

Szeto, Mirana May, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Contesting Neoliberalism: the Cultural and Community Movement of Blue House, Hong Kong

Hong Kong postcolonial identity politics used to be played out in academia and cultural production circles, without significant trickle-down to mainstream consciousness. In face of the post 1997 intensification of neoliberal urban redevelopment however, resistant cultural politics has barged into mainstream consciousness and discourse through the cultural-spatial politics of new preservation movements persisting all over the city. This paper studies the cultural turn in the movement tactics and imaginaries of these new preservation movements emerging from communities under treat of demolition and displacement due to neoliberal urban redevelopment and tourism makeovers repackaged in the name of heritage revitalization. This trend started in full force in Wanchai, and can be said to achieve significant success in the participatory community building movement in preserving the century old quotidian cultural landscape and living community around Blue House, Wanchai. The implications of this exceptional, precarious success need to be contextualized, historicized and analyzed.