Report*, the District Mayor of Nanshan cited booming economic activity, doubled GDP, better-coordinated development, cultural construction, park construction, CMG's 'new Shekou', and better social welfare, among the district's many achievements. The bilingual work report listed five key takeaways (ibid.):

> (1) Adhere to innovation development and among the top three cities in China in terms of comprehensive strength,
>
> (2) Stick to coordinated development, and made overall progress,
>
> (3) Adhere to green development and build ecological and suitable residences,
>
> (4) Adhere to openness and development and international style became increasingly apparent,
>
> (5) Adhere to sharing and development and happiness of people's livelihood increased.

The expanded Point 4 on making 'openness' and the 'international style' 'apparent' is perhaps, the most explicit reason for Sea World Plaza's design (ibid.):

> In the last five years, leveraging on the advantages of "Special district plus bay area plus free trade zone", and international and domestic resources and markets, we strived to turn Nanshan into an important portal of the maritime silk route in the 21st century.

Nanshan enterprises became leading players in the world. We encouraged enterprises to go out, exporting more technologies, management, services and brands. Large enterprises such as China Merchants, China Resources, ZTE, and CIMC expanded abroad...

Free trade zone was robust. We support China Merchants to "rebuild new Shekou" with investment amounting to 60 billion yuan, with the aim to forge a world class peninsula bay. The Sea World Urban Complex was fully completed…159 shipping lines of international liners of Western Shenzhen Port can reach to countries along "the Belt and Road".

Based on the above statements made in the 2016 *Nanshan District Government Work Report*, everything points towards economic growth of the city, coordinating events, making these efforts visible and also improving social welfare of its citizens. In the same report, it also listed the 'Main Work in the Next Five Years' (leading up to 2020). The Nanshan District Government would continue to focus on culture and new innovations to achieve the new dream of becoming a "world-class innovation capital, modern liv[e]able city", and "the bay of international charm" (ibid.). The reports show the importance of cultural venues for its "plan-led urbanism" (Huang and Xie, 2012) as seen in other districts, e.g. developments along the major Shennan Road and Futian CBD. The local government have made urban redevelopment a key financial strategy, whereby marketised land leases and upgrading projects (new museum architecture, cultural facilities, masterplans, etc.) generate economic revenue. The most explicit way to make 'openness' and 'international style' apparent is arguably through the sight of cultural amenities and the superficial appearance of foreign architecture styles.

Therefore, museums play a role in legitimising urbanisation and conveying the benefits of urban redevelopment in their exhibits. The SWCAC as a cultural hub legitimises Shekou's past through the partnership with the V&A Museum and formalised in the exhibits at the Museum of Reform, meanwhile, the design of Sea

World Plaza reflects the same desire to project these multiple narratives through a commercial means. From Deng's Reform and Opening-up, Xi's Chinese Dream, CMG's China's Hawaii to Nanshan District Government's world-class vision, these different narratives form the localised brandscape of Sea World Plaza; all of which demonstrates a heavy top-down narrative associated with the SWCAC, Sea World, Shekou and Shenzhen.

Figure 176. Own photo of Sea World metro Station on the northern end of the main street, with a similar Tower of London structure (in circle); bottom left shows a photo of Tower of London (Sekhon, 2021).

ii.   Duplitecture as message

Figure 177. (Top left) Own photo of Venice with Doge's Palace (taken in 2017) against own photos of Doge's palace arches over McDonald's at Sea World.

Figure 178. Own photo showing a façade of Venetian arches and a Colosseum-like structure functioning as a shell over another building.
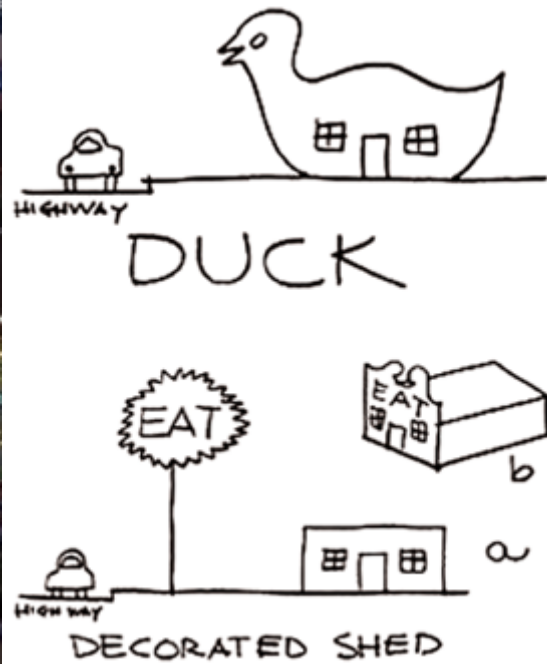
Figure 179. Own photo of a Mexican Restaurant, which is a typical "decorated shed" in that it relies on iconography and signs to define its geographical association and function.

Whilst the brandscape of Sea World Plaza localises foreign architecture-styles to symbolise China's Reform and Opening-up and Xi's Chinese Dream (both part of 'Shekou's Story'), some of the foreign architecture styles are recognisable as cultural icons from another culture. They exist at Sea World Plaza as in the form of copycat architecture. Given how much of this commercial zone involves the visual and the "tourist gaze" (Urry and Larsen, 2011), it attempts to read beyond the lines of its kitsch and even mismatched façades that are chosen to represent 'Shekou's Story'. This subsection analyses the non-local architecture forms designed and choreographed around narrating 'Shekou's story' by viewing them based on the traditional lens of seeing buildings as signs (Venturi, Brown and Izenour, 1977; Eco, 1986). This also includes adding a localised understanding of shānzhài culture (copycat architecture or duplitecture) to explain the disjointed façades on the main street and the various kinds of replication found at Sea World.

The most common mode of analysis is the widely adopted mainstream literature on semiotics, whereby the building constitutes a sign or brand. Early pioneers of the idea are based on the 'duck' and 'decorated shed' analogy famously illustrated in

Learning from Las Vegas (Venturi, Brown and Izenour, 1977), whereby the city is seen as a 'message city'. The 'duck' is a building that explicitly represents its function through its shape and construction, whilst the 'decorated shed' is described as a generic glass-box store with added signs and decor that denote its purpose. For the duck typology, the building is the sign, whilst the decorated shed requires signs.

Sea World Plaza contains both the 'duck' and 'decorated shed'. The Minghua cruise ship can be regarded as the 'duck' that represents its original functions as a floating hotel. The 'decorated sheds'—in the form of faux-townhouses on either side of the main pedestrianised street—contain bakeries, cafes, fast-food outlets and convenience stores, and local and international dining, with a mix of Chinese and English signage. From the Xinhua Road entrance (north side), two recognisable architectural forms mark the entrance of Sea World Plaza's pedestrianised main street: arches from the Doge's Palace and the Tower of London (see Figure 145 for the plan). Whilst both are not total replicas, these forms appropriated from another culture are used as window-dressing over (unrelated) retail stores, e.g. Doge's Palace arches over a McDonald's restaurant. This distinction between the shell and the functional space is most visible in the two photographs that were taken on the street level. The photographs show a clear difference between the disjointed façade layer and an offset, but otherwise-generic, building inside (Figures 177 and 178).

This element of deception, of borrowing non-local styles and pastiche to create a visual spectacle, bears similarities to that of Las Vegas and Disneyland. From historic districts to theme parks, nostalgia has been a pervasive theme in triggering memories. Similarly, Disneyland's architecture on its Main Street also disguises their supermarkets or retail stores in full-sized "toy houses", "where you buy obsessively, believing that you are still playing" (Eco, 1986, p.43). Because of this experience, Disneyland is more hyper-realistic than the Museum of Reform, whose display clearly demarcates what is authentic (in a glass-casing) or replica (the sensory diorama). While there is realism in reconstruction, Disney's admission

ticket and boundaries remind visitors that fantasy is reproduced, but at Sea World, without any visible boundaries, the fantasyland merges with reality to become a unique experiential component that allows visitors to participate in the branded environment.

However, unlike Disney, part of this imagined community at Sea World Plaza is also somewhat real. The faux-West style hints at Shekou serving as a base for workers contracted by multinational oil conglomerates in the 1980s. Thus, Western-styled homes, food, drink, entertainment and schools were established to cater to this community. At present, there are at least seven international schools catering to Japanese-, Korean- and English-style curricula in Shekou. Shekou also made its mark as China's first management and service centre for ex-pats. According to the Management and Service Center (Shekou Daily, 2017), there are 43,919 currently registered ex-pats living in Shenzhen, and Shekou has the largest community, with 6,275 registered with the Shekou Police Station and Shenzhenwan Police Station. It is with some irony that these styles may be criticised as kitsch and often distasteful (Shephard, 2012; Zeveloff and Johnson, 2012; Parry, 2012; Wainwright, 2013); however, considering the debates surrounding commodity housing (Pow and Kong, 2007; Breitung, 2012), and architecture mimicry (Bosker, 2013), this approach seems to be thriving in China's market-driven environment. The presence of foreign copycat architecture suggests conflicting images in representing internationalism, yet it is also fitting in the context of Shenzhen as a manufacturing hub and factory-of-the-world.

Whilst the above is seen through a standard semiotic lens, to truly understand the value of imitating or recreating foreign forms, two unique phenomena can provide alternative insights: shānzhài [山寨] culture in Shenzhen, and the controversial "duplitecture" (Bosker, 2013), regarded as copycat architecture. This way, their added insight into the Chinese context may overcome the limitations of using the traditional, West-centric postmodernist understanding of signs and architecture. With regard to the former, no other city is better associated with shānzhài culture than Shenzhen. With its industrial and manufacturing landscape, shānzhài largely

refers "to counterfeit goods and cheap unlicensed imitations of established brands" (Mengoni, 2016b). Their origins can be traced to low-cost electronics products and imitation mobile phones (e.g. Apple, Nokia, Samsung, etc.). Often used in a derogatory way, shānzhài became a unique Chinese phenomenon that has triggered a wider debate on the legitimacy of 'the copy' (Eco, 1986) and China's Intellectual Property and Copyright enforcement (Hennessey, 2011; Chen J., 2012; Platt, 2012). The term is widely used even on imitations of look-a-like celebrities that managed to command global netizen's attention (Chubb, 2015; Yang F., 2016). Shānzhài culture takes advantage of the online network where headline-grabbing, attention-seeking and extreme surprises are key drivers of information consumption. This copycat phenomenon became so widespread that the 'made in China' tagline became associated with the production of fakes.
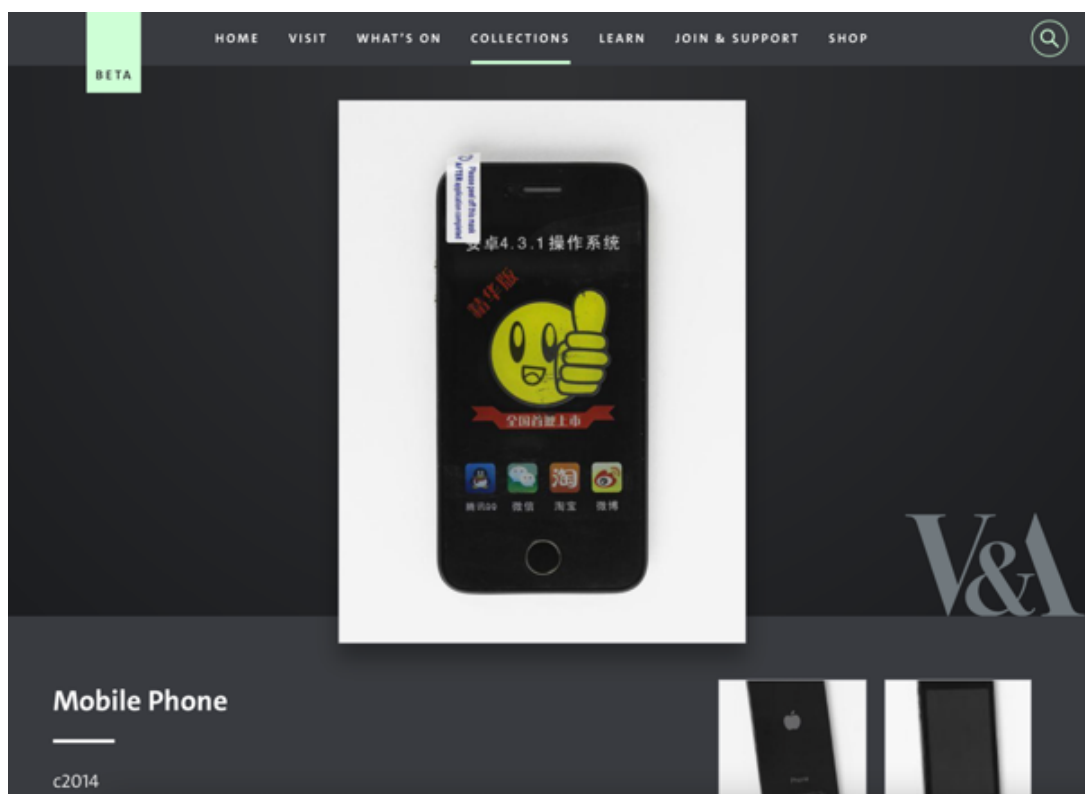
Figure 180. A screenshot of the Mobile Phone acquired by the V&A and made available on the V&A Collections online (V&A Collections, 2014).

