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Making with the Past: Bricolages in Wang Shu's Design Writings and Built Projects

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Keywords

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Bricolage
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Abstract

This study explores how design research writing can engage with historical reference in a radical way. In the 2002 essay "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi" ("City Froze in Time"), based on Chapter 2 of his 2000 PhD thesis, *Xugou Chengshi (Fictionalising City)*, the Chinese architect Wang Shu proposes reinterpreting the traditional Chinese architecture and city through the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of "bricolage", which is defined as making do with available objects. Bricolage is informative for understanding Wang's design undertakings, which involve skilful adaptations of vernacular building types and construction techniques in new urban projects. Nevertheless, its fundamental role in shaping Wang's design writings is yet to be fully understood. In his design writings, Wang employs a specific quotation method whereby words and paragraphs from other writers' preexisting works are reused and woven into new textual compositions. Through formal analysis of "City Froze in Time" and comparisons of compositional patterns between the essay and Wang's built projects, mainly the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art, Phase II, Hangzhou (2007) and the Ningbo History Museum, Ningbo (2008), this piece explores three issues. First, it demonstrates how textual fragments found in the past and uttered by others undergo bricolage in Wang's essay. Second, it foregrounds the intention behind Wang's chosen writing strategy and investigates broader critical issues, such as authorship and the past-present nonlinear order associated with Wang's strategy. Third, it expresses how historical materials – understanding "materials" in an inclusive sense – are treated in comparable ways in Wang's written and built works. By examining Wang's case, this paper highlights a radical case of contemporary architectural research writing in which an attempt is made to demolish the boundary between theory and design by extending the make-do logic of design into the field of design reflection.

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Introduction

1. C. Greig Crysler, *Writing Spaces: Discourse of Architecture, Urbanism, and Built Environment, 1960-2000* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 57-84.

2. Jane Rendell, *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010); Klaske Havik, *Urban Literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2014); Hélène Frichot and Naomi Stead, eds., *Writing Architecture: Fictio-Critical Approaches* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2020).

3. The Chinese title of Wang's essay (i.e., "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi") derives from the structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's claim (through Edmund Leach's translated work Lévi-Strauss) that myth and music are "machines for suppression of time". Given this derivation, a more accurate English translation of the Chinese title is "The City for the Suppression of Time". See: Edmund Leach, *Lie Wei Si Te Lao Si* [Lévi-Strauss], trans. Qingren Wang (Beijing: Joint Publishing, 1988), 136; Edmund Leach, *Lévi-Strauss*, 4th ed. (London: Fontana Press, 1996), 135.

4. Shu Wang, "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi" [City Froze in Time], in *Sheji de Kaishi* [The Beginning of Design], ed. Mingxian Wang and Jian Du (Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press, 2002), 130-70.

5. Dongyang Liu, "Wang Shu de Yige Sixiangxing Xiangmu: Ta Cong A Er Duo Luo Xi de Chengshi Jianzhu Xue zhong Xuedao le Shenmo" [An Intellectual Project by Wang Shu: His Learning from Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*], *Xin Meishu* [New Arts] 34, no. 8 (2013): 105; Jianfei Zhu, Lu Zhang, and Cheng Sun, "Wang Shu he Wei Yan Wu: Dongya Jianzhushi Xiezuo Celue Weiguan Gean Yanjiu" [Wang Shu and Kengo Kuma: Writing Strategies of Two Architects from East Asia], *Shidai Jianzhu* [Time+Architecture] 172, no. 2 (2020): 144.

6. Shu Wang, "Xugou Chengshi" [Fictionalising City], PhD diss., (Tongji University, 2000), 16. (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.)

7. Wang, "Xugou Chengshi" [Fictionalising City], 5.

The norms of architectural writing have been a subject of constant debate in past decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, architectural poststructuralists conceived of writing as a mode of constructing with words and texts. In this discourse, architecture and writing become the equivalent, but not identical, textual practice.¹ Informed by postmodern philosophies, more recent studies of architectural writing have problematised the norms of the standard scientific mode of writing while actively incorporating fiction, autobiography, and other literary genres into architectural qualitative investigations.² In this later trend, the boundary between academic criticism and artistic creation has been blurred.

By examining the Chinese architect Wang Shu's 2002 essay, "*Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi*" ("City Froze in Time"), based on Chapter 2 of his 2000 PhD thesis, *Xugou Chengshi* (*Fictionalising City*), this article highlights a radical case of research writing whereby language and architectural matters mingle and academic routines of architectural writing are challenged.³ The essay "City Froze in Time" (henceforth "City Froze") is a key piece of literature articulating the architect's typology design thought, which was published in Issue 96 of the Chinese architectural journal *The Architect* and reprinted in *The Beginning of Design*, a collection recording Wang's major written and built works with critics' commentaries.⁴ First, this article demonstrates Wang's often overlooked reflection on architectural theoretical writing. Second, through close reading of "City Froze", the article inspects the writing technique and compositional pattern of the essay and articulates the implications of Wang's writing strategies in reference to his specific theoretical context. Third, by comparing aspects of Wang's essay and his built works, especially the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art, Phase II, Hangzhou (2007 [henceforth the CAA Campus]) and the Ningbo History Museum, Ningbo (2008), this article explores how Wang expands his bricolage design logic into design reflection.

