

01/07

Hu Fang New Species of Spaces

Bo wu zhi (History of Nature), compiled by Zhang Hua during the Western Jin Dynasty (265–316), is the first study of natural history in China. In this ten-volume book, Zhang recorded geographic features of the landscape, animals, biographies, myths and ancient history, immortals and ancient alchemy, and so on. He placed all that could not be categorized into a special section entitled “The Miscellaneous.”

If we take the whole world to be a book, then we are today lost in its multiple narratives and countless miscellanea. If we take it as a medium through which to reflect and explore the world, this book is no longer able to keep up with the speed at which narratives now unfold in it.

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As a central building in the community, cinema is the largest luminous architectural body. Lights and film are cast in the sky of community, and linked with lights of city, of course, cast on bodies and faces from the bottom-up, as like the final scene in Genesis. A bustling city appears before us, and accomplishments under foot, there is an impassable and high aloft feel . . .

– Beijing-based real estate ad magazine
Contemporary MOMA, No.8



1
Head over to Changi Airport. Putt your way through before boarding the plane.
欢迎来到樟宜机场。请在登机前将球击出。
Selamat datang ke Lapangan Terbang Changi. Masukkan bola anda di sini sebelum menaiki kapal terbang.
チャンイ空港へようこそ。飛行機に乗る前にバットしましょう。



2
At the Discovery Centre, check out the submarines, fighter plane and tank.
在知新馆，检查潜艇、战斗机和坦克。
Lihatlah kapal selam, kapal terbang dan kereta kebal berpusing di Discovery Centre.
ディスカバリーセンターでは潜水艦、戦闘機、戦車を見てください。



3
Try your luck at the Turf Club, you may just be a winner.
在新加坡赛马会试试运气，你可能就是赢家。
Cobalah nasib anda di Turf Club, anda mungkin pemenang hari itu.
ターフクラブで運を試みてみてはいかがでしょうか。もし当たると嬉しいかもしれません。



4
Symphony or musical, take your pick at the Esplanade.
交响乐或是歌剧，您可以到滨海艺术中心尽情选择。
Simfoni atau muzikal, buatlah pilihan anda di Esplanade.
エスプレナードでオーケストラ又はミュージカルをお楽しみください。



5
MRT's North-South, East-West lines will get you there.
地铁南北线、东西线将带您到那里。
Gunakan MRT Utara-Selatan atau Timur-Barat ke mana-mana yang dingini.
MRTの南北、東西線がそこにお連れ致します。



6
Will your putting skill through the Fountain of Wealth bring you prosperity?
以击球的技术，“财富之泉”会给您带来财富吗？
Adakah "Fountain of Wealth" akan membawa anda tuah?
バットのスキルは健康の噴水を通して幸運をもたらしてくれるかも？



7
Your ball has arrived in a container at Singapore Port.
您的球已到达了新加坡港的集装箱里。
Bola anda telah sampai dalam kontena di Singapore Port.
ボールはシンガポール港のコンテナに着きました。



8
Try Satay, Chicken Rice and other local favourites at the Food Centre.
在美食中心尝尝沙撈越、鸡饭和其它地方小吃。
Cubalah Satay, Nasi Ayam dan lain-lain makanan tempatan di Pusat Makanan.
フードコートでサテ、チキンライス、又は美味しい地元料理をお試しください。



9
Welcome to Lilliput, putt carefully and watch out for the obstacles.
欢迎来到Lilliput，小心击球，谨防障碍物。
Selamat Datang ke Lilliput, berhati-hati mengelak selok-belok halangannya.
リリパットへようこそ！障害物に気をつけてバットしてください。



10
At Haw Par Villa, the Buddha is laughing, why? Because of the previous putt!
虎豹别墅，佛祖含笑，笑什么？笑你的前一杆击球哦！
Adakah putting berhala Buddha di Haw Par Villa bersenyum kerana pukulan sebelumnya itu?
ハーパービルではさっきのバットを見て仏陀が笑っています。



11
Learn putting and physics at Science Centre! Try ski-putting at Snow City!
在科学馆学习击球和物理知识！在雪城试试雪橇式打法吧！
Pelajari bermain golf dan fiziks di Science Centre! Cuba memukul sambil bermain ski di Snow City!
サイエンスセンターで物理学とバットを学び、スノーシティではスキー・バットに挑戦。



