CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Architecture, Culture and Agriculture in the Wenruitang Valley, South China.

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• Abstract (300 words):
The Wenruitang is a centuries-old water network in in the south of Wenzhou, China. It combines three natural rives and kilometers of man-made canals developed to irrigate, drain and serve as a central mean of transportation between Wenzhou and Rui’An and all the settlements in between the two cities. Wenruitang valley has been defined by its natural landscape but also by the man-made countryside: the settlements, the canals, the agriculture, and transformed a hostile swamp environment into a livable milieu. The organic relation between settlements, infrastructure and agriculture defined this cultural landscape. (Peu Duvallon, 2019)

The wide spread urbanization of the last thirty years overlapped on top of this territorial logic a different one where highways, train lines and avenues replaced the water network, high-rise compounds the settlements and urban sprawl the agriculture, jeopardizing the cultural and agricultural landscape.
At the same time, national and local policies are being implemented to preserve the wetland ecosystems, improve the water quality, and the lack of agricultural land is at the heart of Beijing’s preoccupations.

But the link that was linking natural and cultural environment has been broken.

Our research explores the landscape evolution of the Wenruitang valley through this perspective of territorial palimpsests to define the current landscape condition of the Wenruitang valley, located on the urbanization front, but also to draft alternative urbanization plan that address the dual question of historical settlements and agriculture.

If we follow the French geographer Augustin Berque, and see China as one of the first landscape civilization, the question of preservation in China should be even more landscape oriented than in the West, and try to avoid the trap of disconnecting cultural and environmental issues.

This landscape approach is leading us to learn from the historical landscape to propose solution that preserve at the same time natural and man-made environments but also address the question urbanization and the growing need for housing and urban development on China East coast.

In conclusion, the project proposal try bring back economy, in its etymological meaning of the management of the home/environment (οἰκονόμος) at the heart of the urbanization. This extended economic perspective, that includes environmental, historical, and also regular economic theory ensures that urban planning solutions are economically internally driven, making them more feasible and sustainable.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Vincent Peu Duvallon is an Assistant-Professor of Architecture and Executive Director of the School of Public Architecture at Wenzhou-Kean University. He received his professional degree at the ESA in Paris, France, and has also studied at the University of Hong Kong and the Ecole d’Architecture de Versailles in France. He did his apprenticeship with two leading international architects, Christian de Portzamparc and Frederic Borel in Paris.

For the last decade, has maintained an active professional practice in Asia with built works in Korea and China. His work in Wenzhou and Shanghai has been recognized for the adaptation of antiquated factories into new mixed-use facilities as a part of a revitalization project in both cities. He has lectured about his work in China, Italy, France, and the United States, and has served as a visiting faculty member at several schools of architecture in France. His research focus on contemporary vernacular environments and landscapes, particularly in Wenzhou area, south of Zhejiang.
**Huang Tieru** has been studying architecture at the School of Public Architecture, Michael Graves College since its opening in Fall 2017. During her studies, she has been extensively involved in extracurricular projects, competitions, and research. As her curriculum has a strong emphasis on the urban and territorial dimension of architecture, she has been working on Chinese urban fringes settlements with her colleagues and her instructors. Her work on Chinese Suburban Villages has been exhibited in Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University, "Architecture Across Boundaries" international conference in spring 2019, in Michael Graves College's Exhibition on Public Spaces along with infrastructures in Fall 2019. Her experience in Wangzhai village got her enrolled in the student's team part of the Wenzhou-Kean University Campus Planning for the extension of the campus in the Wangzhai area. In fall 2020 she was awarded the first prize of the Wenzhou-Kean University organized competition on "Architecture, Culture and Agriculture" with her team entry "Points of Departure".

**Ruzhen Zhao** has been studying architecture at the School of Public Architecture, Michael Graves College since its opening in Fall 2017. During her studies, she has been extensively involved in extracurricular projects, competitions, and research. The diverse practice in Chinese Suburban Villages got her interested in the interconnected questions of care, labor, ecology, and economy in architecture and urbanism. With the support of her instructors and the cooperation of her colleagues, her experience in Wangzhai village got her enrolled in the student's team part of the Wenzhou-Kean University Campus Planning for the extension of the campus in the Wangzhai area. In fall 2020 she was awarded the first prize of the Wenzhou-Kean University organized competition on "Architecture, Culture and Agriculture" with her team entry "Points of Departure". The team’s involvement with the architectural, economic, environmental, political, social, and urban context, informs her knowledge and critical analysis.

**Bao Jiayu** has been studying Finance at the Wenzhou-Kean University, College of Business and Public Management since its opening in Fall 2017. During her studies, she has been extensively involved in extracurricular projects, competitions, and research. Her courses have focused on economics and finance, and she has been working with her colleagues and her mentors to analyze the impact of specific factors on the overall market and economy. As a result, she is concerned and interested in geopolitical and economic research. Her work on the Impact of Global Commerce from High Tech Rapeseed has been presented at the University of Kuala Lumpur Business School, "Interdisciplinary Business and Economics Research" international conference in fall 2020. In fall 2020 she was awarded the first prize of the Wenzhou-Kean University organized competition on "Architecture, Culture and Agriculture" with her team entry "Points of Departure".