• Paper / Proposal Title: Using Film as Research Method for Students to creatively explore Hong Kong’s Urban Spaces

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• Abstract (300 words):
Films move with 24 images (or frames) per second, while the stories they convey emotionally move us. Beyond the general understanding of films as entertainment, they can also be seen as potential research methods for architectural education. Personally, I have started early to use films as my main research tool. Undoubtedly, film and architecture are two disciplines dealing with the realization of an idea. As long as an architectural idea is not being built, it exists in the architects’ mind. This idea can be visualised through various tools, yet it exists merely as a narrative that focuses on the aspects of time and space. These similarities and differences have been long investigated, and famously brought to a wider public by Maggie Toy’s edited volume of Architectural Design ‘Architecture & Film’ in the early nineties’. Hence, this project seeks to discuss films as a creative research method in order to experiment with students the productive interplay of filmmaking and their architectural studies. Driven by students’ short films, this applied method creates new grounds for discussions on everyday urban spaces in Hong Kong, while enhancing our understanding of existing ones. Here, students learn essential visual communication skills by experimenting with short cinematic investigations based on chosen classical films. Chosen films are creatively reenacted to reflect on and transform the way students see everyday life in a city like Hong Kong. This
not only leads to appreciate films as sources of inspiration, but also to see them as concept libraries. All this tries to value the aspects of storytelling not limited to a single discipline, but to see space and time as potential fields of interdisciplinary teaching in higher education and to inspire students through films in order to trigger their interest about the built environment.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):
Nikolas Ettel is Lecturer in the Department of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong. In his current position as Faculty Interdisciplinary Course Coordinator, he promotes a highly innovative teaching methodology that will be adapted in his new Common Core Course 24 Frames; Communicating Ideas through Film. Nikolas has taught design and theory courses in Macau, Shanghai, and Tokyo. His main research focuses on the interdisciplinary fields of film, philosophy and architecture. This includes Asia’s back alleys, 360-degree films, and Ludwig Wittgenstein’s language-games.
Nikolas holds a BArch from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and received his Master of Arts (Architectural History) from The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. His work has received several fellowships including the Design Trust Seed Grant 2018, and has been exhibited internationally in Vienna, London, Luxembourg, and Hong Kong. His latest research Alleys in Wonderland will be exhibited at the Hong Kong Pavilion for the 17th Venice Biennale of Architecture 2021. Nikolas is editorial board member of adato, a Luxembourg based architecture magazine, and UCL Alumni Mentor in Hong Kong.