

The background of the entire cover is a complex, multi-layered architectural wireframe. It features various geometric shapes, lines, and patterns, including a grid, a circular structure, and a series of overlapping planes. The lines are white and set against a dark blue background. The overall effect is that of a technical drawing or a blueprint, suggesting a focus on structure, design, and perhaps the underlying systems of an economy.

Rogue Economies: (In)Secure

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Unit 14 reinforces its interests in Rogue Economies - those subversive economic practices, tactics and transactions that shape contemporary Johannesburg in bewilderingly dramatic ways. We look to understand these dynamics to build a relevant architectural literacy around emergent economic practices that are defining our African cities. This year, we focus our attention on Security - that perilous state whereby the necessity for security reorganizes our society and space through uncomfortable arrangements. We examine both the attainment of security and the consequences of its inverse - (in)Security, which results in the forfeiture of rights, sovereignty and instability. Through its extreme levels of violence and crime, in a war-like territory, Johannesburg offers a rare and opportunistic portal to examine the relationship between architecture and security at both intimate and grand scales.

Employing forensic drawing methods to decode, we reveal and communicate the hidden meanings and (symbolic and economic) value of how our security operations construct our urbanity. Immersive fieldwork coupled with an engagement with an array of cross-discipline specialists creates a comprehensive and empirical field-guide to working with (In)Security. Insights are employed to speculate an architectural proposition that aims to purposefully operate between binary extremes of risk and opportunity. Exploiting its attributes to be both defensive and accessible, the Gatehouse as an architectural typology is adopted as a means through which to explore an architectural proposition.

These explorations are located though Unit System Africa, the flagship architectural program at University of Johannesburg's Graduate School of Architecture.

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**Linking the
Capitalisation of
Security in the
Context of
Hyper-Speculation**

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With more than 4 billion people residing in urbanised regions, Hong Kong is rated ninth in the Economist Intelligence Unit (2017) Safe City Index¹. In the published report that ranks city safety, Tokyo is ranked first, Singapore second and Osaka third. Toronto ranks fourth, Melbourne fifth, Amsterdam sixth, Sydney seventh, Stockholm is eighth and Zurich is in tenth position. At the lower end of the scale, the cities of Jakarta and Bangkok rank fifty-seventh and forty-ninth. Amongst its peers, Hong Kong can pride itself on a pristine safety record that is both spatial as well as virtual, continuously implementing new measured thresholds to secure virtual (internet) and physical safety.

With petty crime, small theft and monetary conversion being the 'official' culprits that determine Hong Kong's ranking, the city is not known for extreme crime, murder or major life-threatening dangers. In comparison, Johannesburg and Karachi, fifty-fourth and sixtieth position respectively, are positioned

based on the frequency of terrorist attacks, coupled with the annual number of city casualties. As a metric, both the upper and lower ends of the scale sketch stark realities of how safety impacts the environment, especially those of the Global South and their respective tactics that address 'comprehensive security' under categories of digital, health, infrastructure, and, most importantly, personal safety.

If Hong Kong has such a 'safe' position, what drives the city's manic security, with its steel bars on windows, iron gates, and ever-present paranoia constantly observed through closed circuit monitors? Why does the Hong Kong environment show such an affinity for militant condition, where commercial developments become economic islands closed off to the urban territory? Why has the 'anti-civic' become a dominant voice, militarising space in favour of the financial elite's desire for exclusivity and a certain need to negate landscapes that are free and open to all?

One realises these questions remain too dispersed to deliver a comprehensive argument in this short text. As an alternative, would it be possible to extract one single focus: to questioning the capitalisation of security in the context of hyper-speculation?

My hypothesis draws from the delinking of capitalism from consumable goods, and its realignment with space as commodity. Historically, one is reminded of Hong Kong's 'market city' status² and its post-war devolution as a prominent industrial territory. With the flight of industries across its border with China, Hong Kong's 'territorial status' has irreversibly become a knowledge economy, realigning its financial systems, production services, consumption and consumerism to hyper-speculation and global competitiveness. More importantly, and a key to situating capital and security, the territory's continued drive to capitalise on every available

space in the landlocked city-state, has repositioned 'luxury' as the operative concept and, in doing so, has realigned the 'luxury of space' with scarcity and defensibility. Although counter-intuitive to the conventional understanding of commodification whereby the circulation of goods requires both expedited use of goods and maximum exposure to its consumers, militant consumerism mechanises the concepts of Very Important Persons (VIP/ VVIP), smallness and the confines of space with exclusivity, excess and extravagance in the deliberate ploys to exclude the civic from both the public and private spheres. Even though access to exclusive commerce is regulated through one's financial means, spatial realities seem to play primary role.

In Hong Kong's precarious position of a 'one-country-two-systems' context³, the view of land capital and security is intensified by the heightened awareness of land scarcity. The manic drive by an inflated property market, with estate agents located

on every urban block, sends clear signals of a social tendency that equates security with the ownership of property, and not with social responsibility or the quality of neighbourhoods. Physical boundaries, spatial limits and building edges, in reality, define a microcosm of control wherein the right of access reverts to the unquestionable authority held by landlords at any given time.

If indeed Mike Davis's⁴ assertion that the 'urban fortress' as a generic formulation for contemporary urbanisation rings true, then Hong Kong has finally mastered the capitalisation of security in the totality of its urban landscape. Fortresses of commerce, fortresses of residential enclaves and entertainment have become prevalent.

Delving further into the links between physical security and commerce, we notice the impact of fortification set in place by Chanel, Dior, Hermès and Cartier, as well as other larger commercial centres. The spatial ploys of security guards

stationed at each enclave of luxury, operate under strict instructions to limit the number of clients at any given time in the store. Guards with earpieces and closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance monitor customers throughout the already inwardly orientated store (commerce visible from the outside blocking all sightlines into the store). The exclusivity that a HK\$ 40 000 tote bag guarantees, in parallel, secures a haven from the madding crowds.

Within a residential setting, the same sentiment applies. The presence of guards posted at entrances, gate after gate, coded access and gridded fenestration, places 'other' security layers at the forefront of habitual value. Packaged amenities contained within the building complex, part of a 99-year 'ownership' agreement (which is, in fact, a long lease tenancy agreement that guarantees the safety of space), replace unsafe urban functions located exterior to the complex. Placed away from the street and defended by its position

in the centre of the high rise, each amenity establishes a new condition of control, to and from the clubhouse, cinema room, gym facilities and pools. Not only do these represent internalised micro-derivatives of neoliberal development, they concurrently mirror the desire to exclude the city from any dwelling process.

In conclusion, the desire of the bourgeoisie to militarise their ways of life is not exclusive to Hong Kong. In a text I wrote in 2012⁵, I questioned similar tendencies in the South African city. Although done for very different reasons in the South African context, the formation of commercial islands, the heightened investment in security features, and the importance placed on enterprises that exclusively address security raises equivalent concerns for South Africa and Hong Kong. As two societies caught within processes of social, cultural and geopolitical change, the important question should reflect on how to capitalise on the security of inclusivity, rather than on paranoia

and isolation. I fear, whatever the position, this will remain a question of life seen from behind bars.

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- ³ Hong Kong is officially run by a CEO; Chief Executive Officer under the mandate from China.
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