In the V&A Blog series, *Unidentified Acts of Design* (UAOD) (Mengoni, 2016b), *Part 7: The Pirates and The Makers* briefly chronicles shānzhài's origins and the speed at

which companies operate due to the easy availability of key components. Thus, "the ability to fast prototype and freely assemble components in different formats have also created the conditions for innovative solutions and adaptations that are responding to specific market requirements, usually not covered by leading brands" e.g. mobiles with multiple sim cards and speakers (ibid.). A counterfeit iPhone 5s that "stands in relation to the culture of fakes" synonymous to Shenzhen even made it into the V&A's collection, as archived under the V&A's Design, Architecture and Digital Department (V&A Collections, 2014). Collected on the occasion of the *V&A in Shenzhen: Rapid Response Collecting* at the 5th Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism and Architecture in Shenzhen, the part of the gallery label reads: "…Their fake iPhone imitates the looks of Apple's iconic smartphone, but arguably improves on the original design by integrating a double SIM card slot…" (ibid.) (Figure 180). The innovative spirit would then become synonymous with Shenzhen's manufacturing success.

Figure 181. A side-by-side image of Hallstatt, Austria, and the replica Hallstatt in Guangdong (Shephard, 2012).

The second phenomenon is similar but is more relevant to the copycat phenomenon known as "architectural mimicry", "simulacrascapes" and "duplitecture" (Bosker, 2013). Ever since major cases like the Hallstatt replica (Spiegel International, 2011; Shephard, 2012 and 2016) and Zaha Hadid's Wangjing SOHO replica went viral in 2011 and 2012, respectively, the definition and debates surrounding this shānzhài spirit in the urban landscape peaked during this period from the movement's inception in 2008 (Chubb, 2015). The terms were coined by

American journalist and writer Bianca Bosker in *Original Copies: Architectural mimicry in Contemporary China* (2013). From a smaller replica of the Eiffel Tower in Hangzhou to a 1:1 scale replica of an entire UNESCO heritage site of Hallstatt in Guangdong, early 21st-century China has seen a nation-wide proliferation of copycat architecture that incited a mixed range of criticism, amusement and concern from journalists (Wainwright, 2013; Shephard, 2016; Bosker, 2013 and 2016; Mairs, 2016), academics (Piazzoni and Banerjee, 2018) and architects like Zaha Hadid (Chen J., 2012) and Rem Koolhaas (Phaidon, 2013). These alien spaces can be found across China, varying in enormity and scale.

Bosker (2013, p.4) made it clear in her first chapter that she was only looking at themed communities or 'simulacrascapes' in China, which were "a part of a mammoth trend of 'duplitecture'". What distinguishes these architecture types in China from the debates surrounding themed communities (McKenzie, 1994; den Hartog, 2010; Shen and Wu, 2012) and theme parks (Zukin, 1993; Debord, 1994; Davis S., 1996) is the extent to which the urban landscape is meticulously constructed for an all-encompassing sensory and visual experience—hence the terms 'simulacra-spaces' or 'simulacrascapes' (Bosker, 2013). Her book paid great attention to the philosophical, theoretical and sociological drivers of these Chinese-themed communities, including the different philosophical underpinnings of 'the copy'. Her site observations and arguments are largely supported by key texts, as well as interviews with residents, architects, and real estate developers of these spaces. In the latter half of the 2010s, there were debates on whether this copycat trend and preference for Western styles were diminishing as China's economic dominance grew. A ban on "weird architecture" was also made in the late 2010s (Bosker, 2016), but the trend of luxury Western brands and certainly Western-styled housing would fluctuate and adapt according to market shifts.

Tech giant Huawei recently built its own simulacrascape in the style of a European-themed model village in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, to house research and development offices (Figure 182). According to journalists from *Business Insider* (Thole and Moynihan, 2019), a portion of the 30,000 employees at the Shenzhen

campus will move to this new campus. Modelled after castles and palaces around Europe, the mini town is themed according to place: Verona, Paris, Bruges, and more, following replicas of the Palace of Versailles in the 'Paris' town and even a replica of Harry Potter's Hogwarts Great Hall (Oon, no date). Despite the grandeur and fairy-tale setting, the offices themselves are typically modern. Similar to Sea World's main street, the faux-West style is but a façade to clad modern offices or brand the mini township into a surreal fantasyland that exudes a selective interpretation of 'international-style'.

Figure 182. Huawei's campus in Dongguan is themed after European cities and offices are designed in as replicas of iconic architectural palaces and landmarks in Europe (Oon, no date).

For Sea World Plaza, the US architecture practice CallisonRTKL—a non-state and non-local actor—was given the task to narrate 'Shekou's Story' within the expectations of Xi's Chinese Dream. Although it does not have the renown of starchitects, CallisonRTKL has been involved in many projects in China for two decades. Its portfolio of work includes design for hotel chains (W, Grand Hyatt, Intercontinental), museums (China Film Museum, Shanghai Science and Technology

Museum, offices (Lenovo), and shopping malls (MixC, Capitaland, Vanke) through to large-scale urban planning. Three of their offices are in China: Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, thus making them familiar with the Chinese market and its trends. In many ways, hiring a starchitect and international company circumvents these debates and legitimise these spaces, as the findings of Bosker's simulacrascape suggest. Their presence legitimises state narrative through the action of cultural consumption. Again, like the SWCAC, non-state actors are used to transform China's urban space. Transnational actors, too, are active participants in creating these hybrid forms, whether as duplitecture or simulacrascape, e.g. Thames Town in Shanghai by WS Atkins.

Another upcoming, high-profile new town like San Weng in Fuzhou, which will resemble the 16th-century English town of Stratford-upon-Avon, is built with the joint corporation of the Fuzhou Municipal Government, Fuzhou Culture and Tourism Investment Company Ltd, the DCMS, the British Council and Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, as well as the UK's Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The town will include "'authentic' replicas of Shakespeare's birthplace as well as New Place, his marital home that was demolished in 1759" (Chen L., 2018). It is deemed 'authentic' in that the replica buildings will be overseen by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. This active involvement of state actors and cultural institutions of this scale marks a shift in attitude as China's market-driven environment gives these branded landscape new symbolic and experiential value based on both the local and global markets.

As argued by Bosker, author of *Original Copies* (2013), the value and associations of these foreign replicas will obtain different meanings as they are appropriated for the local context. Although the commercial zone at Sea World does not fully replicate entire townships like 'simulacrascapes'—often faux-European towns that are replicated to the highest detail—the appearance of global brands and foreign architectural features indicate the symbolic and economic expectations placed on Sea World. Although the case of Sea World does not suggest explicit acts of shānzhài or grand-scale architecture mimicry, these copycat phenomena share

many similarities with the developments of commercial spaces in terms of the conditions in which they operate: interconnected networks, a globalising market, proliferation of media, rising middle-classes, and so forth. They also provide insight into the appropriation of foreign cultures and architectural forms in new urban spaces and commercial zones in ways that the Western philosophical and moral implication of 'authenticity' could not.

In sum, the presence of faux-Western architecture provides an experiential value, sign and lifestyle association for certain social groups or the "creative class" (Florida, 2012) in China, even if it is merely a shell and seems disjointed from reality. At a glance, the superficial façades seem like a passing fad, but in a similar view to Bosker (2013), these copies will eventually adapt and create new forms and even find greater authority over the engineering of urban space and memories. In establishing the shānzhài culture and the value of architecture mimicry, it aimed to give some justification and deeper understanding of CMG's and Nanshan's District Government's idea for 'Shekou's Story' through images of 'openness', 'international-style' and the presence of global brands as signs of achievement, as openly stated in the Nanshan Government Work Report (2016). Moreover, this is to continue, as the Mayor of the Nanshan District has expressed a conviction to use hybrid culture and commercial programmes to reinvent and revitalise spaces in the more recent 2019 Government Report.

Figure 183. (Left) own photo of the outdoor poster promoting the Latina Brazilian BBQ bar and Paulaner Biergarten and (right) the modern indoor plaza containing various global fast-food chains: KFC, McDonalds, etc.

This final subsection views Sea World Plaza as a kind of open-air museum that utilises commercialism and visual spectacles, starting with global brands and cultural events that support traditional narratives of 'Shekou's Story' and more recent shifts towards the fulfilment of 'China's Story' through the success of Shekou's development. In the same way that architecture theorist Guatremere de Quincy's account of Rome deemed the city as "the true museum" composed of statues, temples, obelisks, baths, porticoes, and so forth (Boyer, 1996, p.129), perhaps Sea World could also be seen through this view. Whilst the urban memories at Rome seem disconnected from the present, memories at Sea World Plaza seem constructed alongside the continuum of time—as functioning culture and commercial spaces, aligning with an official history of Shekou projected by the Museum of Reform.

The shifting authority of urban space from the public to the private sector can be felt in the typical projects of public parks, commercial streets and flagship stores of multinational corporations. The visual presence of global corporations (e.g. The Sony Center in Potsdamer Platz, Berlin) and commerce would be a part of what Zukin (1993) calls the re-aestheticisation of public space that became dominant in

America during the 90s. The shops, entertainment complexes and art museums became important interventions that helped shape "an ideal city based on consumption" (ibid.). However, unlike the clear division between private and public spaces in America, China's unique political landscape and dominance of state-owned enterprises [SOEs] in wider urban and city development plans blur the public space with urban traits supposedly linked to the private sector.

Disneyfied streets, growing coffee bars and shops are traits that continue to be employed by SOEs to shape public space in China. Sitting in between the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza, the underpass below the busy Wanghai Road is home to a children's arcade with flashing neon signage, the sight of children on bumper cars, and claw cranes stuffed with toys (in the earlier Figure 146). The children's arcade at this mid-point did seem out-of-place, but it prompted a dividing line between the cultural and commercial zone; the contrast between the well-manicured and orderly park and a sense of carnival-like environment of Sea World Plaza. Maki and Associates, upon designing SWCAC and the adjacent park, considered circulation and connectivity to Shenzhen Bay and Sea World as important spatial features. To get out of the underpass, the flight of stairs on either side leads up to the street level; both are flanked by the sight of global franchise stores (McDonalds and KFC). Directories of Sea World Plaza and Happy Hour posters appear on either side.