Wang Shu on Writing

Among Wang's written works, *Fictionalising City* is held by commentators as one of the foundational works of literature for understanding the architect's practice and design thinking.⁵ Despite such appraisals, Wang's theoretical project is yet to be fully understood. One missing part is the intention behind the architect's intensive experiments with architectural writing. In *Fictionalising City*, Wang asserts that "if designing is 'doing', theorising is 'doing' as well".⁶ Wang's proposition of writing as architecture is in line with his text theory informed design research, as he writes:

To see the city as a kind of text brings forward the second tenet of [the activity of] fictionalising cities: the equivalence principle. [...] It [*Fictionalising City*] means demolishing the distinction between theory and design, concept and object.⁷

8. See for example: Jian Shi and Keru Feng, "Wang Shu Fangtan——Huifu Xiangxiang de Zhongguo Jianzhu Jiaoyu Chuantong" [Interview with Wang Shu: Renew the Imagined Tradition of Chinese Architecture Education], *Shijie Jianzhu* [World Architecture], no. 5 (2012): 25.

9. Xiangning Li and Xiaochun Zhang, "Wang Shu Fangtan" [An Interview with Wang Shu], *Shidai Jianzhu* [Time+Architecture], no. 4 (2012): 95.

On multiple occasions, Wang has explicated his critical attitude towards writing as a means of theorising.⁸ His reflections on this topic are unambiguously expressed in a 2012 interview in which he stated that

what I really care about is exploring the notion of writing itself. [...] My exploration of writing is closer to the way Roland Barthes conceptualises it. For example, I pay more attention to genres of writing than just what is written about.⁹

Wang insists that the text of *Fictionalising City* is "self-referential" and is "not at all a normative theoretical writing but an archi-design with words and texts". Reflecting on the relationship between his thesis and design practice, Wang concludes that "10 years after its [*Fictionalising City*]'s completion, I have realised the thesis once again in architecture".¹⁰ Despite Wang's affirmation of the significant role of writing in his theoretical project, two issues remain unaddressed. First, Wang has not explained which actual writing styles or means he adopted in *Fictionalising City* and other derived essays. Second, he has not specified how the claimed equivalence between writing and building has been achieved in his works.

Writing with the Past

11. Gaojin Xinleng, Jonathan Hale, and Qi Wang, "Novelistic Essay: On the Form of Wang Shu's PhD Thesis, 'Fictionalising Cities'", *Architectural Research Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (2019): 157-66.

A recent study may shed some light on the first issue concerning the style and form of Wang's theoretical writings. By thoroughly comparing excerpts from Chapter 3 of *Fictionalising City* with other authors' writings, Xinleng Gaojin, Jonathan Hale, and Qi Wang note that Wang's thesis employs a specific quotation method that involves systematically reusing and collaging textual fragments from other authors' writings while forgoing the conventions of modern academic referencing.¹¹ The present article extends Gaojin and his colleagues' investigation by applying their method of cross-textual comparison to a reading of "City Froze". The aims of the following analysis are threefold. First, using several reading samples, the analysis shall demonstrate how previously published writing materials are appropriated in "City Froze". Second, beyond Gaojin and his colleagues' focus on textual form, the analysis shall further explore the alternative discursive mode enabled by Wang's specific writing method. Third, the analysis shall clarify the essay's compositional pattern by applying the abovementioned comparative method to the full text of "City Froze".

12. "City Froze" was originally written in Chinese. Therefore, the comparisons of texts presented in this article began by comparing Wang's original text with other works written in Chinese or the Chinese translation. The excerpts from "City Froze" are my translations. In producing these translations, reference was made to both the Chinese and English versions of the texts with which Wang's essay is compared.

In the reading samples below, excerpts from "City Froze" (nonitalicised) are presented together with other writings (italicised) for the purpose of comparison. Sample 1, for instance, demonstrates how Wang's text reuses a paragraph of structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* to describe daily life in a traditional Chinese village.¹² This excerpt from "City Froze" is part of Wang's case studies in support of his rereading of the Chinese urban tradition.

Sample 1

Excerpt from "City Froze":

Often a farmer is also an amateur architect, carpenter, and

13. The original Chinese text: 一个农夫常常也是一个木匠，是业余的建筑师与建筑工人，能够认出哪块小木头是属于哪一种树上的，而且通过观察木头和树皮的外表、气味、硬度和其它属性来做精细确定。Wang, "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi" [City Froze in Time], 147.

14. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 5. The original Chinese text: 关于琉球群岛的一个落后种族，我们读到：“甚至一个孩子也能常常认出哪块小木头是属于哪一种树上的，而且通过观察木头和树皮的外表、气味、硬度和其它特征来确定那种树的性别 [...]”。Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Yexing de Siwei* [The Savage Mind], trans. Youzheng Li (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1987), 8.

construction labourer who can identify the kind of tree from which a tiny wood fragment has come and, furthermore, make an accurate judgement by observing the appearance of its wood and bark, its smell, its hardness, and similar characteristics.¹³

Excerpt from *The Savage Mind*:

Of a backward people of the Tyukyu archipelago, we read: "Even a child can frequently identify the kind of tree from which a tiny wood fragment has come and, furthermore, the sex of that tree, as defined by Kabiran notions of plant sex, by observing the appearance of its wood and bark, its smell, its hardness, and similar characteristics. [...]"¹⁴

Sample 1 shows that the phrases highlighted in grey are strikingly similar to the underlined phrases. Given that such similarities have not been explained by Wang in "City Froze" or elsewhere, this resemblance may raise concerns about academic ethics. Most noticeably, this textual resemblance challenges operations of power in the canonical form of the academic essay where the text's power to mean and represent others is expected to be fully manipulated by authorial intention. Wang's way of uttering through instead of on behalf of other authors is distinct from the routine practice of academic referencing, which is a procedure that requires and actualises the judging authority of the author over the other within the text. In Sample 1, Lévi-Strauss's voice and the new significances stemming from Wang's recontextualisation of the original text tangle and overlap. The absence of an author–other hierarchy both shatters Wang's text into heterogeneous fragments and prevents the text from being taken as a derivation of Wang the writer. In other words, Wang's textual construction underlines coauthorship and dialogism on a structural level in the concerned essay, which could be controversial in the context of academic writing.

Another consequence of Wang's quotation technique is that the essay comes to embody a nonlinear temporality in which the "already said" is an indispensable participant of the current intellectual reflection. Differently, in standard academic referencing, the current writing represents the intellectual or cultural past. The former is privileged as a perspectival point through which the past is exhibited, assessed, and received. In so doing, the cultural past is reduced to merely an object of the undergoing reflection; the historical context no longer operates as the very condition whereby such reflection can emerge. More precisely, in academic referencing, the present is singled out as a moment completely outside history. This irreversible order between now and then, or the one-dimensional linear temporality that undergirds standard academic referencing and scientific writing formats, is coherent with the modernist notion of progress where the now is often welcomed as a total renewing, replacing, or eradicating of the past. Alternatively, Wang's quotation technique can be seen as a specific means of writing with the past, which interrupts a simple past–present evolution.

Wang's quotation technique also draws attention to a method of writing itself that disassembles and reassembles historical writings to formulate a new whole. This practice of writing with the intellectual past parallels

15. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 1-33.

16. Wang, "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi" [City Froze in Time], 145-167.

the strategies of architectural typology design articulated in "City Froze". Wang's typology design approach is modelled on the Lévi-Straussian notion of bricolage, a metaphorical term that characterises mythical thought and, more generally, artistic modes of creation.¹⁵ According to Lévi-Strauss, myth is a narrative form in which "mythemes" or elements of old stories are recycled and reassembled for the telling of new ones. Wang integrates this recycling ecology of the narrative form of myth into his typology design theory. According to Wang, an architectural type is a fragmentary form detached from the existing fabric of a city, and the task of urban design is essentially similar to the work of a bricoleur and involves the agential rearrangement of recycled forms into new constructions.¹⁶

Sample 2

Excerpt from "City Froze":

17. The original Chinese text: 做为修补术的类型学，其特征是：建立起有结构的组合，并不是直接通过其它有结构的组合，而是通过事件，或者更准确的说，把事件的碎屑拼合在一起来建立诸结构。Wang, "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi" [City Froze in Time], 164.

[...] the characteristic feature of typology design, as of "bricolage", is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structural sets but by fitting together events, or rather debris of events.¹⁷

Excerpt from *The Savage Mind*:

18. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 28. The original Chinese text: 现在，作为实际平面上的修补术的神话思想，其特征是，它建立起有结构的组合，并不是直接通过其它有结构的组合，而是 [...] 通过把事件，或更准确地说，把事件的碎屑拼合在一起来建立诸结构 [...]. Lévi-Strauss, *Yexing de Siwei* [The Savage Mind], 21-22.

Now, the characteristic feature of mythical thought, as of "bricolage" on the practical plane, is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structural sets but [...] by fitting together events, or rather the remains of events [...].¹⁸

19. Wang, "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi" [City Froze in Time], 159.

Wang argues that traditional Chinese cities, such as Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Beijing, have been constructed in a similar way to the bricolage of myth.¹⁹ Following Lévi-Strauss's opposing between bricoleur and engineer, Wang contrasts the premodern Chinese craftsman or artisan with the Western conception of the architect-creator because the former works with concrete signs and makes do with the already formed, while the latter begins with concepts and imposes preconceived order on the city. By metaphorically linking architectural typology design and bricolage, Wang critiques the modernist ideology of architectural progress.

Sample 3

Excerpt from "City Froze":

20. The original Chinese text: 也就是把过去的城市讲述一次，或者把过去的事情每回忆一次，城市的历史就被从新构造一次。[...] 由过去变成了现在的一部分，关于织体城市的理论就是对关于城市的历史进步与历史发展的传统理论的拒绝。Wang, "Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi" [City Froze in Time], 161.