12
Careful, don't feed your ball to the animals at the Zoo, you might not get it back!
小心，别把您的球喂给了动物园里的动物，那有去无回了！
Anda mungkin tidak akan dapatkan bola anda balik jika dimakan haiwan di Zoo!
動物園では動物にボールを吞まさないでください。返してくれないかもしれません。



13
Stop by Padang for a quick ride in a Trishaw. Anyone for Cricket or Rugby?
在运动场停留，乘坐三轮车游览一番，有人对板球或橄榄球感兴趣吗？
Nakik Beca di Padang. Ingin bermain Kriket atau Ragbi?
パダグで寄り道してトライシャウに乗って見ましょう。クリケット又はラグビーは、いかがでしょうか？



14
Experience Boat Quay, Singapore's famous riverside entertainment hub.
体验游船码头，新加坡最著名的河畔娱乐中心。
Lawati Boat Quay, pusat hiburan tepi sungai Singapura yang terkenal.
シンガポールの有名な川沿いのエンターテインメントの中心、ボート・キーに行ってみましょう。



15
If bird watching is your thing, check out the flamingos at the Bird Park.
假如您喜欢观赏鸟类，可以在飞禽公园看看红鹳。
Dekatilah burung flamingo di Bird Park.
バードウォッチングが好きであればバードパークでフラミンゴをご覧ください。



16
Catch the cable car to Mount Faber and hope your ball comes out the right exit.
登上花柏山的缆车，希望你的球能找到正确的出口！
Nakik kereta kabel ke Mount Faber dan harap ia keluar dari tempat yang betul!
マウント・フェバーケーブルカーに乗ります。ボールが正しい出口から出ることを願っています。



17
At the Botanic Gardens putt your way through the plant sculptures.
在植物园让您的球穿过各种各样植物的雕塑。
Di Botanic Gardens, pukulkan bola antara ukiran-ukiran tumbuhan.
ボタニック・ガーデンでは植物の彫刻をすくすく通り抜けてください。



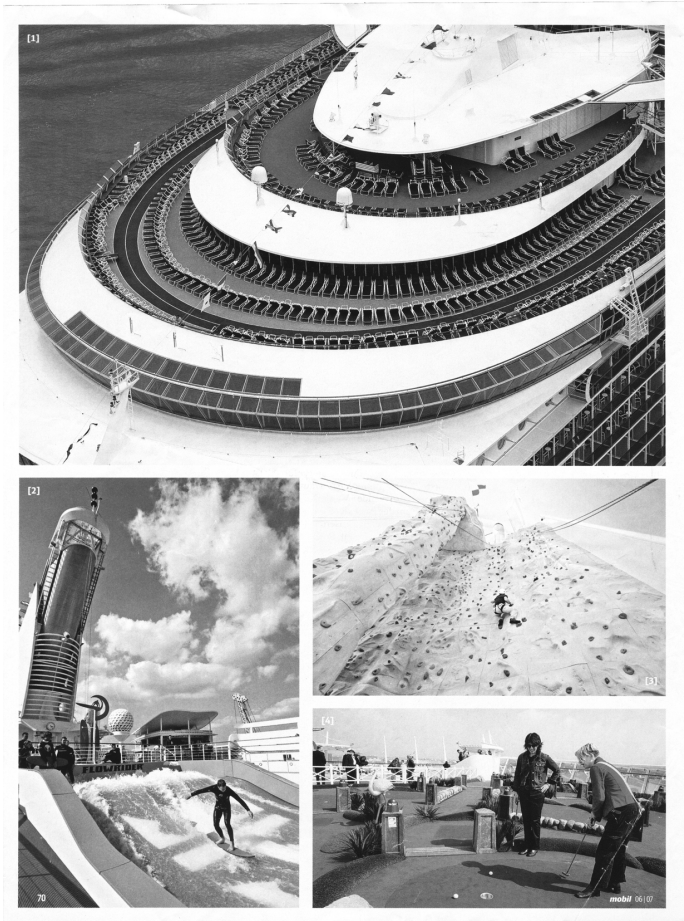
18
Round off your visit to Lilliput at Sentosa. Mention and the Musical Fountain.
在圣陶沙岛的鱼尾狮雕像和音乐喷泉中完成您的Lilliput之行。
Akhir lawatan anda di Sentosa, Mention dan Musical Fountain.
マライオン、ミュージカル・ファウンテンでセンターのバットの訪問も終わりを迎えます。

The Linked Hybrid building, also known as MOMA (Contemporary MOMA) is a residential building complex designed by American architect Steven Holl for Beijing. This huge residential container is more like an epochal allegory of the imaged space of reality. It proclaims:

1. Reality will become a set in a film.
2. Residents will be the stars of the film.
3. The architect will become the film's director.

