



# Shanghai Nightscapes: A Nocturnal Biography of a Global City

*James Farrer, Andrew David Field*

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The pulsing beat of its nightlife has long drawn travelers to the streets of Shanghai, where the night scene is a crucial component of the city's image as a global metropolis. In *Shanghai Nightscapes*, sociologist James Farrer and historian Andrew David Field examine the cosmopolitan nightlife culture that first arose in Shanghai in the 1920s and that has been experiencing a revival since the 1980s. Drawing on over twenty years of fieldwork and hundreds of interviews, the authors spotlight a largely hidden world of nighttime pleasures—the dancing, drinking, and socializing going on in dance clubs and bars that have flourished in Shanghai over the last century.

The book begins by examining the history of the jazz-age dance scenes that arose in the ballrooms and nightclubs of Shanghai's foreign settlements. During its heyday in the 1930s, Shanghai was known worldwide for its jazz cabarets that fused Chinese and Western cultures. The 1990s have seen the proliferation of a drinking, music, and sexual culture collectively constructed to create new contact zones between the local and tourist populations. Today's Shanghai night scenes are simultaneously spaces of inequality and friction, where men and women from many different walks of life compete for status and attention, and spaces of sociability, in which intercultural communities are formed. *Shanghai Nightscapes* highlights the continuities in the city's nightlife across a turbulent century, as well as the importance of the multicultural agents of nightlife in shaping cosmopolitan urban culture in China's greatest global city.



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