



KITA
INSTITUT KAJIAN ETNIK
INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC STUDIES

KITA Discourse Series 8/2022

Title:

Creating the Spectacular City in Everyday Life: A Governance Analysis of Urban Public Space in China

Presenter:

**Dr. Ryanne Flock,
University of Wuerzburg, Germany**

16th December 2022 (Friday)

10.00 am - 12.00 pm

KITA Meeting Room, Level 4, Kolej Keris Mas, UKM

This seminar will be broadcasted via:

Zoom & KITA Facebook Live

PROGRAMME

10.00am - 10.05am	Introduction by moderator: Dr. Rachel Chan Suet Kay, Research Fellow, KITA-UKM
10.05am - 10.15am	Welcoming remark by: Distinguished Prof. Datuk Dr. Shamsul A.B. FASc Founding Director, KITA-UKM
10.15am - 11.00am	Seminar by Dr. Ryanne Flock
11.00am - 11.45 am	Q & A Session
11.45pm - 12.00pm	Light refreshment & Closing

About KITA Discourse Series

KITA Discourse Series provides a platform for interested scholars and graduate students to present his or her ideas on any social issues pertaining to ethnicity which may be subsequently published in UKM Ethnic Studies Paper Series. For further information, please email rachelchansuetkay@ukm.edu.my.

ABSTRACT

Chinese cities are making a name for themselves through “accumulation by spectacle” (Guthman, 2008). Mostly analysing sport events and Expos in China’s municipalities, studies elucidate the fast change of the urban fabric and the interconnection of commercial profits with pro-state propaganda. These mega-events appear as a once-in-lifetime chance for a city, orchestrated during a specific time and in purpose-built venues. This paper, however, argues that during 40 years of reforming and opening up efforts of spectacularization expand to everyday life. I take the marginalisation of the urban poor, i.e. of street vendors and beggars, in Guangzhou as a starting point to understand governmental ideals, strategies and patterns of controlling public space. The data is mainly based on fieldwork, government documents, yearbooks, and newspapers. Engaging in the discussion on the “society of the spectacle” (Debord), the study elucidates governance strategies shaping public space for the external gaze. Urban management concentrates on areas serving tourism and commerce, memorial politics, and government relations. It follows the pulse of annual events and seasonal holidays, recurring political dates, exceptional mega-events, and regular urban development campaigns. These zones and periods of increased control intertwine and culminate in an “ideal” public space excluding poverty and other elements contesting the city’s success images.

PRESENTER’S PROFILE



Ryanne Flock is a postdoc research associate in the research project “Social Worlds: China’s Cities as Spaces of Worldmaking” (funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research) at the Institute of Sinology, Würzburg University, Germany. Her research focuses on urbanization in the context of private and public spaces in China and sinophone Malaysia. She is the author of *Shikumen Linong – Dwelling and Urban Change in Modern Shanghai* (Lit, 2015), *Public Space in Urban China: The Social Production in the Context of Urban Marginalization Processes* (Franz Steiner, forthcoming), and co-editor of *Family – Life – Pandemic: Words and Worlds of Chinese Rural Migrants* (Böll Foundation, forthcoming). Her research interest in Malaysia concentrates on *The Urbanization of Chinese New Villages in the KL Metropolitan Region: Changes of Society, Culture and Everyday Space* (working title).

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