In this way, architects and developers encourage people to participate in the creative process of "seeing" and "being seen" in the performance of contemporary life.

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If seeing is an act of consciousness, then today such an activity seems to create its own reality: the mirror. Through his works, Dan Graham revealed the significant psychological effects of the semi-reflective glass used in shopping centers and office buildings on people, particularly at moments when one's own reflected image fuses with that of the goods displayed behind the glass. This fusion produces an entirely new self-image. While of course Graham shows that this new self-image is of someone who wants to purchase the goods behind the window, he also touches upon the most fundamental cultural condition of urban

life, namely that urban living space has become a continuous system of self-reflection in which "I" can never perceive the existence of other people beyond my own mirrored image, just as the city itself cannot perceive any other parts of the world, but only its own reflection.

People experience an endless carnival within a cycle of their own mirrored images, and the city lives within its own mirrors endlessly. This is the beginning of exhausted self-experience.

Do we still have a real relationship with reality?

He withdraws his eyes from the flashing computer screen back to the gray horizon beyond the glass wall, where thick clouds are lit by a gloomy sunset, where high-rises extend one after another into the endless distance like reproducing cells, together creating our living borders through rapid replication and continuous hybrids.

Pressing the keyboard, a theme park weaves, accumulates, rotates, and diffuses in color.

In a city of constant destruction and reconstruction, history has been superimposed constantly, and to a point where it is so blurred that it can no longer be seen.

– Hu Fang, *Garden of Mirrored Flowers*¹

In a novel I wrote entitled *Garden of Mirrored Flowers*, I began to imagine the figure of an architect who gradually found the maze of life revealing itself to him as he constructed a theme park called "Garden of Mirrored Flowers."

In contrast to Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths," the maze of life in *Garden of Mirrored Flowers* could perhaps be a direct contact with reality itself, with the novel serving as a "documentary" of it – a collection of those traces in reality, such as television advertisements, stock market summaries, cell phone messages, shopping lists, and so on, which are always shown as dramatic events. From political performances to economic crises, the production of reality in the form of a story seems to occur in abundance today.

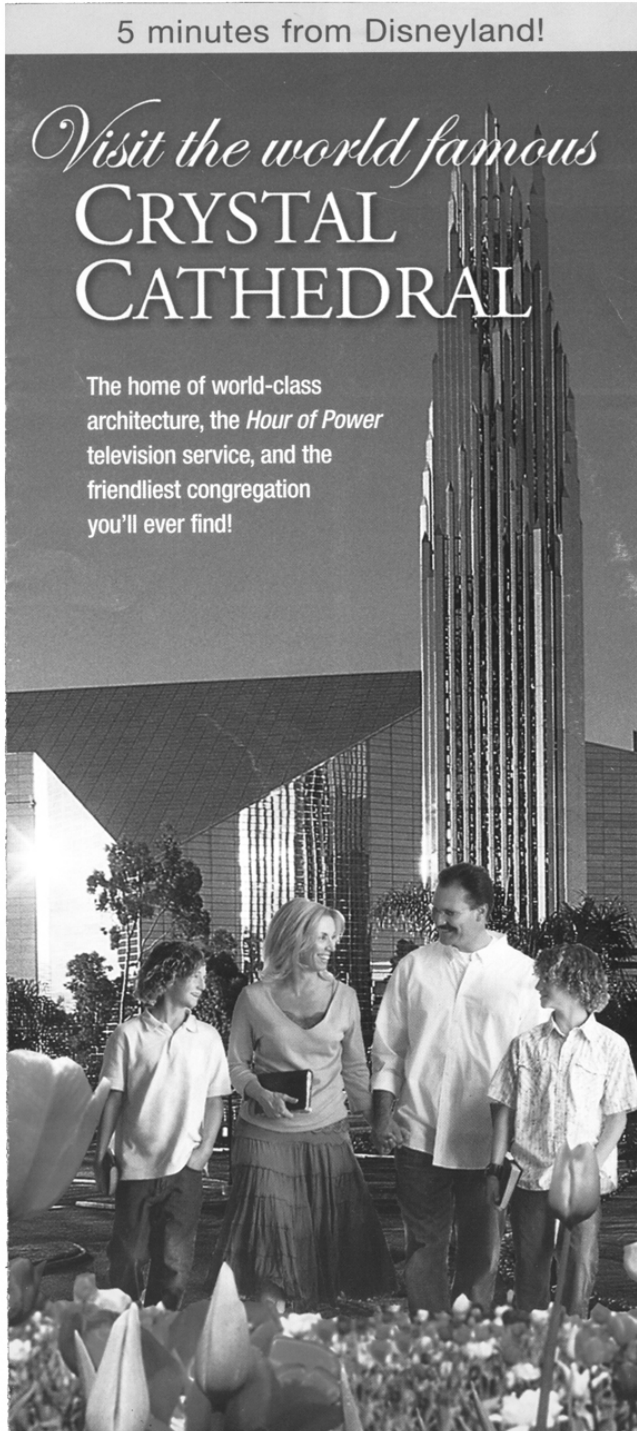
Thus, this novel becomes a "script" of reality, as the Russian writer Victor Pelevin suggests with regard to the Russian literary tradition in the preface to the Chinese edition of *Generation "П,"* "In Russia, the writers do not write novels, but scripts."