Figure 184. The bathing beaches of the 90s with Nanhai Hotel and its sail-like façade is in the distance (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018).

These distinctions support a deliberate choice and consideration by Sea World to adopt a theme park atmosphere or as Yuan Geng even claimed, "China's Hawaii".

> 蛇口是个好地方，那里有绵绵细沙的海滩，海滩上有风吹飒飒作响的树林，你们有谁去过夏威夷吗？蛇口，美得就像夏威夷一样！

(Xu and Liu, 2018, p.294)

The above is a quote documented during a high-level meeting at the former China Merchants buildings on 25 June 1979. It loosely translates as: "Shekou is a good place. Where else would there be beaches of fine sand, whose gentle breeze causes the leaves of the woods to rustle. Anyone here been to Hawaii? Shekou is as beautiful as Hawaii!" He Jiang, one of the contributing authors in *Shekou: Where the Dream Started* (2018, p. 295), reaffirmed with "海上世界就是东方的夏威夷…" (translated as: Sea World is the Hawaii of the East). Whether this has been

achieved, or how much of this comparison is relevant, will not be discussed here. Rather, the purpose and aims of Sea World begin to support observations that the place brand is intended to reflect a resort city or theme park as a deliberate choice. Yuan Geng did not stop at this executive meeting but also continued to call Shekou "China's Hawaii" at a reception in Hong Kong as well, according to Liu Youyang, a Shenzhen Commercial Daily reporter (Xu and Liu, 2018).

There was not much elaboration on why Hawaii was used as a reference, but it seems to be a superficial reference to the beaches or leisure zone that Sea World could become; new spaces of consumption. This could also refer to the long-gone bathing beach, but nothing left of the beach remains at Shekou as it is replaced by a public and semi-private waterfront park that stretches along the coast. The palm trees (Figure 185) planted along the main street and around the artificial lake signify "one of the most connotative, signifying paradise, liminality, 'Otherness', extravagant consumption and bodily pleasure" (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.108). But as a classic tourist icon, its presence has been so generalised that it remains aspatial rather than spatially affiliated with Hawaii.

Figure 185. Palm trees lined up along the artificial lake (CallisonRTKL, 2021a).

Figure 186. Own photo showing a row of palm trees lined up along the main street and around Sea World. On the right is the Volkswagen pop-up.

Instead of taking Yuan Geng literally, China's Hawaii could be best seen as a metaphor for an aspiring resort or leisure city. In the 1980s, other cultural facilities and commercial buildings were built to develop the industrial area. The Nanhai Hotel (now renamed the Shekou Hilton Nanhai Hotel) was the first five-star hotel in Shenzhen, constructed with CMG as one of its investors. Like the Minghua cruise ship, in its capacity as a floating hotel and bar, this hotel was constructed "to provide service to foreign business people exploring oil in the South China Sea" (Xu, Liu and Di, 2018, p.103). The Nanhai hotel and its distinctive sail-like design can still be seen along the bay, just walking distance from the SWCAC. In 2013, it was apparently set to be discontinued, but in 2017, Hilton took over its management and operations. It was "to be managed in the American way rather than the Hong Kong style" (ibid.).

The presence of foreign corporations, brands and architecture-styles contribute to the desire to use the 'international-style' to connote the spirit of the Reform; both the past (Deng's Reform) and present (Xi's Chinese Dream). In their blog, CallisonRTKL deliberately paired up shopping with entertainment centred around

the unique pieces of local history to bring about this emotional connection to visitors (Wiggins, 2017). Not only that, the pressure for the place to perform as a marketable commodity continues at present in the significant and symbolic place of Shekou. The water feature choreographed to match the music entertains Sea World's visitors every night, alongside computer-programmed light and pyrokinetic showcase. Owing to the fact that the buildings are already centred around the Minghua, the water features are most visibly seen at every possible angle. The single-storey terraced restaurants by the lake would not obstruct the view if visitors were watching from the entertainment and dining centre behind. Like the motives behind developing signature architecture fit for the experience economy, place marketing relies on establishing eye-catching and entertaining tourist attractions.

If the SWCAC is designed to 'withstand time' and 'suspend time' through its orderly space and linear narratives, then the commercial zone of Sea World Plaza is the primal example of 'chaos' that Foucault sees as characteristics of fairgrounds and early museums in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) and *The Order of Things* (2001)— lacking classification and order to display. Comparing the museum to a fairground (Sorkin, 2001) also refers to the many attractions that could cater to the diverse tastes of consumers living in a brand-saturated market. Everything is a potential attraction in its own right, and the narratives would become limitless. At Sea World Plaza, nationally-themed bars, restaurants, and international franchises are placed around haphazardly, with neon signage in Chinese and English, and in wildly different architectural styles with no grouping of themes or even a singular theme for consistency. Despite the chaos, the random placements of recognisable architectural features and global brands serves to "stimulate the visual sense through spectacular but also predictable and well-known signs" (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.106). Whether they are imported signs of iconic tourist places from a bygone era or just the sight of another Starbucks, this hybrid mix stimulates the sense of travel, although the consumer knows it is merely simulated. In turn, tourists themselves find pleasure in "staged authenticity" and accompanying "pseudo-events" (Urry, 1990); both are superficially constructed.

A highly saturated market means consumers not only seek brand identity or values, but are given added value through the creation of memorable experiences. At Sea World Plaza alone, among the multiple international restaurants, familiar chains like Subway, Pizza Hut, Starbucks and KFC also dominate the scene. Standard literature on spaces of consumption sees the ubiquity of global brands as a reflection of powerful corporations directly involved in the creation of urban spaces for public cultures (Zukin, 1995, p.3). As brand producers with enormous marketing, sponsorship and public relations, these franchises have been highly active in blurring the local-global, culture-commerce through the production of wénchuàng [文创] products (literally translated as cultural creations). Like some museum collaborations, they have been producers of the unconventional: they have produced bizarre or limited-time items that emerge from partnerships, e.g. KFC's collaboration with Liushen—a bug repellent-maker—to create an insect repellent coffee and coffee-flavoured repellent (Jiang A., 2020; Jiang I., 2020).

Figure 187. Own photo of Tequila Coyote's shop front that sells Mexican food. It is among many other international restaurants available at Sea World in which the visitor is spoilt for choice.

Whilst these collaborations appear as differentiators, they also appear to follow a repetitive formula, one that makes similar sites of consumption look homogenous or 'the same'. It has become a common sight to see the presence of global franchises at major tourist sites, 'old street' models or CBDs from any tier-level city, e.g. KFC at Tiananmen Square or multiple Starbucks branches at the Yinzhou CBD district at Ningbo. At Sea World Plaza, a number of familiar brands can be seen: Hilton at the Nanhai Hotel, fast-food chains like KFC, Pizza Hut, Subway, and Starbucks, to name a few. Like in the case of the Starbucks effect, consumers are not only purchasing coffee but also the brand experience of Starbucks, a sense of community and the perception of a certain lifestyle attached to it. Naomi Klein, in *No Logo* (2001) sees the involvement of global brands like Starbucks as a company that managed to foster powerful identities through the romance of the coffee experience rather than the quality of the drinks themselves. They also have fearsome power "to exert upon local markets, consumer tastes and consumption practices" (Thompson and Arsel, 2004, p.632); the fear of cultural homogeneity. Yet, the homogenising standard of the global brands suggests 'McDonaldization' at work (regardless of domestic or international tourists), whereby efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control allow the brand to remain the same regardless of place and city (Ritzer, 2001). Namely a global phenomenon driven by Western corporations, global homogenisation suggests a ripple effect on all aspects of social life, including consumer experience. Yet these brands continue to support the dividing line between 'representation' and 'reality' as the presence of global brands at Sea World Plaza symbolises more than just exuding an international image but also a space that is constructed around entertainment only for those who can afford it. In *Cultures of Cities* (1995, p.28), Zukin termed this as "pacification by cappuccino". Despite the fear, Craig Thompson and Zeynep Arsel (2004) argue that intersections of global brands and local cultures do produce cultural heterogeneity. In China, the cultural collaborations among local partners with global brands represent one such way.

Figure 188. S-Michelle restaurant clearly communicates the type of food it will serve through the iconic Eiffel Tower logo and photograph at the shop front (Dian Ping, 2015).

Whilst early developments of Sea World took into consideration hotels, restaurants and entertainment for the foreign workers, current trends seem to cater towards domestic tourists, ex-pats and Shenzhen's white-collar workers as the target group instead of international tourists. The sight of nationally-themed bars and restaurants at Sea World demonstrates a kind of "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1997, cited in Urry and Larsen, 2011), which attempts to present itself as authentic through the representation of the nation and through its name. In experiencing and observing a range of cuisines available at Sea World Plaza alone, visitors can travel anywhere and taste so-called authentic food whose shop names and décor explicitly state nationality: Indian Spice, Tequila Coyote's, Paulaner Biergarten, Doors Turkish Restaurant, Latina Brazilian BBQ, and more. The biergarten located along the lake, for example, imitates the open-style patio of panelled wood floor, pergola with vines, and outdoor pub furniture. There are also restaurants that simply take after iconic city markers in the shop logo, like S-Michelle Restaurant [圣米歇尔餐厅]—a restaurant that uses the outline of the Paris Eiffel tower as its logo, and a street-level photograph at the base of the Eiffel Tower plastered on its shop window. This decorated shed signifies that French food is to be expected. Under the tourist gaze, sites of consumption do favour trends of using non-local façades so as to bring visitors to many places under one roof. In the same spirit as

Disneyland, world fair and shopping malls, these architectural forms and brand logos are spectacles that shape urban space, in which authenticity is fabricated.

When seen in reverse, Joy Hendry (cited in Larsen and Urry, 2011, p.32) describes how various theme parks are established within various Asian countries that showcase exotic Western counterparts. Although not limited to China, the nearby attraction Window of the World is one of many in China that demonstrates this reverse of otherness. Hendry described this as *The Orient Strikes Back* (2000), the pushing of key displays of iconic Western culture (namely from affluent North Europe and the US) for visitors in one outdoor theme park, scaled down for viewing and photographing without leaving their home country (Winter, Teo and Chang, 2008). It becomes a kind of 'reverse Orientalism' (Hendry, 2000). For the tourist gaze, the sight of the familiar gives a sense of feeling at-home-away-from-home, but they are all in a controlled environment in contrast to the more organic urbanism in the form of urban villages (on the nearby Haichang Road or Old Shekou Road). 'Urban Villages' can be described as "pockets of informal urbanization that developed out of former rural villages, and eventually became surrounded by the city", arguably an urban phenomenon born in Shenzhen (Mengoni, 2016c).

The presence of global franchises, international dining and pop-up events becomes the postmodernist vision of hybrid edutainment (education + entertainment) spaces. Sea World Plaza's urban spaces aim to create an all-immersive experiential value through the choreographed events, open-air markets and pop-up exhibitions that help to expand the museum beyond its traditional boundaries. The SWCAC's Museum of Reform also aimed to expand the formalised history of Shekou beyond the boundaries of the museum space. According to a 2018 press release published by the Design Society, the newly refurbished Museum of Reform hoped to advocate the city itself as an open-air museum, to be designed and experienced through their public education programme "city is a museum" [城•是博物馆]. Established by the Museum of Reform, it aimed to "interact with cities, communities, and residents through a series of extended activities with the theme of urban development, allowing the public to read the stories behind the development of Shekou"

(translated from *Introduction to the Shekou Museum of Reform*, 2018). This has allegedly manifested in contests, lectures, open-air cinema screenings and school activities. Sites of consumption, in turn, are shaped and blurred by intertwining public-private, education-entertainment, and cultural-commercial spaces.