The history of the city is reconstituted each time the past of the city is retold or recollected. [...] By having the past become part of the present, the theory of texture-city discounts traditional theories of progress or evolution.²⁰

Excerpt from *The Age of Structuralism*:

For him [Lévi-Strauss], history is reconstituted each time a myth is retold or the past is recollected. [...] By having the past become

21. Edith Kurzweil, *The Age of Structuralism: Lévi-Strauss to Foucault* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 23. The original Chinese text: 按照他的看法, 一个神话每重新讲述一次, 或者过去的事情每回忆一次, 历史就被重新构造了一次。[……]由于过去变成了现在的一部分, 莱维-斯特劳斯的理论不赞成关于历史进步或历史发展的传统理论。Edith Kurzweil, *Jiegou Zhuayi Shidai: Cong Lei Wei-Si Te Lao Si dao Fu Ke* [The Age of Structuralism: Lévi-Strauss to Foucault], trans. Dayi Yin (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1988), 14.

part of the present, Lévi-Strauss' theory discounts traditional theories of progress or evolution.²¹

The above readings indicate that the Lévi-Straussian notion of bricolage has a twofold significance in "City Froze". Bricolage offers a theoretical model for the architect's conceptualisation of architectural typology design; meanwhile, Wang's writing with the past is a work of bricolage in its own right, as the text combines previously unrelated topics, texts, and ideas to construct ad hoc instruments of analysis. It is in this sense that the text of "City Froze" is self-referential; it simultaneously articulates Wang's preferred design strategy and performatively embodies this strategy.

Bricolage Pattern

By applying the method of cross-textual comparison demonstrated in the above reading samples to the full text of "City Froze", the present article also maps and offers a visual representation of the bricolage form of Wang's text.

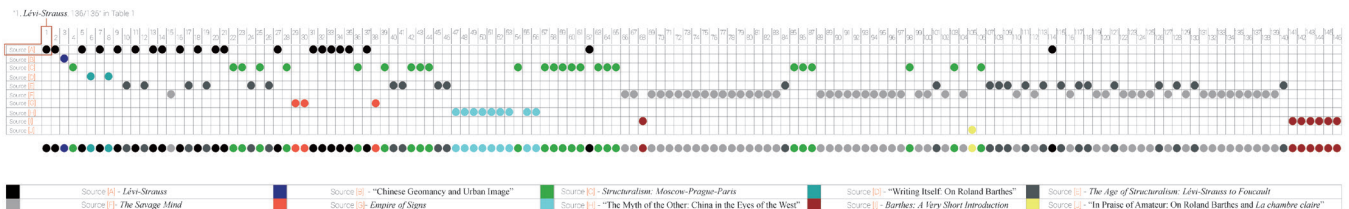
Table 1 presents the 146 textual fragments found in "City Froze" in the order of their appearance in the essay. Each entry in Table 1 is numbered and includes the title of the original text in English, the page number(s) of the fragment in the Chinese edition of the text, and the page number(s) of the corresponding fragment in the English edition. If there is no corresponding English edition of the Chinese text, the digit(s) following the English title refer(s) to the page number(s) in the Chinese source. When a text appears for the first time in Table 1, it is indexed with a letter (from "[A]" to "[J]"), which links the marked entry to its corresponding bibliographic categories in Table 2.

