

The Modern Abattoir as a Machine for Killing: The municipal abattoir of the Shanghai International Settlement, 1933

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This paper tells the story of the production of a public abattoir completed in 1933 by the Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC). The Architecture Office for the Public Works of SMC was responsible for the design and sought examples of best practice from around the globe. The principal building consisted of an outer rectangular building for holding stock and chilling carcasses and an inner cylinder building for killing animals. The internal layout was designed so that animals could walk by inclined ramps to the upper floors for slaughter, so that everything, from offal to carcasses, could be conveyed back by gravity. The outer and inner structures were connected by a series of twenty-six bridges at different levels, segregating livestock from people. The result was an extraordinary series of multi-storey concrete structures, functionally dictated by the bloody business of slaughter, all set behind an art deco influenced façade. This is no anonymous warehouse but sophisticated architecture and concrete sculpture.

Biographies:

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