Other cultural events linked to the creative city of Shenzhen also use public spaces to stage and provoke action. During a site visit in December 2019, first-hand experience and photographic evidence showed how this site of consumption turned into an open-air museum. The pedestrianised main street at Sea World Plaza was converted to host these pop-up events in the same way that Senado Square adapts itself to cater to events, which O'Donnell (2012) claims Sea World Plaza is modelled after. Sea World's secondary streets were converted into a lively Christmas Market, whilst the main street had a Volkswagen pop-up exhibition lined up on the narrow end of the funnel-shaped square. As part of the Guangdong Art Project (running from December 2019 to January 2020), the pop-up was strategically positioned on the main pedestrian street, closest to the Sea World Metro Line 2 (A) entrance/exit. If visitors are coming from the Line 2 entrance/exit or on foot from the busy Xinghua Road, these imposing and identical grey boxes are immediately visible. Each box is guarded and contains one or two Volkswagen car models displayed in different themed installations.
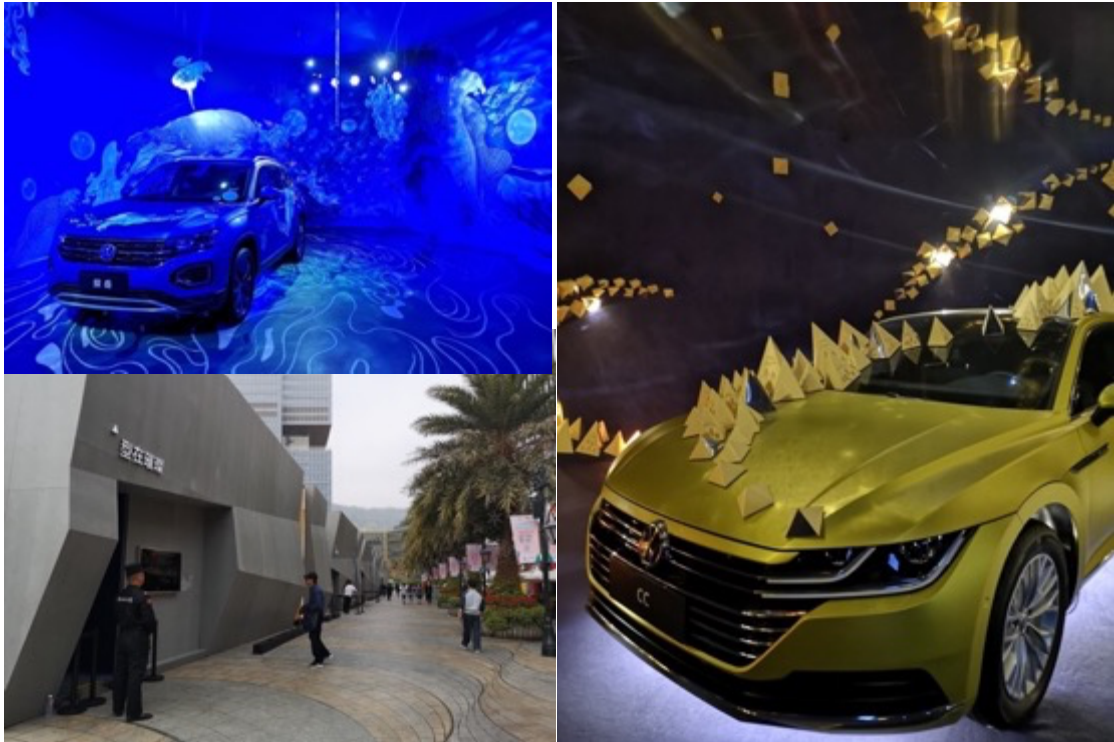
Figure 189. All photos were taken during December 2019 and there was a Volkswagen pop-up showcase.

The Volkswagen Group is one of the many TNCs that is engaged in arts and cultural programmes. It not only focuses on the development of the auto-industry market in China but also becomes a transnational actor in the promotion of arts and cultural events, as part of its corporate social responsibility [CSR], "sustainable development" in "promoting bilateral exchanges between China and Germany" (Volkswagen Group China, 2018). Historically, the Volkswagen Group made history as one of the first TNCs to enter into a pact with the Chinese government to develop the auto-industry, headed by Volkswagen Group China. Since 1978, its automobiles and commercial vehicles have been assembled locally in China, but it has grown to diversify its production, sales, services and its role as a transnational German ambassador. Not bound by a physical space or borders, TNCs like Volkswagen also contribute to the growth of China's economy on micro and macro levels. Other areas of involvement in the arts industry include the following: the Artistic Engagement Programme-China (AEP-China), co-founded with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in 2017 to gather Chinese youths through its music programs and activities; the Theatertreffen (a top-level German Theatre festival) in 2016; and

Deutschland 8 art exhibition in 2018. All events brought in renowned musicians and institutions.

Compared to this pop-up at Sea World Plaza, TNCs like Volkswagen share the power to change local cultures and transform public space (Zukin, 1995; Klein, 2001). In addition to the Shenzhen context, direct involvement in the creative and cultural industries—in 'promoting design'—is required of a UCCN designated 'City of Design'. Even though the cultural offerings are expected in the museum space, this extension of culture in public space continues to introduce new and hybrid experiences beyond the museum. In the 2016 *Nanshan District Government Work Report*, *Point 3: Drive cultural industry, shape cultural highland, and build brand for Shenzhen pioneering zone of cultural innovative development*, acknowledges this relationship between CMG with place- and city-brand. Point 3 has subpoints of 12 – 15 that reveal the plans to achieve these goals:

> 12. Solidify leading position in cultural industry…We will support OCT and China Merchants Shekou Holdings to optimize industrial distribution and upgrade cultural industry in scale, profession and intensification.

> 13. Foster urban culture. We will support China Merchants Group to build China's first museum of reform and open-up and carry forward the spirit of aggressive, fearless and taking initiative.

> 14. Build high-standard cultural and sports facilities. We will enhance planning for cultural development space and design a series of high quality cultural and sport facilities…

> 15. Hold high-quality cultural events. We will support venues…to hold high-end cultural events and improve the social benefits of these venues. We will guarantee the smooth holding of branded events like Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture, Nanshan

Pop Music Festival, Science Film Week, Community Art Festival, and Community Neighbour Festival. We will implement projects for attracting celebrities and encourage creation of high-quality cultural and art works.

Although unable to measure Sea World's success in general, what can be determined is the inherent nature of shopping and leisure that has long been embedded into Shekou's landscape. Yuan Geng seemed to have intended for Shekou to become a shopping paradise for business and tourism. If the Nanhai Hotel was the first five-star hotel in Shenzhen, then the Shekou Shopping Centre (Xu and Liu, 2018, p.100) makes history as the country's first foreign currency shopping mall opened by Shekou Investment Shopping Dream (where Seaview Building stands). As a historically important site of consumption, it was the first to import and export commodities, as is befitting of the earliest free trade zone. Foreign exchange was accepted. This was especially strategic as these commercial venues would cater to incoming visitors and influx from the nearby ferry terminal. The mall would later thrive with an initial focus on electrical products, which allegedly stood out in contrast to the "monotonous varieties of shops in other cities in the mainland" (ibid.). It was demolished in 1995 after 13 years in operation as a result of rapid urbanisation, although much of this consumer spirit continues to the present day.

Current developments also seem to continue Yuan Geng's vision of "improving people's wellbeing" (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2016) through cultural amenities, leisure and shopping spaces. The strong alliance between the city and the district government ensures that state interests and narratives are met, even in this guise of consumerism and spectacles built upon the theme of travel and nostalgia. The reconstruction of urban memory and the added experiential value of place through the marriage of culture and commerce uses symbolic architecture and branded chain stores to circulate and house their ideas, brand image and vision of the ideal 'global city'.

5.4 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter proposes a localised form of brandscape that works for the Chinese context, as foreign forms and images are given new meaning during the process of hybridisation between the local and global, and urban developments that followed in response to this factor. From 1979 to the present, the architectural and urban space of Sea World seems like a convergence of two worlds—an East-meets-West trope. Instead of viewing it as an instance of local-meets-global, architecture historians like Jianfei Zhu (2009; p.208) see a "possibility that China is moving in a new direction beyond classical categories (of communism and capitalism)." To what degree Sea World can be considered as 'China's Hawaii' is debatable, but as a new Chinese Dream and new policies are made, brandscapes like Sea World will always reflect these shifts in China.

The brandscape at Sea World then appears to be a new medium for local actors to construct new meaning, provide an engineered experience and innovate new forms that cater to the local-global networks. Not only is this argued in key texts on the developments of architecture in China but also in recent studies on shānzhài culture (Hennessey, 2011; Keane and Zhao, 2012; Chubb, 2015; Keane, 2016) and simulacrapes (Bosker, 2013). Based on the development of Sea World Plaza since the 80s, the use of foreign architecture styles, international architects, global brands and icons are not merely design trends, but deliberate choices made to historicise Shekou.

Whilst it appears to be hybrid cultural-commercial spaces constructed with one authoritative voice, the local-global interactions in both the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza reflect a past centred around Shekou's history of cross-cultural exchange and adoption of new ideas since the Reform and Opening-up. As a result, 'Shekou's Story' produced by CMG and the various actors create new urban memories.

PART 3

INTRODUCTION TO PART 3

As the final part of this study, Part 3 is designed to highlight new insights and expand upon new findings from Parts 1 and 2 that otherwise could not be explored due to the way the chapters are structured. Thus far, Part 1 (containing Chapters 1 and 2) has established the key aims, research gaps and unique framework to connect the phenomenon of hybridising museums with broader economic and political changes in mainland China. Through an extensive literature review comprising various concepts from interdisciplinary backgrounds, Chapter 2 has established alternative ways of seeing the hybrid museum: through a localised form of the 'brandscape' and in three levels of hybridisation. This is later followed by Part 2's examination of the Sea World Cultural and Arts Center (SWCAC), which is structured according to Chapter 2's *Three Levels of Hybridisations*. The SWCAC has been examined as three mutually exclusive themes in *Chapter 3: The Transnational Actors*, *Chapter 4: The Cultural-commercial Hybrid*, and *Chapter 5: Place Branding Sea World and 'Shekou's Story'*, respectively. However, the SWCAC has not been examined as a product of these overlapping hybridisations.

To complete this study on hybrid museums in China, Part 3 will have two aims: (i) to interrogate and expand on current findings based on these overlapping hybridisations, and (ii) to conclude with the main findings of the thesis. Part 3 will be divided into *Chapter 6: Discussion* and *Chapter 7: Conclusion*, which address these two aims, respectively.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1   Introduction

Chapter 6 is divided into two main sections: *6.2 Expanding the localised brandscape* and *6.3 Hybridisation providing new insights.* The chapter's structure corresponds with the theoretical framework and research questions, namely (i) to review this study's combination of Klingmann's 'brandscape' (2007) and contextual understandings of museum development in China (Lu, 2014) in the formation of a 'localised brandscape', and (ii) to reinforce key findings and concerns when SWCAC is viewed as a product of overlapping hybridisations.

Section 6.2 focuses on expanding and challenging the idea of a localised brandscape, based on the new findings at Sea World that reinforce a careful construction of 'urban memories' and spatial experiences that project 'Shekou's Story'. The localising elements also provide new insights in regard to the mnemonic functions of architecture that are reshaping and historicising new spaces in China. Meanwhile, section 6.3 will discuss the concept of the 'hybrid museum' in the light of the 'post-museum' (a part of new museum theory) as a product made from key agendas and decision-making processes that feed the politics of representation and cater to diverse needs.

The overall findings demonstrate how these transnational activities visibly impacted the way museums in China are designed for and redefined by powerful localising factors, as well as "multiple voices" (Design Society, 2017a). Because of shared localising factors, some of these discussions in Chapter 6 can be applied to similar developments in China: cultural venues, grand theatres, shopping malls, copytowns, megaprojects and more. Whilst it is clear that foreign actors and institutions do instil some of their ideas onto these projects, the localised power ensures that state interests are met.