1. Lévi-Strauss [A], 136/135	47. “The Myth of the Other: China in the Eyes of the West” (henceforth “The Myth of the Other”) [H], 147/108-109	96. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 17/12
2. Lévi-Strauss, 98/99	48. “The Myth of the Other”, 147/109	97. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 18/13
3. “Chinese Geomancy and Urban Image” [B], 301-303	49. “The Myth of the Other”, 148/109	98. <i>Structuralism</i> , 137/107
4. <i>Structuralism: Moscow-Prague-Paris</i> [C], 123/95	50. “The Myth of the Other”, 148/109	99. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 16-17/12
5. Lévi-Strauss, 58/63	51. “The Myth of the Other”, 148/109	100. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 22/16
6. “Writing Itself: On Roland Barthes” [D], 193/xix	52. “The Myth of the Other”, 148/109	101. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 6/17
7. Lévi-Strauss, 58/63	53. “The Myth of the Other”, 149/110	102. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 3/1
8. “Writing Itself: On Roland Barthes”, 194/xx	54. <i>Structuralism</i> , 105/88	103. <i>Structuralism</i> , 114/87
9. Lévi-Strauss, 16/25	55. “The Myth of the Other”, 149/110	104. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 15-16/11
10. <i>The Age of Structuralism: Lévi-Strauss to Foucault</i> (henceforth <i>The Age of Structuralism</i>) [E], 6/16	56. “The Myth of the Other”, 149/110	105. “In Praise of Amateur: On Roland Barthes and <i>La chambre Claire</i> ” [J], 163
11. Lévi-Strauss, 16/25	57. <i>Structuralism</i> , 4 note 2	106. <i>Structuralism</i> , 94/71
12. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 190-191/185	58. <i>Structuralism</i> , 123/95	107. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 5/16
13. Lévi-Strauss, 16/25	59. <i>Structuralism</i> , 4 note 2	108. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 5/16
14. Lévi-Strauss, 14/23	60. <i>Structuralism</i> , 124/95-96	109. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 4/15
15. <i>The Savage Mind</i> [F], 297-298/259-260	61. <i>Structuralism</i> , 116/88	110. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 22/16
16. Lévi-Strauss, 15/24	62. Lévi-Strauss, 58/63	111. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 6/17
17. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 3/14-15	63. <i>Structuralism</i> , 12/2	112. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 23/17-18
18. Lévi-Strauss, 14/23	64. <i>Structuralism</i> , 125/97	113. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 6/17
19. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 4/15	65. <i>Structuralism</i> , 124/95	114. Lévi-Strauss, 16-17/25-26
20. Lévi-Strauss, 14/23	66. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 3/1	115. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 3-4/15
21. Lévi-Strauss, 41/49	67. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 4/1	116. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 24/18
22. <i>Structuralism</i> , 112/86	68. Barthes: <i>A Very Short Introduction</i> (henceforth Barthes) [I], 88/89-90	117. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 14/23
23. <i>Structuralism</i> , 115/88	69. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 4/2	118. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 6/17
24. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 214/211	70. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 4-5/2	119. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 43/35
25. <i>Structuralism</i> , 114/87	71. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 5/2	120. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 43/35
26. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 3/14	72. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 5/2-3	121. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 7/17
27. Lévi-Strauss, 138/137	73. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 6/3	122. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 43/35
28. <i>Structuralism</i> , 22/10	74. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 6/3	123. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 25/19
29. <i>Empire of Signs</i> [G], 51-56/33-36	75. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 7/4	124. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 28/21
30. <i>Empire of Signs</i> , 52/34	76. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 8/5	125. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 26/20
31. Lévi-Strauss, 36-37/44-45	77. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 9/5	126. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 7/17
32. Lévi-Strauss, 37/45	78. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 11/7	127. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 28/21-22
33. Lévi-Strauss, 62/67	79. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 12/8	128. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 7/17-18
34. Lévi-Strauss, 101/101	80. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 13/9	129. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 44/36
35. Lévi-Strauss, 56-57/61-62	81. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 48/39	130. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 7/17-18
36. <i>Structuralism</i> , 116-117/89	82. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 14/9-10	131. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 26/19
37. Lévi-Strauss, 56-57/62	83. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 13-14/9	132. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 26-27/20
38. <i>Empire of Signs</i> , 54/34-35	84. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 15/24	133. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 27/21
39. <i>Structuralism</i> , 22/10	85. <i>Structuralism</i> , 132/103	134. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 28-29/21-22
40. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 207/205	86. <i>Structuralism</i> , 132/103	135. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 28/21
41. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 210/208	87. <i>Structuralism</i> , 133-134/104	136. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 26-27/20
42. <i>Structuralism</i> , 107-108/82	88. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 14-15/10	137. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 24/18
43. <i>Structuralism</i> , 109/83	89. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 15/10	138. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 27/20
44. <i>Structuralism</i> , 108/82	90. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 15/10-11	139. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 27/21
45. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 144/145	91. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 16/11	140. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 15/24
46. <i>The Age of Structuralism</i> , 144/145	92. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 16/11	141. Barthes, 55/56
	93. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 16/11	142. Barthes, 58/58
	94. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 16/11	143. Barthes, 32/32
	95. <i>The Savage Mind</i> , 21/15	144. Barthes, 33/34
		145. Barthes, 36-37/37
		146. Barthes, 34-35/35-36

Table 1: The 146 discourse fragments found in “City Froze in Time”
Source: Shu Wang, “Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi” [City Froze in Time], 130-70.

