

## Everyday architecture in China

This issue of **arq** examines the possibilities for, and potentials of, thinking about everyday architecture in contemporary China. The term ‘everyday’ describes a concern with the lives of so-called ordinary people, and the routines and rituals of daily life. Its contemporary academic use springs largely from the work of cultural theorists such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau. In architecture, ‘the everyday’ can refer to design and construction by non-experts, the engagement of non-expert stakeholders with design, and design by experts that nevertheless remains sensitive to details and patterns of everyday life, encouraging it to thrive. Such ideas have particular relevance in the contemporary Chinese context, at a time of massive state-led building and infrastructure construction.

The six articles published here emerged from a symposium on the theme of everyday architecture held in Nanjing in May 2016, organised jointly by Southeast University, China, and the University of Melbourne, Australia, with participants including architects, critics, and political theorists. Jianfei Zhu – co-organiser of the symposium and curator of this issue of **arq** – reflects on the selection of papers and their collective impact in his opening perspective (pp. 200–202). He notes that the organisers ‘sought to highlight the centrality of ordinary people and the critical, yet open-ended, category of the everyday’ in order ‘to test and explore how [it] could be re-activated and re-enanted for discussions about China’. ‘We hoped to maintain’, Zhu writes, ‘a non-conclusive and non-resistant, yet questioning and political, relationship with modernity, technology, the market and the state’. The papers collected here are of broader global interest while also being of specific relevance to China. It is hoped that the questions they pose, particularly around ideas of the ordinary and the anonymous, will open up fruitful opportunities for architects and critics operating within and across different cultural contexts.

THE EDITORS