Identity is not a singular construct, nor is it creation a linear activity. Both individual and collective identities are constructed by multiple entities. Similarly spaces, like identities, are multiple in their definitions and are constructed – and not always by ourselves. The spaces and identities of a city can be thought of as a series of dynamic and layered abstractions, a Met[a]ropolia (Meta + Metropolis). These layers refer to each other to continually change meaning, and in doing so complete or add to its original self. We are interested in self-reflexive techniques to construct identity and space. Met[a]ropolia explores frames within frames, plays within plays, and cities within cities to ask: How can a meditation on space illuminate our understanding of identity?

The year 2046 is significant for Hong Kong as it will mark the end of the “one country, two systems” constitutional principle (aka Special Administrative Region - SAR) formulated by China. In Wong Kar-Wai’s film of the same name, 2046 is never explicitly defined. It is a place, a room, a year, and a state of mind. Wong’s films – distinctly characterised by multiple non-chronological narratives, saturated visual style and complex composition – create a reflective approach and raises questions about reality/illusion, identity/self-discovery, continually questioning relationships between viewer and occupant.

In the 1995 anime Ghost in the Shell, director Mamoru Oshii creates a future city of Japan that is modelled after Hong Kong. Oshii recognised in Hong Kong an ability to take on new identities – the city for him was the perfect starting persona from which he could create his futurist urbanism. The key city scenes are sequenced in what cartoon theorist Scott McCloud identifies as Aspect-to-Aspect transitions. In contrast to goal-oriented, Action-to-Action sequences commonly found in American comics, the Aspect-to-Aspect sequencing found in manhua/manga create transitions that virtually abandon time, for the exploration of space. These transitions evoke mood, activate the senses and imagination, and they focus on the experience of being there, rather than getting there.

We are curious about visual media that explores movement through space, representation of non/adjacent spaces alongside displaced/adjacent moments. Exploring new protocols for drawing is critical for the discovery and representation of these sequences and their relationships, and will ultimately develop and inform your architectural identity.

Mise-en-aybme • Project 1, Device | Oct – Dec 2017 | 10 wks

Project 1 explores methods of self-discovery and identity through the technique of mise-en-aybme. Mise-en-aybme occurs within a text when there is a reduplication of concepts referring to the textual whole. In the visual arts it can be demonstrated through an image

In Wong Kar-Wai’s films, there is not a single shot of Hong Kong skyline, that picture postcard metaphor of Hong Kong, conjuring up images of power and desire. Wong’s Hong Kong is a city of a different kind, and the secret of that city is not power, but impotence…. The city is not only a physical scape, but also a psychic one. This is one reason why the city is never shown whole, but only in fragments, in metonyms and displacements.

- Ackbar Abbas
The Erotics of Disappointment

More than 90 percent of Hong Kong residents are ethnically Chinese. However, ask residents here how they see themselves in a national sense, and many will say Hong Konger first - or even Asian or world citizen - before mentioning China. The issue of identity is one that the Chinese Communist Party has grappled with since Britain turned over control of this global financial capital to China 17 years ago.

- Edward Wong
NY Times
appearing within itself. *Mise-en-aybme* is a play of signifiers within a text, of sub-texts mirroring each other. This mirroring can get to the point where meaning may be rendered unstable and, in this respect, may be seen as part of the process of deconstruction.

We will begin Project 1 by considering Hong Kong's shifting cultural identity under the waves of occupation and governance – pre 19thC Imperial, British Colonial, Japanese occupied, post-WW2 British rule, and post-Handover. Project 1 will take the form of a spatially embedded device or a 1:1 installation that occupies a space in London. It will be directly informed by your research of Hong Kong culture. We will consider the traditions, heritage, language, religion, ancestry, aesthetics, thinking patterns, and social structures that have contributed to the development of contemporary Hong Kongese identity. Whilst speculative in nature, your project will be bound by a series of determined roles and relationships, such as user occupation and the urban context.

We expect Project 1 explorations to employ Making as a design process to rigorously test ideas through physical models. Workshop fabrication, both analogue and digital craftsmanship, is all actively encouraged not only in order to convey the language of one's architecture but to feedback into the design thinking itself. The final documentation of the project will be through a short film. On-going support will be offered to students in computing, professional photography and post-production.

### Field Trip
- **Hong Kong** | **Jan 2018** | **1 wk**

The unique political, economic and geographical qualities of Hong Kong have created an inimitable megacity that exists in a dynamic state of layered and continually changing meanings. Sek Kei's essay on the waves of Hong Kong cinema (first in the mid 70s, and the second in the early 90s) attributes this to a sense of identity crisis brought about by a pressing reality of the '97 handover, and the sense of living on borrowed space and borrowed time. This examination fostered a sense of common purpose, and a common medium of the cinema to vent its collective feelings. Possessing both Chinese and international qualities, and with aspirations to be both East and West, the cultural waves of these periods also benefitted from the tight geography of the city closely informing the lifestyle, psychology and sense of destiny of its inhabitants.

### #2047
- **Projects 2 + 3, Main Building** | **Jan – May 2018** | **18 wks**

The main building project of the year will be sited in Hong Kong. Your *mise-en-aybme* investigations from Project 1 will drive the ideas and inform your architectural language for Project 2. Your proposal will form a new urban hub within Hong Kong and will act as a generator for future change, a shift in the urban landscape, an amplification of an edge condition, or as a resource for yet to be discovered communities. You will be required to speculate on and be inventive with proposing a programme, to develop a complex brief, and synthesize a sophisticated design proposal. Your design will suggest new forms for the city and its inhabitants, considering them not as passive receptors but instead as active elements in the definition of architecture. The mediation between matter and form, the relationship between design and occupation, the spatial implications of new technologies and the restructuring of social relationships that follow are themes that continue to interest Unit 9.

We also expect the *mise-en-aybme* approach to push your drawings into unexplored territories of representation. Craftsmanship and mastery of the multidimensional drawing, model, film and beyond, is required to bring the viewer or occupier as close as possible to the sensation of your architecture.