	Chinese bibliography	Corresponding non-Chinese bibliography
[A]	Leach, Edmund. <i>Lie Wei Si Te Lao Si</i> [Lévi-Strauss]. Translated by Qingren Wang. Beijing: Joint Publishing, 1988.	Leach, Edmund. <i>Lévi-Strauss</i> , 4th ed. London: Fontana Press, 1996.
[B]	Kunio, Miura and Mozuna Kiko. “Fengshui yu Chengshi Xingxiang” [Chinese Geomancy and Urban Image]. In <i>Fengshui Yanjiu</i> [Research of Fengshui Theory], edited by Qiheng Wang, 299-310. Tianjin: Tianjin University Press, 1998.	No corresponding non-Chinese literature found
[C]	Broekman, Jan M. <i>Jiegou Zhuyi: Mosike-Bulage-Bali</i> [Structuralism: Moscow-Prague-Paris]. Translated by Youzheng Li. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1980.	Broekman, Jan M. <i>Structuralism: Moscow-Prague-Paris</i> . Translated by Jan F. Beekman and Brunhilde Helm. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974.
[D]	Sontag, Susan. “Xiezuo Benshen: Lun Luo Lan Ba Te” [Writing Itself: On Roland Barthes]. In <i>Fuhaocue Yuanli: Jiegou Zhuyi Wenxue Lilun Wenxuan</i> [Elements of Semiology: Selected Essays of Structuralism Literary Theory], translated and edited by Youzheng Li, 182-207. Beijing: Joint Publishing, 1988.	Sontag, Susan. “Writing Itself: On Roland Barthes.” In <i>A Barthes Reader</i> , edited by Susan Sontag, vii-xxvii. New York: Hill & Wang, 1982.
[E]	Kurzweil, Edith. <i>Jiegou Zhuyi Shidai: Cong Lei Wei-Si Te Lao Si dao Fu Ke</i> [The Age of Structuralism: Lévi-Strauss to Foucault]. Translated by Dayi Yin. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1988.	Kurzweil, Edith. <i>The Age of Structuralism: Lévi-Strauss to Foucault</i> . New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.
[F]	Lévi-Strauss, Claude. <i>Texing de Srwei</i> [The Savage Mind]. Translated by Youzheng Li. Beijing: The Commercial Press 1987.	Lévi-Strauss, Claude. <i>The Savage Mind</i> . London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.
[G]	Barthes, Roland. <i>Fuhao Diguo</i> [Empire of Signs]. Translated by Naixiu Sun. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1994.	Barthes, Roland. <i>Empire of Signs</i> . Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983.
[H]	Zhang, Longxi. “Fei Wo de Shenghua——Xifangren Yanzhong de Zhongguo” [The Myth of the Other: China in the Eyes of the West]. In <i>Wenhua Leitong yu Wenhua Liyong——Shi Jingqian Beida Jiangyanlu</i> [Culture Equivalence and Culture Use: Speeches Delivered by Jonathan Spence at Peking University], edited by Rong Jiang, 147-173. Beijing: Peking University Press, 1990.	Zhang, Longxi. “The Myth of the Other: China in the Eyes of the West.” <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 15, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 108-133.
[I]	Culler, Jonathan. <i>Luo Lan Ba Te</i> [Roland Barthes]. Translated by Jian Fang. Taipei: Laureat Publications, 1992.	Culler, Jonathan. <i>Barthes: A Very Short Introduction</i> . Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2002.
[J]	Hsu, Chi-Lin. “Yeyu Song——Guanyu Luo Lan Ba Te yu Ming Shi Yishu” [In Praise of Amateur: On Roland Barthes and <i>La chambre claire</i>]. In <i>Ming Shi: Sheying Zaji</i> [La chambre claire], edited by Yongsheng Xiao, 151-167. Taipei: Idea Photography Taiwan, 1995.	No corresponding non-Chinese literature found

Table 2: A bibliography of “City Froze in Time”
Source: Shu Wang, “Shijian Tingzhi de Chengshi” [City Froze in Time], 130-70.



The bricolage pattern of the 146 textual fragments found throughout “City Froze” can be visualised further. In Diagram 1 above, each textual fragment listed in Table 1 is represented as a coloured circle. The circles in Diagram 1 are sorted vertically into 10 rows corresponding to the bibliographic sources presented in Table 2, which are labelled alphabetically in the far-left column of the diagram from “Source [A]” to “Source [J]”. Circles of the same colour represent textual fragments derived from the same source. Meanwhile, corresponding with Table 1, the circles in Diagram 1 are also sorted horizontally according to the order in which they appear in the text. For example, the first black circle that is highlighted in the upper left-hand corner of Diagram 1 belongs to “Source [A]: *Lévi-Strauss*” and is the first identified textual fragment to appear in “City Froze”.

Diagram 1 embodies the Lévi-Straussian notion of bricolage. In Diagram 1, each circle marks out an event of theorising and writing about the city using codes found in other authors’ texts. In these events, linguistic signs become blocks of constructing ideas, which carry within them meanings of the past and the traces of various writers’ engagements with written marks. The patchwork of the essay formulates a second-level significance, which renders the concept of bricolage perceptible. In this sense, the essay goes beyond technical modes of representation but is charged with symbolic force.

It should be clarified that the above analysis implies no intention to deny the practical necessity of standard academic referencing. The article only attempts to highlight that academic referencing is simultaneously an element of scientific writing and a cultural practice; it is a template that is not ideologically free but charged with presuppositions. Consequently, the article suggests that it understands Wang’s challenging practice of referencing without overlooking his very specific critical position.

Building with the Past

Considerable research has been focusing on the built projects of the Amateur Architectural Studio, which was cofounded by Wang and his professional partner and wife, Lu Wenyu. Nevertheless, comparative studies of Wang’s written and built works remain rare, which leaves the writing–building equivalence claimed by the architect underexamined. In fact, forms of bricolage are readily discernible in Wang’s typology design and architectonics.

22. Shu Wang and Wenyu Lu, “Zhongguo Meishu Xueyuan Xiangshan Xiaoyuan Shannan Erqi Gongcheng Sheji” [Phase II of Xiangshan Campus, China Academy of Art], *Shidai Jianzhu* [Time+Architecture], no. 3 (2008): 72–84.

