

# Hong Kong Waters

A photo/video/sound project by Andreas Müller-Pohle

## **Abstract**

This project aims to map Hong Kong from the perspective of the water. Different media will be used: underwater photography, half above and half below the water surface; floating video recordings in which the camera will adapt to the rhythm of the waves like a message in a bottle; and an audio track combining underwater sounds with live recordings of the noises of the city.

# Hong Kong



## Concept

Two dimensions define the image of Asia's mega-metropolis Hong Kong: its vertical urbanity and its horizontal conformity to the water. No other city in the world has a larger number of high-rises (558 buildings over 400 feet; by comparison: New York has 360 skyscrapers) or a higher population density than Hong Kong (7 million residents live in a built area of no more than 100 square miles). Due to a dramatic lack of buildable land between the mountains and the waterfront, a hyper-dense architecture has emerged since the 1970s with ever closer and higher structures. In striking contrast stands Hong Kong's varied water landscape – an area with more than 700 kilometers of coastline, almost 260 islands, numerous harbours, bays and rivers, clear-water reservoirs and waterfalls.

The multimedia project "Hong Kong Waters", in its photographic component, aims at bringing these two dimensions together: the vertical city, seen from the perspective of the water, photographed half above and half below the water surface. The "drowning pictures" resulting from this process may be seen as a metaphor for the city's increasing susceptibility to floods as a consequence of global warming and land reclamation (the water level in Victoria Harbour, for example, has risen 12 cm over the past fifty years). The photographs are taken at significant spots across the entire urban area and include Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, the New Territories and the widespread world of tiny isles to sizable islands. Each photographed spot will be determined by its precise GPS coordinates to allow the viewer to contrast the underwater view of the photograph with its corresponding Google Earth satellite view from space.

In its video component, "Hong Kong Waters" will go with the poetic flow of the water – as do the photographs that are exposed to the caprices of the random wash of the waves –, but here the visual results will be left entirely to chance. Like a message in a bottle, protected by a light water housing, a video camera will follow the rhythm of the waves and combine, preferably by night, the city lights and their reflections with the blackness of the water.

A synthesis of architecture and water, social space and an economically used natural element is also the aim of the audio component that mixes two different sound sources: the underwater sound recorded on a Star Ferry boat ride from Hong Kong Central to Kowloon, with the human voices and noises of these two parts of the city that are connected by the ferry. The world of underwater sound is an unusual and completely different one from the one we know; water transmits sound waves over 1480 meters per second (air: 340 meters/second) and is thus a medium more than four times faster. A special microphone, a hydrophone, is needed to authentically record this remote world of sound.

Together, these three components create a multimedia installation in which photography will play the central and dominant role with up to 80 medium-sized images (60 x 85 cm). A video projection adds the light rhythms of the water at night. And in a separate, shaded space or box the visitor may contemplate the sounds of Hong Kong from below and above the water.

The project outlined here has been conceived specifically for Hong Kong. Its components, however, have been verified, conceptu-

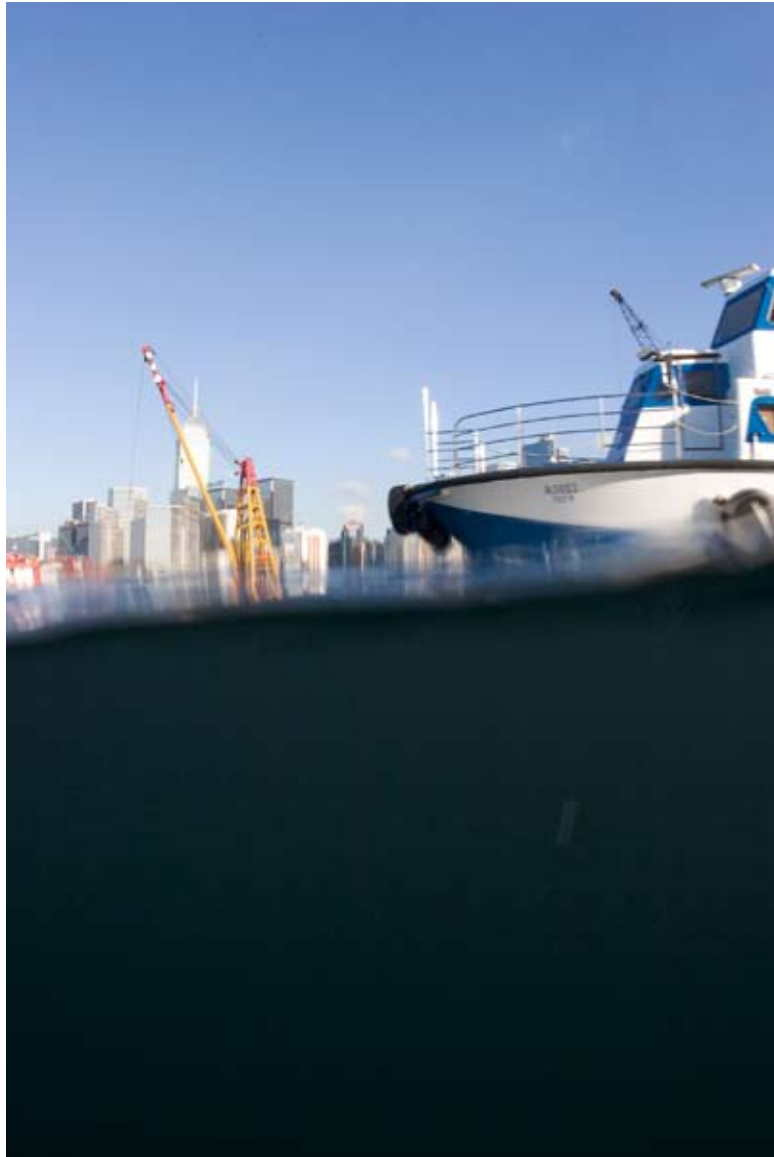
ally, aesthetically and technically, in "The Danube River Project" so that no obstacles in the realization process are to be expected. The water project along the Danube was a river project, a linear task, accomplished from the source to the end over a distance of 2840 kilometers. In contrast, "Hong Kong Waters" is an areal project, a non-linear task that involves a big variety of totally different water situations. The river as a line, the city as a knot, that makes both projects perfectly complementary.