6.2   Expanding the localised brandscape

In Chapter 2's theoretical framework, the localised concept of the brandscape—the combination of Klingmann's 'brandscape' (2007) and the "third phase of museum development" (Lu, 2014) in China—is used as the overarching theme to assess recent hybrid museums like the SWCAC. Based on Part 2's findings, this section expands and challenges current observations of the localised brandscape, and questions how this has been achieved in the study of the SWCAC in relation to Shekou and Shenzhen.

As suggested by the title of the first subsection, understanding the localised brandscape includes understanding the *(i) Tensions between the local and global*. This subsection establishes the importance of the localised form of brandscape in China that is capable of projecting certain lifestyles and cultural values, as seen in the nearby waterfront park and the high-end gated communities at Sea World. Although state-led development is dominant, the conflicting images used in these residential areas continue to adopt Western-styled housing and lifestyles, as though continuing the eclectic architectural styles found at Sea World Plaza. As part of a larger system of cultural production, the museum becomes a tool for formalising these historical narratives and reconstructing new urban memories of Shekou as an important site. Together with the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza, the nearby residential zones cater to 'Shekou's Story' and present a lived reality of an idealised lifestyle for the elite few. At the same time, the mnemonic potential of buildings also suggests how these curated images developed at Shekou cause tensions between remembering and forgetting the place's history.

The second subsection, (*ii) Expanding the third phase of museum development*, revisits Tracey L-D Lu's (2014) museum development in China and expands upon the latest trends and ideologies being projected by museums managed by SOEs and state-owned developers.

i.   Tensions between the local and global

Whilst the 'post-museum' in the West is concerned with a diverse representation of local communities, along with marginalised and 'Other' voices in museum spaces, China's museum trends seem to favour the commercialisation of museums, brand collaborations, and developing 'soft power'. When the museum is tied to a masterplan or city-brand—e.g. the *Centre Pompidou x West Bund Museum Project*, Eden Qingdao, and San Weng in Fuzhou—these high-profile projects also share a similar formula of employing international cultural institutions, working with local municipal government and state corporations, and using the museum as part of a bigger, urban plan—all of which supports Lu's (2014) and Varutti's (2014) claims that museum development in China is state-led. The images established a "fundamentally local" voice but also projected the value of the 'West' as the most visible modernising and internationalising symbols (Dovey, 2010; Bosker, 2013). In many ways, these forms of representation set two conflicting ideas between a local readaptation of Western ideas and a kind of 'reverse orientalism' that adds to another variety of orientalist thinking (Hendry, 2000).

Regarding the readaptation and overturning of so-called 'Western' ideas, this study acknowledges that the 'museum' in China has to balance both localising and globalising forces. In China, where concepts like neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007), privatisation and post-Fordism (Keane, 2016) are blurred, Klingmann's West-centric concept failed to express the full extent to which the brandscape (like Sea World) is produced and experienced differently across non-Western cultures. In *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy* (2007), Klingmann failed to give a full picture of underlying organisational and institutional structures in her case studies. As she does not historicise any of her case studies, her concept works under the assumption that all brandscapes operate in the same capitalist and global system. That is why the case of the SWCAC has challenged Klingmann's concept by demonstrating how the symbolic meaning and production of brandscapes will vary depending on the geographical context, especially in non-Western cultures. Thus,

this study advocates for a localised understanding of brandscapes that reconsiders the local drivers that give brandscapes new meanings, reshape public spaces, and project certain lifestyles and cultural values that are unique to that specific local culture.

Moreover, the increase in foreign architects in the development of signature architecture and cultural venues over the years (since the Reform and Opening-up) (Xue, 2019; Sun and Xue, 2020) demonstrates the value of certain styles of architecture (international to faux-Western). The association with being "open" and "international" (PRC. Nanshan Government Work Report, 2016) is immediately felt. It is for this same purpose that placemaking and creative city productions utilise cultural venues, brand-name architects, and signature architecture to make an immediate statement. However, because of China's development state model, "national and local governments remain architects of progress; they welcome international capital and will amend and bend rules to favour investors as well as local players…" (Keane, 2007, p.4).

In the same manner, Sea World Plaza uses "alien" (Bosker, 2013) or foreign architecture to symbolise 'Shekou's Story' as the first port to open up to the foreign trade; therefore, the value of using Western architecture and global brands is two-fold. The first, which is addressed in Chapter 5, shows that Western architectural styles and monuments at Sea World Plaza signify memories of a particular historical person (Deng or Xi) or event (China's economic reforms and the BRI). The development of 'Shekou's Story' over the years would use architecture as a mnemonic function in the art of remembering and forgetting Shekou's and Shenzhen's past. The second, which will be expanded in the following findings, reflects the consumer trends and aspirational lifestyles constructed and consumed by the political and economic elites. These housing trends have been discussed as reasons for increasing Western-styled housing or duplitecture trends, where suburban towns in China are designed to replicate existing (and often European) towns (e.g. Hallstatt in Guangzhou and Thames Town in Shanghai) (Pow and Kong, 2007; den Hartog, 2010; Shephard, 2012; Bosker, 2013).

As expected of a 'global city', the visible presence of shops, entertainment complexes, and art museums are important interventions that help shape "an ideal city based on consumption" (Zukin, 1993). The nearby waterfront park at Shenzhen Bay and the high-end gated communities at Sea World are carefully designed and developed by local state actors and foreign architects to continue these ideal narratives, presented as 'Shekou's Story'.

Figure 190. The 2km walking route taken (in green) along the Sea World Waterfront.

In this manner, the 'museum' and the Western-styled living appear to be products of colonialism, but local municipal governments have curated these foreign images with their own narrative. Based on the site visit in December 2019, the various international styles found along this walking route along the waterfront support a localisation of brandscapes that support the "open" and "international" image of Shekou (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2016). The waterfront park built along Shenzhen Bay, also known as the "green coast" (ibid.), connects one end of Shekou to Sea World. These developments are significant because this

waterfront park is developed by CMG (with the support of the Nanshan District Government) as part of the 'park' element of the Shekou Model. Together with Sea World's development in the 1990s, this waterfront park was also built on reclaimed land (see Chapter 5). Today, this waterfront is designed to support the local district government's aim to turn this area into a "world-class" coast (ibid.). To support this commitment, the district adopted a nature-centred theme and launched the *Civilised Shenzhen* campaign to "focus on building low-carbon life cycle in Shekou, Shenzhen Bay and OCT, and connect natural elements like mountains, seas, rivers and parks" (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2019b).

In many ways, the curation of Sea World involves a complex process of erasure and reconstruction of 'place', with local actors as most influential. The idea of the 'green coast' is not only symbolic of the park element of the Shekou Model but also adopts Shenzhen's 'city-and-nature' brand. It becomes evident that the SWCAC and other brandscapes are a part of the city's commitment to creating a "civilized city" through cultural centres and parks (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2019a). As part of the city-brand, core socialist values published in the *Shenzhen Civilization Manual* (ibid.)—a handbook that lists down the expectations of a model citizen living in Shenzhen—are turned into slogans, made into posters, and plastered along this waterfront route, as a mnemonic function. Meanwhile, evidence of the area's history as a fishing village, oyster farm, bathing beach and more, no longer exists except in the photographic images and archives at the Museum of Reform, SWCAC.

Figure 191. The opening page from the Shenzhen Civilization Manual (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2019a).

Figure 192. A view showing low- and high-density blocks along the waterfront (own photo).

This is especially important to the development of Shenzhen's city-brand. As Shenzhen is "a new city without history, without Mao statues and few reminders of any era other than Deng's" (Cartier, 2002, p.1,514), its urban spaces can be easily moulded by the dynamic set of institutions, practices, and ideologies—an "imagined community" (Anderson B., 2006). In addition to the hybrid programmes at the SWCAC, the observations along the waterfront can be viewed as a "showcase window" of state ideologies and values (Xin and Leng, 2020) and the ideal image of a "civilized city" (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2019a). This ideal citizen of Shenzhen can be visualised in the international architecture styles found at Sea World and along the waterfront, as encouraged by the Nanshan District Government. The spirit of point 4 of *The Nanshan District Government Work Report* (2016)—"*Adhere to openness and development and international style became increasingly apparent*"—also carries into nearby residential areas at and around Sea World. In the bilingual *Nanshan District Work Report* (2016), the definition of the "international-style" is vague. The Chinese characters for 'international', 国际, are translated as "international-style" in the English version. It directly refers to architecture design and urban developments—the superficial.

Figure 193. Private properties and apartments have access to the public waterfront park (own photo).

Figure 194. One of the gated and guarded properties along the waterfront (own photo).

To view Sea World's current architecture and urban space as just another design trend is dismissive of the historical symbolism of Western European landmarks, commercial experience, and choreographed events that are born from local-global networks. As Western architectural styles are exported into China, they begin to create new hybrid forms that fulfil local functions and present a visibly global image. To an extent, Bhabha's concept of 'mimicry' (2004) still applies as a process of 'doubling' (in this case, replication of Western architecture), whereby the coloniser creates a 'double' of itself in the colonised to assert superiority and its civilising mission. The concept of mimicry asserts that the double is "almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha, 2004; Hernández, 2010, p.65). Yet, there is some irony presented here at Sea World.

In line with Bosker's 'simulacrascapes' (2013), China appears to be colonising itself. The appropriation of the (foreign) past is sold as aspirational and ideal lifestyles, but kept within a highly-controlled urban environment. The gated and guarded residential areas of Coastal Rose Garden Phase 2 and Shuang Xi Garden are varied in design (low- to high-density housing, in the form of landed property, from low-density flats to tower blocks), but overall, they conveyed the same middle-class appeal and continue the international-style developed at Sea World Plaza. The low-density housing facing the waterfront has adopted either a Greco-Roman or vernacular architecture style. Meanwhile, the Shekou International School campus situated along the waterfront route has also adopted a Greco-Roman building style to promote its secondary building. Although simple in design, the double-dome design, arches and quasi-Classical-styled buildings represent a formal educational institution. It also matches the cathedral-styled main campus at the nearby Jinshan Villa, established in January 1988 by a joint venture group of oil companies (Shekou International School, 2021).

This subsection concludes that these tensions between the local and global are key traits of the localized brandscape. It appears that the processes of constructing and erasing the past benefit those from the political and economic elites.

Figure 195. The Shekou International School secondary campus is in a quasi-Western style, with Rose Garden blocks behind (own photo).

ii.   Expanding the third phase of museum development

The original 'brandscape' sees architecture as "an integral part of a larger system - of economic developments, technological advancements, and social changes" (Klingmann, 2007, p.4). As one of the key arguments, this study looks at the growing interest in museum hybridisation and museum collaborations in mainland China as indications of change—a new transition to another economic cycle and shifting political interests. This transition is expected to produce new architectural styles and typologies, including that of museum architecture, as implied in Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991), Klingmann's *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy* (2007), Lu's *Museums in China* (2014), Varutti's *Museums in China* (2014), and in historical frameworks on early modern architecture in China (Rowe and Kuan, 2002; Xue, 2006; Denison and Guang, 2008; Zhu, 2009; Wang, D., 2017).

This study frames the phenomenon of museum hybridisation and museum collaborations as extensions of the "third phase of museum development" in China (Lu, 2014). Lu's historical and ethnographical framework (documenting the origins and developments of the museum in mainland China) was able to identify the distinctive architectural styles and traits of each phase that represented a response to changing power, politics and national identity. As the book was published in 2014, it cannot fully examine the recent impact of e-commerce and Chinese social media as catalysts for driving museum partnerships, merchandising, and cultural programmes. Lu was also not able to predict how museums in the third phase may react to fast-paced markets and, rapidly changing economic and political systems.

