



***Please Leave the Country by Lift:
Seeking Models for the Urbanization of the
Hong Kong Shenzhen Border***

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Wednesday, 25 February 2009 (12:45 -14:00)
Room 829, Knowles Building, The University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

The urbanization of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border since the middle of the century has been rapid and uneven. After the establishment of the Closed Frontier Area in 1951, travel across the largely rural border was highly restricted and discouraged legally and physically by both sides. In 1979 the Shenzhen Special Economic Region was established with the express purpose of rapidly urbanizing the China side on economic and development models borrowed from the Hong Kong Side. Today, travel across the border is frequent and encouraged by legislation and infrastructure from both sides. There is even serious discussion of merging the two municipalities into one.

The border, while it has become easier to cross, remains no less an edge: it is strikingly present in the physical environment, with a fully urbanized China side and a still rural, closed buffer zone on the Hong Kong side. As movement across the border has become more integrated with daily activities (a sign in a mall on the China side of the border reads "Please Leave the Country by Lift") it has become no less controlled. Systems for facilitating secure movement of large groups of people through an increasingly dense urban fabric are taking form.

This paper seeks models for the Urbanization of Hong Kong's borders through a close investigation of spatial policy and development proposals and projects at other edge conditions in Hong Kong, notably Victoria Harbor, over the past three decades.

About the Speaker:

Jonathan D Solomon, (b. 1978, AIA, BA Columbia, MArch Princeton) is an American architect based in New York and Hong Kong, and Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong. Solomon is a founding editor of *306090 Books*, a publication series featuring novel developments in architecture, landscape architecture and urbanism. His essays and criticism have appeared in *Log* (New York), *SPACE* (Seoul), *Footprint* (Delft), *Urban China* (Beijing) and other publications. He is the author of Pamphlet Architecture #26, *13 Projects for the Sheridan Expressway* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2004). *Markestructure*, a book on the privatization of urban infrastructure, is forthcoming in 2008. Solomon is a licensed architect (IL, USA) and member of the American Institute of Architects (Hong Kong Chapter) and the American Planning Association (New York Metro Region). He has taught design in North America, Europe and Asia.

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