

Tokyo

Roji

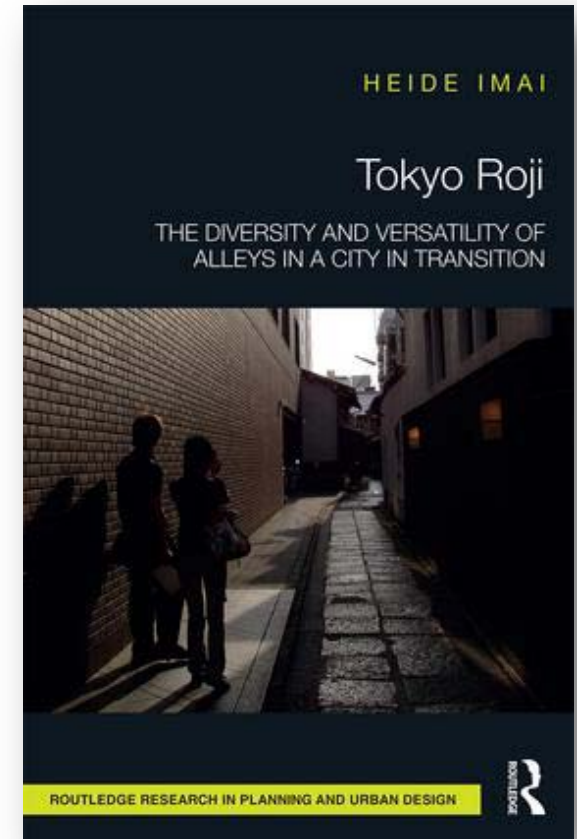
The Diversity and Versatility of Alleys in a City in Transition

Heide Imai

18:30-20:00,
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Room 301, 3F, Building 10,
Sophia University

If the streets of Tokyo could talk, what stories would they tell us? This talk will present the role and meaning of the roji in Tokyo and seeks to go behind the façade of the contemporary urban landscape to re-contextualise these forgotten yet necessary, marginal yet present places of everyday life. Marginalised through the emergence of new forms of housing and public spaces, re-appropriated by different fields, and re-invented by the contemporary urban design discourse, the social meaning attached to the roji is being re-interpreted by individuals, subcultures and new social movements. To portray the life cycle of an urban form being rediscovered, commodified and lost as physical space, I will make use of historical references, urban narratives, graphic reinterpretations and exemplary study cases, to finally disclose questions of the roji's future, its new actors and its new possibilities, closing with a critical statement: extraordinary cities are made of ordinary places.

Heide Imai is Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies (GIS) at Hosei University and Research Associate at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. Licensed as an architect, her research, teaching and practice focus is urban resistance, resilience and the future of vernacular landscapes in global cities.



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