This study's analysis of the SWCAC gives possible answers to the expansion of museums developed in this third phase. Although Lu's third phase of museum development in China lacks the same depth of analysis offered by the first and second phases, Lu had identified the role of international architects, changing architectural production, and globalisation. The impact of globalisation in the field of museology is said to centre on "acquisition and repatriation, exhibitions,

exchange of ideas, cultural dynamics, museum professionalism and museological practice" (2014, p.207). This also included an increasing interest in the Internet for marketing the museum and reaching out to potential visitors. The rise of e-commerce platforms in China also encourages "brand collaborations" or "crossovers" as new marketing strategies (Content Commerce Insider, 2020). The case study of the SWCAC supports these observations through the employment of Maki and Architects, the V&A Museum, CallisonRTKL, and other transnational actors to develop the museum, and effectively contributing to CMG's Sea World. The third phase would also acknowledge the impact of globalisation on exhibition design, professional training, museological research in practice, and academic exchanges between Chinese and foreign scholars.

The Design Society and the V&A Museum partnership is evidence of a form of upskilling and cultural exchange taking place, and is one that is mutually beneficial to many parties. Future research will acknowledge how the third phase of museum development has ushered in new ideas and new approaches towards museum management and design based on hybrid local-global interests. International collaborations between museums in China and world-renowned cultural institutions mark the benefits of globalisation. Some scholars have remarked upon the rapid expansion of museums "that it is ahead of the building of collections, content, trained personnel" (Macleod et al., 2018, p.1). By importing ideas and forging international networks, these collaborations are expected to provide publicity but also improve the professional quality of Chinese museologists, which is a form of upskilling.

On the other hand, the expansion of this third phase in future research will come to acknowledge how mainland China's museums have not changed much, as CCP ideology dominates museographic practices and discourses, even when the museums are not centrally-managed (via indirect means through SOEs). Whilst new museum theory advocates for the museum in the West as an institution that serves the community (Marstine, 2006), the museum in China appears to be a platform

used to accumulate cultural capital and portray a positive image of the state to the world.

6.3   Hybridisation providing new insights

As visualised in the Venn diagram in Chapter 2 (Figure 32), section 6.3 will focus on the overlaps between all three levels of hybridisation to expand and discuss new findings or contradictions that may not be apparent when hybridisations are viewed as mutually exclusive themes. Although the three levels of hybridisation (see Chapter 2, section 2.3) may vary for each museum project, the phenomenon of museum hybridisation is made possible because of China's state-led urban and cultural development. Through the case study of the SWCAC, future research on museum hybridisation and museum collaborations needs to reconsider the following possible roles and functions: *(i) The future of creating new business models*, and *(ii) The construction of new identities through 'soft power'* (Nye, 2011).

The 'museum' is a product of colonialism, but the 'hybridisation' at the SWCAC (and future museums in China) uses the 'museum' as a tool to present their own histories and narratives, even involving international brands and foreign cultural institutions to help build their desired image. The following considers the key highlights of the SWCAC and collaboration between Design Society and the V&A Museum, reflecting its less visible joint aims.

Discussions on the 'post-museum' locate China's shape of museum development around the economic benefits, commercial opportunities and publicity over the need to develop critical voices in museology (Macleod et al., 2018). Yet, there is a need to create new business models for museums of the future. In a key statement during International Museum Day 2021, the ICOM's president encouraged museums to strengthen their offerings and current business models (Garlandini, 2021). The theme of the year was appropriately entitled #FutureOfMuseums, for which digitisation became the year's key focus. As a general contribution to the history of museum development, this study situates itself in discussions surrounding the universal roles and functions of museums, especially after Covid-19 has upended many aspects of museums' established business models. Typically, museums in neoliberal economies have focused on monetising the in-person experience through ticket sales, museum cafés, museum retail, special events, and site rentals (ibid.). In the UK, it is said that over 70% of museums are independent of core government funding and rely primarily on commercial revenues (ibid.). Therefore, the pandemic has proven that ongoing innovations and diversification of business models are vital and that physical visits to the site can no longer be the sole attraction.

Although the Design Society and the V&A partnership was established pre-Covid, this study of SWCAC is timely because it has branded itself as a "totally new way of working in China" (Design Society, 2017a, p.17). Museums are finding new ways to operate and diversify; some would argue that museums are transforming "from public educational institutions into corporate entertainment complexes" (Fraser, 2005, p.42, cited in Goff, 2017). One such response includes the increased interest in museum partnerships, whereby "museums license the cultural IP of their collections for brands for use on a whole range of products, from apparel and cosmetics to technology" (He, Y., 2021). IP licensing and retail companies (like Alfilo Brands) have expressed that they work with leading museums on IP licensing deals in China. In relation to this, the rise of direct-to-consumer domestic brands (like

popular beauty brand Perfect Diary) has led to an increase in their striking of deals with brand-name collaborators, e.g. National Geographic of China, mosaic artist Charis Tsevis, Sanrio, and more. Many of these new brands use their museum collaborations as a key marketing tool to generate interest on social media and e-commerce platforms.

With consideration of the ideas proposed in *New Museum Theory* (Marstine, 2006), the overlap of the 'shrine' (the one-way projection of idealised culture, society, and historical narratives) and the museum as a 'market-driven industry' (associated with profit-driven aims) in the building programme may best describe this new type that allows both traditional and business approaches to co-exist. This study implies a rising co-existence of the 'shrine' and 'market-driven' museum as the dominant type in China (ibid.). Whilst the cultural-commercial ratio may vary according to the type of museum (e.g. a museum-centred project like SWCAC or a mall-centred project like K11 Art Mall), this subsection acknowledges that current economic and political conditions in China foster an environment for hybrid museums to thrive.

This study utilises the theme of 'hybridisation' to examine recently-opened museums and new museum types in a non-conformist way. The introduction of hybrid programmes at SWCAC and earlier trends favouring multifunctional cultural venues (like the grand theatre type) showed the possibility that the museum could evolve into hybrid spaces (Xue, 2019; Sun and Xue, 2020). In an ICOM video posted on Youtube, entitled *The Challenge of Changing a Museum Definition* (ICOM, 2017), Jette Sandahl, the current Chair of the ICOM Committee of Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials [MDPP], used the analogy of comparing the variety of museums as "your corner grocery store and the big department chain stores". The current definition of the ICOM Statues adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna on 24 August 2007 is as follows:

> A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible

heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

Excerpt from *Creating a new museum definition* (ICOM, 2018)

The video (ICOM, 2017) highlights the following concerns: (i) the current definition of a museum has remained stagnant since 2007 since new museum definition proposals have not received enough support; (ii) the current definition "doesn't speak the language of the 21st century"; and (iii) future definitions must insist on a "real equal footing between the museum and society" rather than the current one-way conversation where the museum still reigns "quite sovereign". The latter implies a desire to move the idea of the 'museum' away from the traditional Foucauldian sense of elitism and power.

Recently, a new definition has been approved, replacing the former 2007 version. ICOM's new definition (2022) now reads:

A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.

The new definition is said to align with "some of the major changes in the role of museums, recognising the importance of inclusivity, community participation and sustainability" (ICOM, 2022). This suggests a direction of that favours discussion of the 'post-museum' as community-centred, inclusive and "varied" space (ibid.)—areas in which takes precedence in new museum theory and Western museology.

Despite the recent changes, the definition itself becomes much more complex when museum-malls like the SWCAC are introduced, since they easily fall into various categories of public and private, museum and mall, historical and arts, and so forth. In *Museums in China* (2014), Lu explains a unique classification system, as categorised and labelled by the SACH (from the type of museum: social science, humanities and the arts, science and technology, etc., to Grade I – III). According to Varutti (2014, p.4), each museum is managed by one of four levels of government: national (also called central), provincial, municipal (sometimes called prefecture), and county. The key difference is that national museums are directly managed under a branch of the central government, whilst local museums are managed under the local economic development plans implemented by local governments. National museums like the Beijing Palace Museum are easily classified, but SWCAC's outpost model and its hybrid programmes fit into multiple categories.

With 'hybridisation' as a key trait, the SWCAC challenges both ICOM's and SACH's definitions of the 'museum'. In the more recent *Design Society Review* (2020, p.96), more explicit mention of viewing the SWCAC as a business or "more than a traditional shopping mall" is supported by the opening of a Design Society Store in Shanghai, the involvement of national institutions and expansion into a former industrial area called I-FACTORY in Shekou. With regard to an increase in museum merchandising and collaborations, this study consistently encourages a better interrogation of these types of museums beyond the superficial, using the example of the SWCAC to reveal the complexities within. Klingmann's tenth and final chapter (2007)*, Ten Reminders to Architects,* summarises what she deems as a successful brandscape, with subheadings that are suggestive of the process of hybridisation inherent in her concept. The first of ten points: *Product to Brand*, hints at the dualism or oxymorons that brandscapes face, namely the commercial practices (consumer-friendly and safe) in contrast to the "critical practices" (innovative but fewer customers) (ibid.). The balance between business and cultural ambitions, commercial objectives, and ideological pursuits is a dilemma, but this gap can be closed "as branding comes into play as an effective tool of communication" (ibid, p.311).

Besides integrating new business models into the museum, the inclusion of multifunctional halls is arguably a trademark of hybridising museums. The case study of the SWCAC also highlights an increasing trend towards including multifunctional halls and theatres in other museum projects, e.g. *Centre Pompidou x West Bund Museum Project*. The earliest form of adopting hybrid programmes has been traced to the Reform and Opening-up and back to Shenzhen, especially the grand architecture projects on Shennan Road (Sun and Xue, 2020) and in Yutian District (Cartier, 2002). In many ways, the multifunctional hall represents a practical solution. In *Grand Theater Urbanism* (Xue, 2019), the grand theatre is described as a multifunctional space that caters to state, corporate, and private events.

To conclude this subsection, the process of hybridisation at SWCAC shows a possible future whereby hybrid museum building types in China will continue to challenge the general definition of the 'museum' with increasingly multifunctional, malleable and flexible spaces.

ii.   The construction of new identities through 'soft power'

For the entirety of this study, culture is seen as a new currency that gives added value to global cities, e.g. the developing of Shenzhen's cultural and creative industries has impacted the development of the SWCAC, Sea World, and other cultural venues around the city. With culture as one of the pillars of the national economy, commercialisation and commodification of cultural products are expected to be integral to future museums in China. Domestically, the museum is viewed as a key public facility that not only promotes cultural consumption and supports creative industries, but also builds cultural identity and national identity, spurs on the local economy and boosts the tourist industry (Keane, 2016; Zhang and Courty, 2021). Internationally, high-profile museums like the SWCAC contribute towards the development of Chinese 'soft power' (Nye, 2011).

According to Nye in *The Future of Power* (2011, p.21), 'soft power'; is described as "the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes". The Chinese version of 'soft power' has a fundamental difference; it sees soft power as being "grounded in a strong and centralised government control over cultural policies and cultural agenda" (Zhang and Courty, 2021, p.46). The concept of soft power in China entered the Chinese political lexicon on 15 October 2007, during President Hu Jintao's keynote speech on stimulating cultural creativity as part of the nation's soft power (Zhang W., 2010, cited in Keane, 2013, p.29). As China transforms into an economic superpower, a convergence of creative industries and cultural soft power becomes a way for China to reposition its brand or its "peaceful rise" (Nye, 2011, p.xi). Keane's *Handbook of Cultural and Creative Industries in China* (2016) draws a link between China's emerging soft power and its cultural and creative industries, but reminds his readers of the nationalist undertones that devolve from Nye's initial concept.

The development of the SWCAC proves is that the museum continues to be a facet of China's soft power. Instead of expecting one authoritative voice to be constructing China's brand to the world, findings from the SWCAC show that its entire conception is crafted by multiple voices: mostly from brand-name actors and architects, but also with consideration given towards the less visible local artists and residents, students, curators, and more. Chapters 3 and 4 showed multiple transnational actors contributing towards China's 'soft power' through direct and indirect means, through the museum development and brandscaping processes.