In this case, "I" am not the author of the novel, but rather, reality writes its own novel by

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my hand. This reality then grows increasingly surrealistic and begins to overflow, becoming saturated to a point where it is emptied of its own value.

If we agree that our reality becomes increasingly like the thoughts secreted by an insane collective mind, then can we even see this reality?

Spaces have multiplied, been broken up and have diversified . . . To live is to pass from one space to another, while doing your very best not to bump yourself.

– Georges Perec²

In the misty mist, you pass through a jungle or a mountain. At one point, the road forks: to the left is the first life; to the right, the second life.

Without Cao Fei / China Tracy's *I.mirror*, I would not have encountered a life called Second Life, where there appear to be new concepts of life and death, new histories and new worldviews. But soon we will find Second Life to be not an entirely new world, but rather the same life as the first one.

I.mirror shows the beautiful landscape at the end of the world's wilderness; it is not about

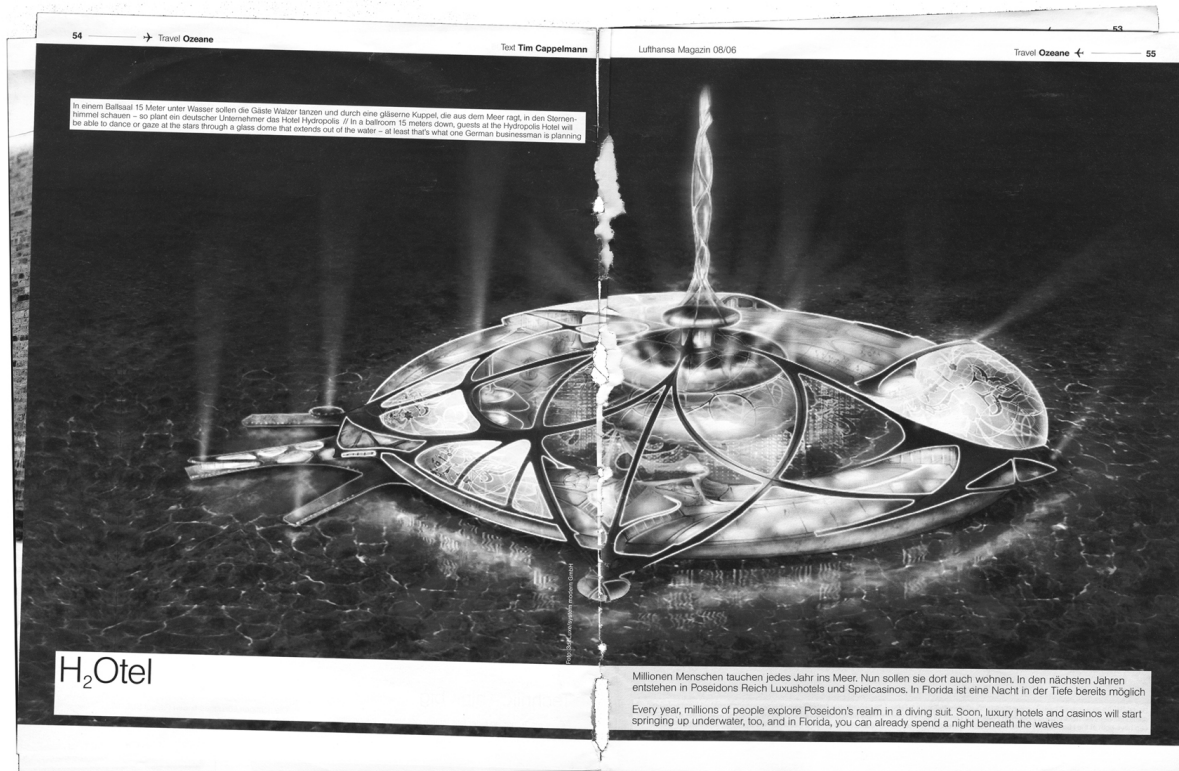
the future, but is a metaphor for daily life and the politics of the present.³

