



# Typological Drift

## Emerging Cities in China

Shiqiao Li  
Esther Lorenz

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>ISBN</b>           | 9781951541712   |
| <b>Publisher</b>      | ORO Editions  |
| <b>Binding</b>        | Paperback / softback  |
| <b>Territory</b>      | World excluding USA, Canada, Australasia & Asia (except Japan; China non-exclusive) |
| <b>Size</b>           | 241 mm x 171 mm   |
| <b>Pages</b>          | 336 Pages   |
| <b>Illustrations</b>  | 300 color   |
| <b>Name of series</b> | Next Cities Series  |
| <b>Price</b>          | £22.95  |

- This book documents the impact of the Chinese culture on the development of city types in China in the past four decades, leading to surprising urban realities that often escape normative urban theories
- Through 13 case studies, the book reveals, how a thing-based conception of quantity, an unwavering enthusiasm for figuration, and the instinct for group action have given rise to distinctive Chinese urban formations

Neither derivatives of Western cities nor isolated from them, Chinese cities in the past four decades are perhaps best captured in their characteristic complexity through a concept in biological evolution: drift. Unlike mutation, adaptation, and migration, drift of phenotypes takes place when chance events terminate some features and allow other features to flourish. The Chinese culture, structurally divergent from the common Indo-European civilizational roots of Western cultures, can be seen to function as a set of “chance events” in the normative processes of urban change. The consequences of these “bottlenecks” of urban evolution are both fascinating and instructive: Chinese cities, when studied with this framework, begin to acquire an entirely different order of significance, injecting urban theory and practice with fresh vigor and insights. Through 13 case studies, more than 60 original maps and drawings, and extensive photographic documentation, the book reveals how three “drift triggers” – ten thousand things, figuration, and group action – have altered typological development in Chinese cities in recent decades.

**Shiqiao Li** is Weedon Professor in Asian Architecture, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, where he teaches history, theory, and design of architecture, and directs PhD in the Constructed Environment Program. He is author of *Understanding the Chinese City* (2014), *Architecture and Modernization* (2009, in Chinese) and *Power and Virtue, Architecture and Intellectual Change in England 1650-1730* (2006).

**Esther Lorenz** is a licensed architect and academic, and Associate Professor at the School of Architecture, University of Virginia. Her research explores the connections between architecture and culture, from the study of new urban formations to cultural and spatial practices in relation to built form, to investigations of the intersections between media and architecture.