## Sample Pictures

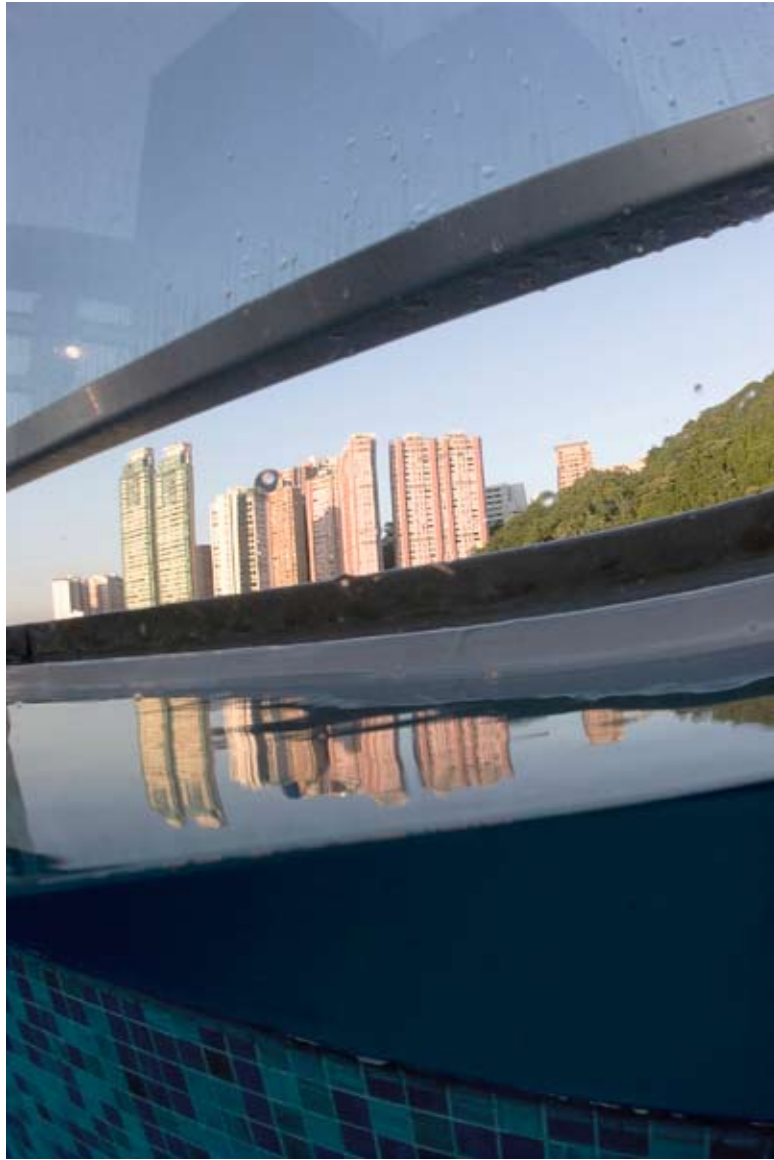


Hong Kong Island, Pier 9. N 22°17.163', E 114°09.770'

Taken in August 2008



Hong Kong Island, Pier 9. N 22°17.150, E 114°09.766'



Causeway Bay, Roof Pool. N 22°16.994', E 114°11.577'



Aberdeen Harbour. N 22°14.790', E 114°09.579'



Aberdeen Island. N 22°14.716', E 114°09.354'

# Info

## **Production Schedule**

November: First field trip

December: Second field trip

January: Photo, video, sound editing

February: Finishing, printing

## **Media**

Photography: 80 digital prints, 60x85 cm each

Video: 10 min video loop projection

Audio: 12–15 min sound loop

Website: [www.riverproject.net](http://www.riverproject.net)

Book: Texts, photographs, video/audio DVD

Flyers, posters

# Partnership

Join Hong Kong Waters and become our partner! We offer four types of partnership:

## **Main Partners**

As a Main Partner, you will be mentioned in all our communications – on the web, in the exhibitions, in the book, in press releases and other accompanying media activities. Depending on your contribution, you will receive one or more prints from the final project (see Share Partners). If applicable, you will be offered individual services such as a guided exhibition tour or invitations to special project events.

## **Media Partners**

As a Media Partner, you will be mentioned in all our communications and get exclusive access to "Making of . . ." footage and documentary photos.

## **Exhibition Partners**

As an Exhibition Partner, you will receive privileged access to the exhibition and be mentioned in our communications.

## **Share Partners**

As a Share Partner, you will receive, upon completion of the project, a print of your choice out of 40, size 60x85 cm, edition 5+III, numbered and signed by the artist. You become a Share Partner by contributing EUR 1000. This is half the price for which prints from the Hong Kong Waters project will be sold after March 2009.

Please contact Ben Füglistner, tel +49-30-62 90 80 06, hongkong@nhp.ph, or Andreas Müller-Pohle, tel +49-30-25 29 29 65 for more information.

## Contact

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