In other words, the aesthetics of the future are not mysterious.

They exist along a blurry border between reality and fantasy, and will disappear over the horizon just as life will. But artists will be more engaged in life – no longer as a solidified reality with an original single meaning, but as a continuous flowing process.

I observe in the artistic works of the individuals around me – Cao Fei, Ming Wong, Xu Tan, Pak Sheung Chuen, Yang Fudong, Zheng Guogu – the recognition of a complex relationship between art and reality: art no longer operates in a laboratory of artists, but as intuitive and active participation in the possibility of life. In this sense, I think our question for art shall concern what it can “become,” but not what it “is,” and we can say that, from the beginning, the purpose of such creation will not be to produce something that becomes a work, but that acts as a force to be integrated in many different contexts. Such creativity shall and will continuously raise questions with regard to social life and stimulate our consciousness of life in general, as well as our actions.

05/07



These individuals regard life itself as a process of experimentation and develop their own unique ways of perceiving the world. As opposed to an unconscious involvement, these figures always have the ability to “intend” movement in a certain direction, which is to say that they are always likely to construct a dynamic relationship *between* and *around*, to generate an integration of multiple relationships through their art practices, making the work itself a kind of *Post-fact*: both the result of a transformation and a proposal, which will in turn touch, and deeply influence the relevant groups, and reality itself. Based on such a premise – that is, if we regard the practice of art as a reconstruction of a relationship to life (such a relationship is no longer a definite social determination, but a fundamental and philosophical understanding) – it must be bound to the direction of its spaces and groups, and become a proposal for constructing the possibility of life.

These different forms of creativity with different orientations respectively become different spaces, but they also suggest the existence of a truly diverse, new species of space – one that will inspire a new space for life.

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Hu Fang is the artistic director and co-founder of Vitamin Creative Space, a project and gallery space dedicated to contemporary art exchange and to analyzing and combining different forms of contemporary cultures. As a novelist and writer, Hu has published a series of novels including *Shopping Utopia*, *Sense Training: Theory and Practise*, and *A Spectator*. His recent publication is a collection of fictional essays called *New Arcades* (*Survival Club*, *Sensation Fair*, and *Shansui*.) His writing has appeared in Chinese and international art/culture magazines since 1996. His curatorial projects include “Through Popular Expression” (2006); “Xu Tan: Loose” (1996); “Zheng Guogu: My Home is Your Museum” (2005); and “Object System: Doing Nothing” (2004). He has been a coordinating editor of *documenta 12 magazines* since 2006. Hu graduated from the Chinese Literature Department of Wuhan University in 1992. He lives and works in Beijing and Guangzhou.

e-flux journal #11 — december 2009 Hu Fang
New Species of Spaces

1

Hu Fang, *Garden of Mirrored Flowers* (Guangzhou, China: Vitamin Creative Space, 2009)

2

Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, ed. and trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Classics, 1998), 6.

3

See "China Tracy: i.Mirror," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vcR7OkzHkl>.

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