

ABSTRACT

This design-based research focuses on Jiangxin island, in Wenzhou China; a place of colonial history, nostalgia and modern entertainment. The main body of the thesis consists of public events designed and carried out as a *critical spatial practice*, including two completed public participatory events and one on-going intervention. Drawing on the researcher's role as the political deliberator and architect, this research-based practice aims to investigate the social-political mysteries in Chinese society, to propose the re-purposing of the British Consulate building to rethink the colonial heritage, to re-examine the concept of public space and to re-imagine an open future for the island. This island is a metaphor for the humiliation and the history of Wenzhou and this thesis starts with a deep understanding of the cultural significance of this place.

The term *critical spatial practice* is used to address the difficulties in making public events in the island with regard to the complexities of socio-political structure in China. It proposes the agency of *political engagement* and *artistic making* as the spatial practice, and the agency of *mapping* and *self-reflection* as the tool of representation.

With the help of social and political agencies, the research context has moved from UK to China while intermediating between the official system and the social power. By representing the process, this research also mirrors the social-political structure within the production of space in Wenzhou.