

## MASTER'S THESIS

### The making of Graham Street market: culture and politics in spatial production

Leung, Ming Fai

*Date of Award:*  
2012

[Link to publication](#)

#### General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

**The Making of Graham Street Market:  
Culture and Politics in Spatial Production**

LEUNG Ming Fai

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Prof. Stephen CHU Yiu Wai

Hong Kong Baptist University

August 2012

## **Abstract**

In late 2006, the HK Government launched the “Old Shop Street” redevelopment project (H18) which claimed to “conserve” a historic district by uprooting the vibrant Graham Street Market that is as old as the city, and erecting giant towers on the site. The underlying logic of H18 reflects the conventional perception and narrative of Hong Kong history: one that ends when it unfolds, erasing the traces of lives once lived.

This thesis attempts to delineate and analyse the space lived by three particular subjects in Graham Street Market through an event-space perspective, inspired by French philosopher Alain Badiou’s theory of the subject. This framework assumes that space, instead of an external pre-given, is the product of event(s) carried out by the subject and is thus critical to their existence. These three subjects, among many, construct their own spaces in the street market through different events. The structure and insight of their spaces will shed light on the discussion on a few problems of space.

The first chapter concerns Graham Street Market itself as a subject. Its historical space in which a conservation campaign takes place signifies a paradigm shift in the conventional narrative of Hong Kong history. The second chapter examines the space of self-making with Yee Kee Vegetable Company as an example to show how hawking is institutionalized and loses its subjectivity in the course of time, which signifies a threat to the right to the city in David Harvey’s sense. The last chapter focuses on the feline space in Graham Street Market. The cat represents the Other in Badiou’s sense and the analysis suggests that the space of Other is the precondition for the emergence of public subject and consequently a political public space.

## Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Table of Content.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One Historical Space: Hong Kong History According to Graham Street Market...	15
Chapter Two Space of Self-Making: <i>Yee Kee Vegetable Shop</i> and Hawking.....	54
Chapter Three The Space of Other: Street Cats and the Public.....	84
Conclusion:.....	115
References.....	123
Curriculum Vitae.....	128