The CAA Campus’s complex consists of three building types: hill, water, and courtyard type houses, which are geometric abstractions of distinctive forms that the architects extracted from various historical sources (Figure 1).²² Each type repeats several times on the campus site while varying to fit particular topographical and compositional conditions. For example, defined by their twisting and undulating volumes, Buildings 11 and 18 are variations of the hill type house and are modelled on the Buddhist grotto of Lingyin Temple outside Hangzhou. Buildings 14 and 19 are water type houses whose curvilinear roofs metaphorically refer to the ripples of water depicted in traditional Chinese landscape paintings. Buildings 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17 belong

to the courtyard type, which was historically the most common form of vernacular house in the area (Figure 2). Like the bricolage of Wang's theoretical texts, the typology design of the CAA Campus combines selected and transformed historical references from local religious, urban, and landscape traditions to house new programmes and sustain cultural continuity.

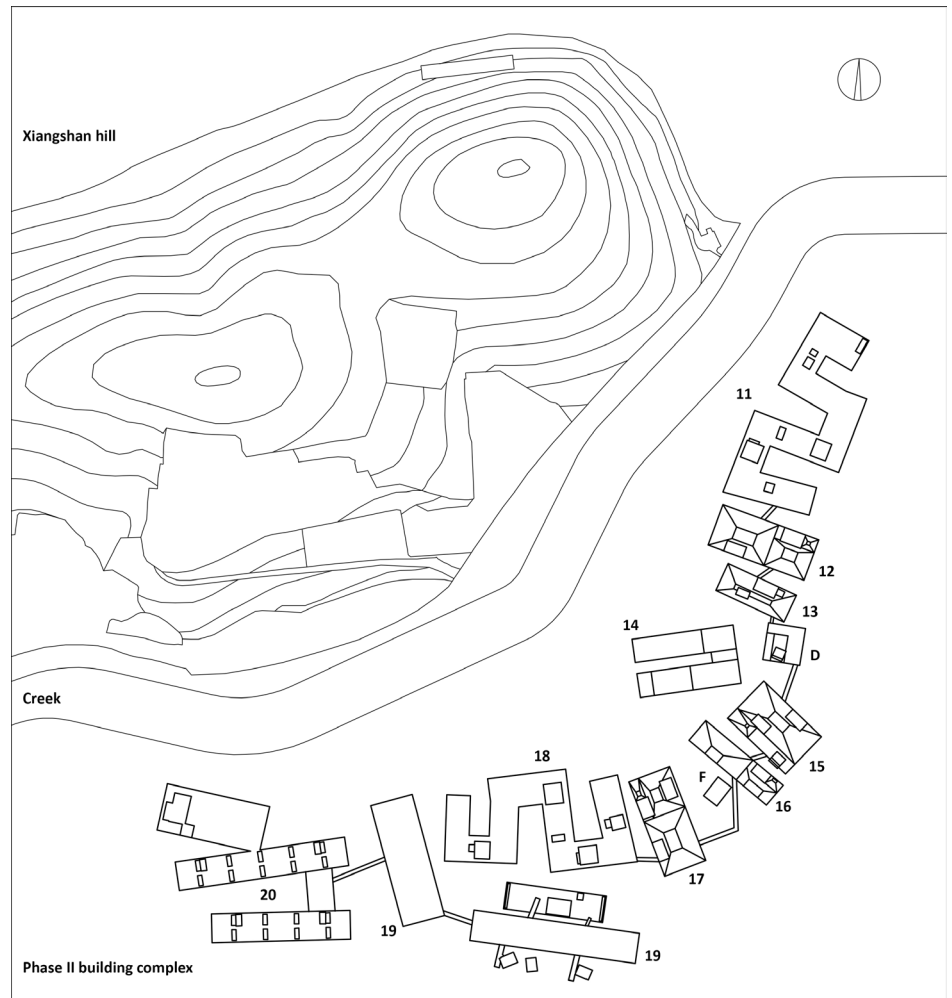
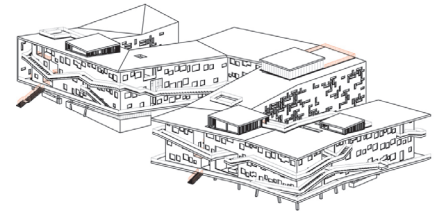
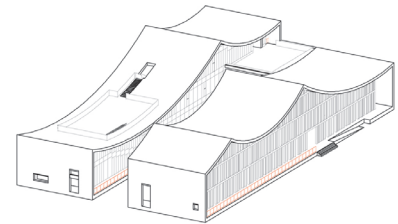
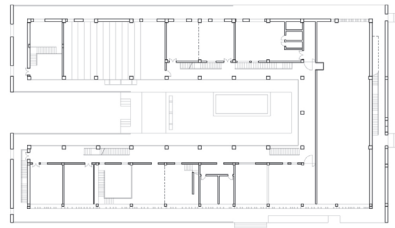


Figure 1: The overall plan of the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art, Phase II, Hangzhou, 2007 (author's drawing)

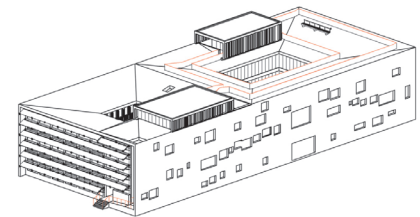
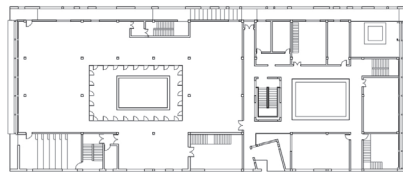
Source: Shu Wang and Wenyu Lu, "Zhongguo Meishu Xueyuan Xiangshan Xiaoyuan Shannan Erqi Gongcheng Sheji" [Phase II of Xiangshan Campus, China Academy of Art], 72-84.