One of the key observations is that a hybrid museum like the SWCAC appears to be a product born from the reciprocal import and export of culture. From the way Shekou's brand is constructed, Part 2 of this study made clear that the connections between the multiple actors in the development of SWCAC's architecture, hybrid programmes, and overall brand image are bound by a dominantly state-led narrative. The various voices and foreign brands that are imported into the design of the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza would later be exported out into other countries, demonstrated by CMG's Shekou Model—now an exportable brand put forward to other port cities in the BRI, e.g. the Port of Djibouti. Shekou's historical association with the Reform and Opening-up, the story of rapid urbanisation, and its image as a "poster city" have become its biggest selling point (O'Donnell, Wong and Bach, 2017). The commodification and monetisation of culture is arguably part of a desire to develop and promote Chinese identity "that aims to reinterpret the past giving it a new cultural pride, historical continuity and aesthetic appreciation" (Zhang and Courty, 2021, p.32).

As an example of China's soft power, the dioramas, exhibits, and wall display at the SWCAC's Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening (described in Chapter 5) showed how the museum is bound by the processes of erasing and reconstructing the past, in favour of historicising Shekou with selective memories of China's economic reform, the history of Shenzhen, and ongoing projects such as Xi's BRI. Although this is a site-specific case, the examination of SWCAC showed how the Design Society and the V&A Museum partnership increased the international exposure of

the museum and, subsequently, the Shekou Model. The Shekou Model, under which the SWCAC and Sea World were developed (managed and operated by CMSK), has arguably turned into a commoditised model that is ready for export. CMG's influence and the Shekou Model should not be underestimated. By 2018, CMG was the 97th largest Chinese SOE under the direct supervision of the central government. In the same year, CMG had access to the African continent through multiple ports established in Djibouti, Tangier, Casablanca, Abidjan, Lagos, and Tanzania (Pairault, 2019). All of them seem to conform to the Shekou Model by the formula "the port in front, the (industrial) park in the middle and the city behind" (ibid.). CMG currently owns a network of 49 ports in 19 countries and regions (China Merchants Group, 2015).

In a 2017 China Daily article, Zhang Lin—the deputy general manager of China Merchants Shekou Industrial Zone Holdings—described the status quo in many countries involved in the BRI as "similar to Shekou 30 years ago. Shekou's model can be replicated to develop foreign port cities more effectively" (Luo, 2017). By making such a comparison and casting China as the developed partner, it uses the rapid transformation of Shekou from an obscure village to a metropolitan hub as the model port city. The article continues to add that the "first successful overseas application on the Shekou Model concept was in the port of Djibouti, East Africa" (ibid.). China Merchants Port Holdings (CMG's port and logistics arm) began constructing this new port in 2012. As implied (ibid.), Sea World and the Shekou Model are effectively turned into recognisable brands that can be identified by foreign investors and future partners.

Since the museum can be exported and integrated into the formation of state narratives, the museum also takes on another more pronounced role of cultural diplomat and transnational actor that will spread in operation beyond China, as seen in Djibouti. The BRI and its past image of the Silk Road have the power to rewrite the historical and cultural values placed on these objects not only in Chinese museums but also—considering CMG's influence—worldwide. At the 2017 opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum of International Corporation in

Beijing, Xi began his speech by citing particular metal objects in Chinese museums as historical evidence for the "Silk Road spirit" of "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit" (Eberhard, 2020, p.163). Scholars have also noted an increase in exhibition and cultural sites in China that push the Silk Road and BRI agenda in their narratives (Wang, S., 2018; Eberhard, 2020).

Considering this in the context of the emerging 'post-museum', hybrid museums like the SWCAC present new approaches that cater to the local and global interests, whilst granting non-Western cultures the power to construct their idealised image and identities that provide diversity. To conclude this section, the museum takes on an ambiguous role in providing hybrid functions to cater to multiple voices and multiple histories, but China's culture production or 'soft power' continue to validate political authority and historicise the idealised past in the process of brandscaping.

6.4 Conclusion

Although this study is inspired by a single case study, some of the key points brought forward in this discussion chapter can be generalised for universal application and framed within the fields of museum studies, architecture history, urban placemaking and city branding. Based on the framework and analysis of the SWCAC, the localised brandscape becomes a thought process that enables a better understanding of the case beyond its superficial façade, as a tool that legitimises the past to create new urban memories of 'place', new cultural identities, and public cultures. Whilst the three levels of hybridisation proposed may vary across individual cases, the idea of overlapping hybridisation itself provides new ways of decoding other brandscapes, cultural venues, outdoor commercial zones, and more. The overlaps between the state and non-state actors, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global interests can be used as an interdisciplinary framework in the fields of cultural studies, museology, place branding, and city branding, and more.

Section 6.2 shows that the localised brandscape should be seen as a concept that can better explain the underlying complexities behind the architectural design and partnerships of recently-opened museums, as well as other similar developments in China, since they share the similar localising factors. As a highly-curated and localised brandscape supported by a variety of local and transnational actors, the museum (and connected urban developments) has the power to reshape public cultures and Chinese cities, making it a type of urban phenomenon that requires more attention beyond superficial brand collaboration and museum production. The Western-styled residences along Shenzhen Bay added to the wider impact of the museum or localised brandscape developments in China, whereby foreign ideas complement the idealised, local 'urban memory' and images of the global.

Meanwhile, section 6.3 discusses the hybrid museum as a manifestation of hybridised interests and negotiations between various voices, which is made possible by globalisation. The overall understanding of the process of hybridisation

in museums also supports the argument that the museum (as an institution) is becoming a "transnational actor", active and responsive across economic, political, and global systems (Goff, 2017). The museum itself becomes personified. There is still much more room for speculation, considering how the post-pandemic era and e-commerce are changing the way museums define themselves and operate in both physical and virtual spaces. Future research will need to consider how the impact of Covid-19, slowing economic growth, a declining real estate sector, and a volatile global market will change the way museums are accommodating and adapting to these changes.

Through its performance of multiple functions, the museum is evolving to seem less like the traditional notion of a museum. Increasing partnerships and hybrid building programmes encourage a new hybrid space that can perform many social functions, cater to state, private, and high-level cultural events, create new public programmes, and more. Moreover, the partnerships encourage an upskilling of museum professionals that will change the ways museums are curated, managed, operated, and so forth. To conclude, the expectations of the museum have changed, and indeed, the growing variety of museums can be as diverse as "your corner grocery store and the big department chain stores" (ICOM, 2017). Therefore, as a "malleable institution" (MacLeod et al., 2018), future museums must be viewed in light of the economic and local drivers that focus on the less visible and complex processes of museum-making.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Achievements of this study

Using a single case study based in Shenzhen, this study has examined Design Society and the V&A's partnership beyond the high-profile collaboration between two nation states (i.e. the UK and China) that it is marketed to be. This study examined SWCAC's underlying transnational organisational structure, hybrid cultural-commercial programmes and, tensions between the local and global, as overlapping types of hybridisations that set the foundations of the proposed 'hybrid museum' type. Marketed as the "first major museum of design" (V&A Museum, 2014) in China, as well as the V&A's "first overseas outpost" (Tsui, 2017) and "first international gallery" (V&A Museum, no date a), the SWCAC has been presented as a new and unconventional museum with added value placed on its multifunctional building programme and new business model. Hence, a new framework wanted to understand what increasing 'hybrid museums' symbolise and how they function in light of the local (in this case, broader economic and political shifts taking place in China) and the global (the changing definition of a 'museum' and new museum theory).

The main contribution of this thesis presents a new theoretical framework and alternative ways of understanding the limited studies of hybridising museums in China. There are many ways to examine this phenomenon in China, but this study begins with the two major themes of 'branding' and 'hybridisation'. This is done through localising the original and West-centric concept of Klingmann's 'brandscape' (2007). Since the history of museum development in China reflects current ideology, political interests and Chinese society (Lu, 2014; Varutti, 2014), the research questions were designed with the intention of exploring the underlying complexities:

1. How and to what extent do hybridisation and branding practices at SWCAC add to the limited studies of hybrid museums in mainland China, particularly through high-profile transnational collaborations?

1. In the process of manifesting brand-name actors' interests, what can the different modes of hybridisation (transnational organisational collaboration; overlapping cultural and commercial activities; and local and global interests) at and around SWCAC reveal about the new roles and functions of museums in mainland China?

Beginning with 'branding' and 'hybridisation' as theoretical tools, the biggest contribution of *Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework* was the establishment of a 'localised brandscape' that considered the local context and state of museology in China. Since Klingmann's brandscape lacked the Chinese context and Lu's different phases of museum development in China lacked the critical view of branding and placemaking, section *2.2 Branding as overarching theme*, combined both to set the baseline for 'hybrid museums' in the mainland Chinese context. In *2.3 Three Levels of Hybridisation*, the process of hybridisation was examined from multiple sources, further blurring the definition of the 'museum'. The 'localised brandscape' was established as an overlap of three dominant types of hybridisation: (i) transnational actors, (ii) cultural-commercial building functions, and (iii) place- and city branding. The literature review examined each hybridisation with its own unique trait; they were seen as mutually exclusive concepts that exposed the complexities behind the hybrid museum.

The order in which the three levels of hybridisation were introduced would form the main structure of Part 2, containing Chapter 3: *The Transnational Actors,* Chapter 4: *The Cultural-commercial Hybrid* and Chapter 5: *Place branding Sea World and 'Shekou's Story'*. Using the single case study of the SWCAC, each chapter is dedicated to examining the SWCAC based on each level of hybridisation identified in Part 1, respectively.

The key highlight of *Chapter 3: The Transnational Actors* centred around the less visible transnational structural organisation (CMG, Design Society, the V&A Museum and, Maki and Associates) behind the development of the SWCAC. The partnership between Design Society and the V&A Museum was branded as a "totally new way of working in China" through increasing 'market-driven' approaches and transnational architecture production (Marstine, 2006; Design Society, 2017a). This chapter viewed hybrid museums like the SWCAC as a kind of "transnational actor" (Goff, 2017) that played many roles beyond the traditional expectations of the museum—a cultural diplomat, a business, and a catalyst for urban regeneration. The overall findings challenged the way the 'museum' is represented and developed in China. In light of the localising and globalising agendas, China's 'hybrid museum' responded differently to that of the 'post-museum' type described by Marstine (2006). Whilst museums in the West are providing spaces for diverse voices and critical dialogue, museums in mainland China seem to take a commercially-driven approach, as exemplified by the SWCAC. The UK's V&A Museum, as a brand-name actor, became a catalyst for an alternate form of the 'post-museum', but developed within the unique Chinese context.

Chapter 4: The Cultural-commercial Hybrid focused on the hybrid cultural-commercial programmes that can be visibly seen and experienced through the architecture of the SWCAC, designed by Maki and Associates. Considering the brandscape's dominantly postmodern framework, Chapter 4's contribution expanded upon the 'museum-mall' type and its cultural-commercial programmes, challenging the traditional expectations of a 'museum'. Supported by architectural plans, the author's own photographs and official publications, the chapter analysed the museum-mall building type, the key materials, key architectural features, building programmes and curated stores. The spatial ambiguity of being neither a museum nor a mall is addressed in *Design Society's 2020 Review* (2020), in which it was claimed to be different from a "traditional shopping mall" by its "combination of art and commerce". Overall findings also showed spaces designed for state events in mind (i.e. the multipurpose hall and Chunmanyuan), not just for commercial or art events. The SWCAC allocated spaces that complemented

Shekou's historical narrative (Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening) and Shenzhen's City of Design status (facilitating creative city events). This shows more similarities to the grand theatre types that are also popular in China—iconic and multifunctional spaces that catered to both state and corporate events. The architectural evidence, coupled with the underlying intentions of the key actors, presented hybridised museums as a deliberate response that catered to the various needs of the state and non-state, the cultural and commercial, and the local and global conditions.

