

## **Layered Landscapes of New York City's High-line and Shanghai's Lujiazui Skyline: The Blending of Historical Memories and Contemporary Design in Transforming Urban Spaces As Temporal Platforms for Innovation, Re-invention and Mediation in Preserving Cultural Product**

Charmaine I. Kaimikaua, PhD, Loyola Marymount University

Judy Battaglia, MA, Loyola Marymount University

### **Abstract**

High-lines and skylines are the silhouette backgrounds embedded within the cultural backdrop of a city. However, these architectural marvels and triumphs of human endeavors were created as a temporal platform to synchronize the aesthetics of culture and nature, to blend historical memories and contemporary visions in transforming urban spaces as places of capacity building. Through the critical lens of Cultural Anthropology and Communication Studies, this paper will explore multiple dimensions of innovation, reinvention, and mediation within the "layered landscapes" of New York City's high-line and Shanghai's Lujiazui's skyline. With the earnest interest of what "came before" and "what lies ahead", this essay will further probe the social realities of these transformed urban architectural places as a platform where sociality, nature and mindfulness is valued but can also be controversial. Architectural high-lines and skylines are often not well received since there may be a disruption of the cultural flow of history and nature blended with modernity. However, this can generate deeper discussions of social mediation depicting continual attentiveness to balance contemporary life and historical memories that nourishes, conserves yet provides spaces for which the cultural product can be innovatively (re) invented to be preserved and rendered timeless through the design process and construction phases. These shared perceptual visions of conversations between the cultural public and architectural designer are dialogues of interaction to nourish understanding in mediating contemporary issues of cultural contamination, alleviation of poverty, and utilizing urban space for the greater good of the surrounding ecology, communities, and the lifestyles of inhabitants in truly allowing people to "taste" the layered landscapes for which they reside in.