

DAAN ROGGEVEEN ED.

# PROGRESS & THE CHINESE CITY AS GLOBAL URBAN MODEL PROSPERITY

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The press about:

**How the City Moved to Mr Sun – China's New Megacities**

*Michiel Hulshof & Daan Roggeveen*

‘Witty, poignant, startling...’

– *Duncan Hewitt*, former BBC China correspondent

‘A delight to read.’

– *Architectural Record*

‘Powerful accounts illustrating the unrivalled pace of change.’

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

– *de Volkskrant*

‘Astonishing trip to urban jungle China.’

– *de Morgen*

**Facing East: Chinese Cities in Africa**

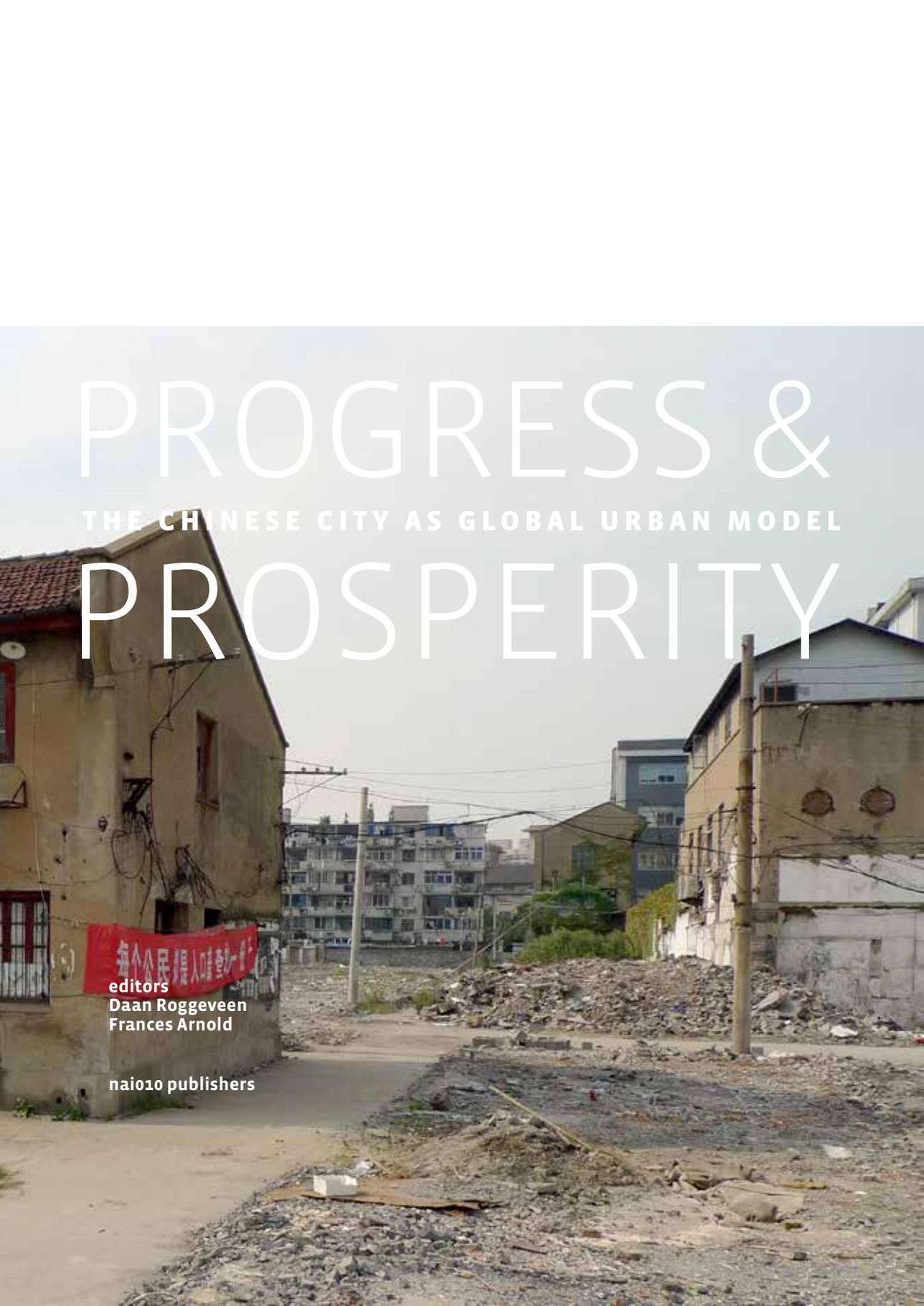
*Michiel Hulshof & Daan Roggeveen*

‘The show’s format is academic ... but the questions it raises about the alliance of two of the globe’s fastest-growing geographic entities are not.’