As the final chapter in Part 2, Chapter 5: *Place branding Sea World and 'Shekou's Story'* examined the development of the SWCAC in the larger urban context of the 'place' (Sea World and Shekou) and city-brand (Nanshan District and Shenzhen). The main contribution of the chapter uncovered the conflicts between the local and global interests through architectural evidence and urban developments over the years, and the images used (at the SWCAC and Sea World Plaza) to represent the history of Shekou in relation to Deng's Reform, Xi's Chinese Dream and the ongoing BRI project. In the process of creating cultural capital, the place brand of Sea World reflected the local municipal government's intentions to create an "open" and "international" image (PRC. SMPG. Nanshan District Government, 2016). Part-theme park, part-nostalgia and part-Chinese, Sea World Plaza was examined for its urban transformation over the decades and its choice of international architectural language, centred around the Minghua cruise ship. From palm trees to Doge's Palace arches, the Western-styled architecture or "alien forms" (Bosker, 2013) that represented CMG's success and Sea World's brand initially appeared conflicting. The overall findings, backed by key publications, archives and exhibits at the Museum of Reform at the SWCAC, presented Sea World as a "showcase window" of state ideologies and values for multiple state actors: from CMG, Nanshan District Government, Shenzhen Municipal Government to the CCP (Xin and Leng, 2020).

Finally, Part 3's *Chapter 6: Discussion* considered the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 2 and findings from Chapters 3, 4 and 5 (based on each type of hybridisation discussed in Part 2). Although occasional overlaps did occur, each type

of hybridisation was examined as mutually exclusive themes in Part 2. Based on these overlapping hybridisations, the chapter aimed to expand on the underlying complexities behind the production, development and marketing processes of the 'hybrid museum'. Considering the different direction that China's 'post-museum' is heading towards, the discussion was divided into four key points that expanded upon the overall findings from the SWCAC; findings that can be made applicable for both the local context and general museum context.

To an extent, the proposed framework and findings in Part 2 support the notion that the Design Society and the V&A partnership is a "totally new way of working in China" (Design Society, 2017a, p.17), yet, historical frameworks and the development of museums in mainland China show that the some of the processes (i.e. transnational architecture production, hybridised cultural venues and their relationship to the wider city-brand) have been around for far longer than expected. As a "malleable institution" (MacLeod et al., 2018), future museums in mainland China should be seen as a localised brandscape capable of reshaping public cultures and cities through key local and transnational actors who produce them.

7.2 Limitations of study

The first obvious limitation is that the application of the framework can be used to generalise other cultural venues and hybrid museum development like the SWCAC. To some extent, the study uses the single case study to generalise these findings and works based on the presumption that museums in China are subjected to the same state agency, architecture production processes, economic and political systems, and the formation of national identity. However, this study's proposed framework and methodology will not be as effective on small-scale, local public museums and private museums, and national museums in China since each one has slightly different organisational structures. Therefore, this study does not claim to provide a standard methodology or framework to examine all recent cultural venues or museums in mainland China.

The second limitation of this study is that the findings are specific to China and its local context. As "the museum is incredibly different" across different geographical contexts (ICOM, 2017), the same can be said of museums across the world, whose political systems and museum production processes operate differently. For universal application, some of this study's framework (historicising the brandscape within the local context and the different modes of hybridisation) can be used as tools to view the new roles of museums in the early 21st-century—contributing to the concept of the 'post-museum' (Marstine, 2006). However, due to the word count, this cannot be fully explored in this thesis.

Meanwhile, the third limitation is more specific to this study and how it could be expanded and improved on in the future. Future studies could consider online content published on Design Society's social media accounts to view how the museum partnership is represented for their tech-savvy and local consumers—a view that is currently lacking in this study. Thus far, secondary sources did not use online marketing texts published on popular apps: WeChat, Weibo and Instagram. This is important because "brand collaborations" and "crossovers" turn towards these digital platforms to monetise their IP and to market their latest museum-

branded products aimed at Chinese consumers, including cosmetics, gifts, home furnishing, apparel, and more (Content Commerce Insider, 2020; Canaves, 2021; Whiddington, 2021b). Considering how digital media may impact the future shape of museum development in China and the future development of museums in general, future studies should reconsider how these collaborations and partnerships transform the design and functions of museums.

7.3 Concluding remarks

Overall, this study provides two key findings. The first is the development of a framework, and subsequently the idea of a localised brandscape—an urban phenomenon born from the shape of hybridising cultural venues and museum development since China's Open Door Policy. Because the history of museums in China has always been tied to the state, politics and national identity (Lu, 2014; Varutti, 2014), this study established that hybridised museums and partnerships with world-renowned institutions reflect broader changes in mainland China due to the way the organisational and institutional structures operate in the country. Therefore, the development of these museums needed to be seen beyond their superficial façade but through a critical lens. The original contribution of this study uses branding and hybridisation as theoretical tools to support a new and alternative reading of the museum. After all, these initial concepts could not fully capture the unique, local traits and contexts that affect the development and design of the 'hybrid museum' like the SWCAC. With better consideration towards the local history, construction (or erasure) of urban memory and the underlying ideologies, mainland China's museums are expected to be different from Klingmann's brandscape (2007) and the 'post-museum' discourse.

The second is viewing the hybrid museum as a 'post-museum' that can enrich future collaborators and partnerships across borders. With the popularity of brand crossovers in the Chinese e-commerce and luxury brand market, these new museums and their hybrid variants (e.g. the K11 Art Mall) have the potential to become prominent building types in new urban and public cultures of Chinese cities, and perhaps in Asia. Findings based on the SWCAC show how transnational collaborations visibly impacted the way museums in China are designed for and redefined by local consumption, making it important to the diversity of 'the culture of museum'. The initial assumption believed that the SWCAC was host to the V&A Museum franchise, but the outpost model created a museum that is neither truly a national museum nor private museum. In viewing the hybrid museum as a type of 'post-museum', the findings support the phenomena of hybridisation and

brandscaping at the SWCAC as a (hybrid) process rather than an object or product of the state actors. As globalisation changes the way museums function, the general idea of the 'museum' is expected to contain hybrid and transnational elements.

Overall, the case of the SWCAC presents a new kind of museum that blurs institutional structures (between the state and private) and yet, retain powerful localising factors. The 'museum', once associated as a product of Western colonialism, is now presenting its own favourable narrative, sometimes with help from its former colonial powers. How these narratives are reconstructed and blurred impact the way the past is presented and 'urban memories' are experienced. Because of these shared localising factors, this study is not limited to museum development in China, but can also other cultural venues, shopping malls, and megaprojects. The interdisciplinary nature of this study can be made relevant in the fields of architecture design, architecture history, branding, museum studies, cultural studies, place branding, placemaking and city branding. Since no museum will have equal or the same levels of hybridisation in its underlying structure, this framework allows future projects to be seen either as a complex layer of overlapping hybridisations (as in the Venn diagram in Figure 32) or given focus as exclusive themes. Future studies ought to reconsider viewing future transnational cultural projects as a process that is beyond its superficial façade and brand value, but also look at the localising forces that shape design and new ideologies.

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APPENDIX

Below are two email correspondences with Brendan Cormier (curator of Design Society and the V&A), one on 3 October 2019 and the other 18 October 2019.

Brendan Cormier is lead curator of 20th and 21st-century design at the V&A, working to open a new design gallery in Shenzhen, China. He is also a lead curator of Design Society at the V&A Shekou. He also tells me that there is a full-time senior staff member based in Shekou for the duration of the development of the gallery, Luisa Mengoni (who oversaw the project, and who was fluent in Chinese).

Email: b.cormier@vam.ac.uk

i.   First email correspondence

1. Can you share your involvement in developing a gallery concept with the staff of Design Society?

   I led the curation of the V&A Gallery, which involved conceiving the gallery's overall theme, selecting objects from the V&A collection, acquiring new objects to be displayed in the gallery, overseeing the development of the gallery's design, as well as bespoke AV production for the gallery, writing the catalogue, and taking part in capacity building exercises with the Design Society staff.

   The gallery was also produced with a fairly rigorous schedule of consultation with the Design Society staff, as well as workshops with leading Chinese designers and experts on design in China.

2. To what extent did the V&A try to embed itself in the local community through this partnership?

   Aside from the network of local experts that we consulted with concerning the content of the gallery, early on, we conceived of a research project called Unidentified Acts of Design, which we showed at the 2015 Shenzhen Urbanism and Architecture Biennale, where we produced 8 films that looked at different individuals, places, and phenomena taking place in and around Shenzhen, in which we felt a lot of design and creativity was taking place, but where the actors involved might not call themselves 'designers' per se. This was an exercise to demonstrate how design was playing out in unique ways in the region, but was also an opportunity to build our network with local practitioners, and broaden a discourse about design.

   https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/international-initiatives/unidentified-acts-of-design-at-the-uabb-2

3. Do you think this V&A outpost model be emulated by other galleries or museums seeking to expand their presence in China?

   In that the model operated as a 5-year partnership, it is a far more nimble and flexible way of operating as opposed to the satellite museum model set out by institutions such as the Guggenheim. It is a model that is far more structured around collaboration between two institutions, and that has been really beneficial for both parties – we were able to gain a much more nuanced perspective on design and making in Southern China, and Design Society was able pick up useful modes of practice for operating a new design museum. So, yes, I believe it is a very useful model for further activity in China, but also around the world.

4. What did you need to consider when curating museum content at V&A Shekou to a Chinese audience that you might not have otherwise to a UK audience?

Design is still a relatively new term in China, and one that has a lot of contested meaning and interpretations i.e. it means different things depending on who you are, and your background. That's ultimately why we chose to structure our gallery around the very simple notion of unpacking different ways of defining design and its value. One of the challenges was getting over the expectation that a fancy museum from London would show only very rare and expensive pieces of art – some visitors were shocked to see regular everyday objects like rice-cookers and iPhones in a gallery setting, but hopefully they left with a broader more critical conception of what design is all about. One of our techniques for resolving this tension was to pair very old objects with contemporary objects, to show that they were all linked in different ways.

5. Could you please share your thoughts regarding the overall impression of design, its potential to improve lifestyles and drive the Chinese economy based on the conversations you've had with local designers, manufacturers and even shanzhai producers?

Overall, designers and manufacturers in China spoke a lot about their interest in design as being a way to grapple and critically engage with the challenges and complexities of a rapidly growing and developing country. Some focused on finding ways to negotiate between forces of tradition and modernity, others looked at design as method of problem solving to address things like pollution, traffic, and many other issues affecting the country. And many others operated as self-styled entrepreneurs, hoping that their successful design would reach millions of people.

6. As part of the V&A's international engagement strategy and the 5-year partnership with the CMSK, what are the future plans for V&A outpost to foster a longer-term impact upon the Shenzhen community and Chinese design scene?

We are currently renegotiating a contract to continue collaborating with Design Society, as we see there's an incredible advantage to having a foothold in China and the Greater Bay Area, and to continue exploring design issues that affect the area. This is work currently underway, so unfortunately I can't say anything more about it at the moment.

ii.   Second email correspondence

1. To what extent did you and the V&A team had a say in the spatial design of the outpost in Shekou? (within or beyond the given exhibition space)

I can answer that. The architecture of the building itself was done by Fumihiko Maki's office, and was already quite developed by the time that the V&A entered the partnership. So we played only an advisory role on some issues of how the building would be fit out (placement of emergency exists, power points, light tracking systems, etc). For the design of the gallery, that was design by Sam Jacob Studio, and was led from the V&A side in consultation with Design Society.