Building 18 - hill type house



Building 14 - water type house



Building 12- courtyard type house

Figure 2: Three building types on the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art, Phase II, Hangzhou, 2007 (author's drawing)
Source: Shu Wang and Wenyu Lu, "Zhongguo Meishu Xueyuan Xiangshan Xiaoyuan Shannan Erqi Gongcheng Sheji" [Phase II of Xiangshan Campus, China Academy of Art], 72-84; Shu Wang, *Imagining the House* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publisher, 2012).

The idea of making with the past is also detectible in Wang's architectonics. In a series of projects – the Five Scattered Houses, Ningbo (2006); the CAA Campus; the Ningbo History Museum; and the *Shuian Shanju* Guesthouse, Hangzhou (2011) – Wang adopted a vernacular tiling technique known as *Wapan*, which enabled local craftsmen to build with materials salvaged from torn-down villages that were deemed to be obstructive to China's rapid urbanisation. The Ningbo History Museum's masonry facade presents a spectacle of heterogeneity wherein broken tiles, bricks, and other irregular pieces of various colours, sizes, shapes, textures, and manufacturing dates are rearranged in a dramatic form (Figure 3). The aesthetic experience evoked by the museum's facade is somehow comparable to that of reading Wang's theoretical texts, as its material hybridity displays "a visual manifestation of fragmentation" that attracts attention to the "enigmatic juxtaposition" of ill-fitting, recycled masonry blocks, which, in

23. Hing-Wah Chau, "The Aesthetics of Reuse: The Materiality and Vernacular Traditions of Wang Shu's Architecture", in *Unmaking Waste 2015 Conference Proceedings*, ed. Kathrine Thornton (Adelaide: Zero Waste SA Research Centre for Sustainable Design and Behaviour, 2015), 360; David H. Fleming, "The Architectural Cinematicity of Wang Shu and the Architectonic Cinema of Jia Zhangke: Diagrammatically Decomposing the "Main Melody" in Monumental Assemblage Art", *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 45.

turn, "necessarily gather new meanings once they [the masonry blocks] become arranged".²³

Through *Wapan*, Wang and his team celebrate coauthorship as an essential architectural quality whereby different types of craftsmanship and materials, cultural and natural forces, and human and nonhuman agencies beyond the architects' immediate control are honoured in and absorbed and fused into the masonry masterpiece. In Wang's built version of installation art, the nonlinear past-present order is pushed to a new level. The facade recovers the natural link of temporality, events, matters, and human perception and, in turn, resists abstracting time into an unlimited accumulation of mathematically determined, monotonous intervals. In a broader sense, Wang's reassembling of material offers an architectural critique of Chinese state-sanctioned urban renovation, which ruthlessly erases existing urban fabrics with their enduring human attachments in the name of progressive modernisation. These cases witness forms of bricolage embedded in Wang's built works. Furthermore, the shared bricolage pattern in the architect's written and built works suggests that amid them, there exists a radical transition of make-do logic from building design to reflection on design.



Figure 3: The Ningbo History Museum's masonry wall (author's photo)

Concluding Remarks

24. Gaojin, Hale, and Wang, "Novelistic Essay".

The presented close reading reconfirms the previous research finding that in Wang's PhD thesis and other published essays based on this thesis, the architect consciously appropriates other writers' texts to formulate his own writing.²⁴ Furthermore, by understanding Wang's writing approach with reference to the architect's specific theoretical context, the article demonstrates that Wang's challenging writing method is an integral component of his theoretical project. The Lévi-Straussian notion of bricolage, or making do with the readymade, has both informed Wang's typology design theory and supplied the cultural logic beneath the theory's textual surface. Wang's writing approach brings to the fore the dimension of cultural continuity, which is arguably inherent in activities of theorising architecture but suppressed to some extent in scientific norms of quotation. Additionally, Wang pushes the logic of cultural continuity to an extreme and expands it into the procedure of scientific writing. His essay is a mosaic piece made with the past and coauthored by many. The unconventional characteristics of Wang's essay echo in several aspects of his built works. The typology design of the CAA Campus incorporates distinctive historical forms into the public project. By adopting the *Wapan* technique, Wang and his team construct literarily using recycled urban debris bearing traces, memories, and various agencies. Examining Wang's writing method does not confine the reader to the margin of his design thought. On the contrary, it reveals the fundamental, but sometimes overlooked, core of Wang's theoretical project in which an attempt is made to demolish "the distinction between theory and design, concept and object".