– *The New York Times*

**PROGRESS & PROSPERITY**





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After completing a degree in sociology and on discovering the work of August Sanders, **Eric Tabuchi** began his photographic career. In 1999, he co-founded Paris-based collective Glassbox with whom he participated in numerous exhibitions. From 2007, Eric Tabuchi released several books with Florence Loewy. He exhibited in Palais de Tokyo, Paris, in 2010. Tabuchi's father is Japanese and his mother is Danish. His work articulates territorial notions, memories and identity. In addition to photography, Eric Tabuchi practices sculpture and creates installations. Featured throughout this volume are extracts from Tabuchi's massive photo essay, *Atlas of Forms* – a collection of found images sourced from the internet, showing worldwide locations. The essay creates both an overview and backdrop of our global urban landscape from destruction, construction and beyond, all underpinned by human aspiration.



photo essay

Eric Tabuchi





# Progress & Prosperity

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Daan Roggeveen

Architect **Daan Roggeveen** is partner at **MORE Architecture**, a multidisciplinary firm that he founded with Robert Chen. MORE is a highly international office, aiming to create contemporary notions of collectivity. With journalist Michiel Hulshof, Roggeveen initiated the Go West Project, a think-tank focusing on emerging megacities. In 2011, they published the acclaimed book *How the City Moved to Mr Sun – China's New Megacities*. Currently, Roggeveen and Hulshof are researching Chinese influence on African urbanization. Their study has been shown at Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York; Louisiana Museum for Modern Art, Copenhagen; and Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel. Roggeveen studied architecture at Delft University of Technology. He was curator at the University of Hong Kong / Shanghai Study Centre and taught studio at the Chinese Academy of Art, Hangzhou. A frequent guest lecturer at international universities, his expertise are regularly sought for debates and analyses around urban development in China.

It is just hours after Donald Trump has been elected the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States when I arrive at the opening of Shanghai Art Week. Over the previous years, the festival has developed into a celebratory concentration of cultural events in the city, with this year emerging as its triumphant apex. Crammed into the space of just a few days were the opening of an art fair, the unveiling of various new gallery spaces, lavish parties, and on top of all that, the launch of the 11<sup>th</sup> Shanghai Biennale in the city's Power Station of Art – an industrial heritage building-turned-contemporary art museum on the west bank of the Huangpu River. In 2014, this former harbour zone was renovated into an attractive waterfront area with restaurants, a jogging track, a climbing wall and several private museums. Two red cranes remain as iconic remnants of the area's recent industrial past. On the river, vessels continue to bring coal and construction materials upstream.

When I walk in, the cluster of smaller and bigger renovated industrial buildings is already buzzing with activity; fashionable kids wearing black dresses and white *Stan Smith* sneakers, clutching glowing smartphones in one hand, a glass of champagne in the other. Collectors from Hong Kong and London meet artists from Beijing and Shanghai, while both established galleries and experimental art spaces are showing work ranging from Xu Zhen to Martin Creed. A steady stream of Ubers ferry guests to and from the festivities.

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Opposite a Tracey Emin neon, strategically positioned next to the entrance of the building, sits a booth with a large model of the waterfront district, praising its development with celebratory captions on the wall: 'Central Activity District of Extraordinary Global City'.

## **The New Normal**

An explosive cocktail of political power, economic growth and pragmatic people has generated massive development and urbanization in China, which has transformed the country from rural to urban. And now, after more than three decades of progress, Chinese cities have arrived at a stage of so-called 'New Normal', a term used by the Chinese leadership to describe a major transition in the economy towards a slower, but more stable type of growth. For several years, China's economy had been slowing down: a change which

impacted cities massively. Real estate developments stalled, factories closed and workers lost their jobs as the economy was swayed by a series of severe complications including a crashing stock market, serious problems regarding debt-laden local governments, and an overheated real-estate market. Urban districts and even whole cities had to redefine their strategies and *raison d'être*.

Simultaneously, China started an economic transformation process from an industrialized to a service-oriented economy. Its economic growth was not targeting double-digit numbers anymore, but aiming at a sustainable economy of innovation, pushing the development of the private sector instead of state-owned heavy industries. Domestic consumption had to replace the economy of export.

Moreover, urban leaders and residents alike started focusing more on the 'soft side' of urban development, which resulted in increased attention to environmental issues and urban culture. City governments established not just art museums and creative districts, but also music festivals and cultural events.

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A young, well-educated creative class proved to be a fertile ground for this cultural landscape. Festivals, gallery openings and museum programmes were expanding quickly thanks to a continually increasing audience. All these changes had a vast impact on the metropolitan landscape, with art being used as the ubiquitous icing on the cake of urban regeneration.

Moreover, Chinese companies—both state-owned and private—started moving their activities and investments abroad, motivated by a range of purposes, from the urge to diversify and expand their portfolio to the acquisition of know-how.

The recent so-called 'One Belt, One Road' initiative further boosted this geo-political expansion: it was a government strategy to invest heavily in infrastructure globally. Fuelled by slower economic development at home, by the ambition to actively increase the Chinese sphere of influence, and by the belief that infrastructure is the driver of growth, the Chinese leadership was funnelling billions into projects that supported the twenty-first century version of the Silk Road.

The Chinese metropolis has developed into the world's most successful urban scheme. Combining bottom-up energy with top-down force, it pushes cities and their inhabitants towards progress, fast-forward.

China's megacities are efficient, with well-functioning infrastructures, top-notch public transport, proper housing, steady economic growth, a low crime rate, an attractive climate for foreign investors, and a glitzy skyline to boot.

Can this metropolis be the blueprint for cities worldwide?

With contributions by architects, academics, artists and activists, this powerful book reveals the current condition of the (Chinese) megacity and its shift from *prosperity* to *progress*.

Architect Daan Roggeveen is the co-founder of MORE Architecture. With Michiel Hulshof, he wrote the acclaimed book *How the City Moved to Mr Sun*.

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