



Press Release

EASTERN PROMISES
Contemporary Architecture and Spatial Practices in East Asia

Press conference Tuesday, 4 June 2013, 10.30 am
Opening Tuesday, 4 June 2013, 7 pm
Exhibition venue MAK Exhibition Hall
 Weiskirchnerstraße 3, Vienna 1
Exhibition dates 5 June – 6 October 2013
Opening hours Tues 10 am–10 pm, Wed–Sun 10 am–6 pm
 Tuesdays 6 pm–10 pm admission free

The potential of East Asian countries as catalysts of a socially and ecologically oriented, visionary form of (global) architecture is explored in the exhibition *EASTERN PROMISES. Contemporary Architecture and Spatial Practices in East Asia*, opening on 4 June 2013 in the MAK Vienna. A multifaceted selection of architectural and urbanistic projects impressively documents the interest of architecture practices in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in a future-oriented form of architecture, which transposes social relations and the structural changes of society into spatial dimensions.

The MAK was fortunate in winning Christian Teckert and Andreas Fogarasi as guest curators, who for over two years have been subjecting the dominant images—which have also been forged by the media—of the East Asian architectural scene to a critical review. While Asia is globally perceived most of all as the scene of some of the most spectacular contemporary mega-buildings by international star architects, the curators focused on local protagonists, whose strategies and tactics might contribute to a social and ecological development and play a crucial role in handling depleting resources.

The historic conditions of architectural production in China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan could hardly be more diverse. While Japan has been engaging intensely with Western modernity for around a century, in China architects in the Western sense have become established only in the last few years. In Taiwan and South Korea, on the other hand, specific local scenes and principles dominate, which for the moment seem difficult to compare.



Nevertheless, in these countries—whether it involves the authoritarian and radical urbanization in China, the intensively contested dynamic of displacement in South Korea, or the extreme compression of living space in megacities of Japan and Taiwan—the most diverse dynamics are perforce leading to the liberation of architectural intelligence and to new, comparable spatial strategies. Especially the focus on social relations and local, rural traditions, as well as a non-hierarchical way of thinking about space can be interpreted as characteristic, linking elements in the East Asian production of space.

EASTERN PROMISES. Contemporary Architecture and Spatial Practices in East Asia conveys a representative cross-section of architectural developments in this region, ranging from the stars of Japanese architecture and the Chinese bureaus, which are slowly but surely shifting into the spotlight since the late 1990s, to young, up-and-coming architects, whose work is being presented in this way for the first time to a wide public.

The new social aesthetic addressed by the curators is represented in particular by the latest architectural projects, for instance by Sou Fujimoto, Kazuyo Sejima, and Ryue Nishizawa in Japan, by Li Xiaodong, Wang Shu, and KUU in China, by Sheng-Yuan Huang in Taiwan and by Mass Studies in South Korea. Their buildings shown in the exhibition are deeply rooted in traditional concepts of space characterized by emptiness and objectivity, and simultaneously engage repeatedly with the idea of the relationship between different spatial and hierarchic levels.

For instance, Kazuyo Sejima's *Shibaura Building* (Tokyo, 2011) blends minimalistic architectural vocabulary with a complex layering of the most diverse, communally used interiors. Meanwhile, with his *House NA* (Tokyo, 2010) Sou Fujimoto transcends the detached, single-family house by generating a vertical landscape made of interpretable platforms, which abolishes the transitions and intermediate spaces of the boundaries between inside and outside.

Also projects such as the Chinese *Bridge School* (Xiashi Village, 2009) by Li Xiaodong, which is deliberately anchored as link between other buildings and people, point to the creation of relationships as an integral component of the architecture. In a similar way the duo KUU of Shanghai is working on home-living typologies in which collectively used rooms such as the kitchen or dining room are revitalized as community and transitional zones.

The reactivation of local micro-economies as social and communicative centers using the simplest means and with the help of architecture is explored in the exhibition



among other features with projects by the Hong Kong bureau Rural Urban Framework.

Sheng-Yuan Huang / Field Office in Taiwan has the objective of approaching architecture by going beyond the mere production of a building and by seeing it as a social process. All projects from this architecture bureau are localized in the city of Ilan and endeavor to generate a network of interior facilities that connect and open up urban spaces.

EASTERN PROMISES has compiled around 70 architectural projects, whereby the exhibition design keeps to a typical Asian, non-hierarchic understanding of space. Freestanding displays reminiscent of historical screens are used for the presentation of the architectural projects. Their arrangement in a strict diagonal grid cites the logic of so-called Japanese axonometry, which was introduced into Europe in the eighteenth century and has influenced the representation of architectural spaces ever since.

Supplementing the show, a graphic and photographic mapping system spread out across one of the walls of the MAK Exhibition Hall shows region-specific phenomena: massed residential development in South Korea's megacities, illegal architecture in Taiwan, the effective power of the state architecture bureaus in China, protest against social displacement processes in South Korea, China's enclave-type urban villages, the 24-hour infrastructure of Japanese and Taiwanese convenience stores, the vigor radiating from new Chinese creative districts, or the life design concepts in the catastrophe region of Tōhoku. A selection of short films curated by Andréa Picard, completes the exhibition with moments of experimental city watching.

Guest curators Andreas Fogarasi and Christian Teckert are renowned as outstanding proponents of the contemporary art and architecture scene:

Andreas Fogarasi (* 1977, lives and works in Vienna) is an artist and since 2001 co-editor of *dérive – Zeitschrift für Stadtforschung*. Numerous international exhibitions, including most recently in the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Ludwig Forum, Aachen; Prefix ICA, Toronto; at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia he received the Golden Lion for the Hungarian Pavilion.

Christian Teckert (* 1967, lives and works in Vienna) is an architect, curator, and Professor of Spatial Strategies at the Muthesius Kunsthochschule, Kiel. He has published numerous works on art, urbanism, and theory of space. With *as-if berlinwien* he was responsible for the new building of the GfZK in Leipzig (Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst), which has won several awards.



Architectural projects by:

Amateur Architecture Studio (Wang Shu/Lu Wenyu), Atelier Deshaus, KUU Architects, Li Xiaodong Atelier, Liu Jiakun Architects, NODE/Rem Koolhaas/Alain Fouraux, Ou Ning, Rural Urban Framework (RUF), Scenic Architecture, standardarchitecture, TAO – Trace Architecture Office, Urbanus Architecture & Design, Vitamin Creative Space, Zheng Guogu, Architects Atelier Ryo Abe, Atelier Bow-Wow, CitySwitch Japan, dessence/Case-Real/Torafu Architects, Go Hasegawa & Associates, Jun Igarashi Architects, junya.ishigami+associates, Kazunari Sakamoto, Kazuyo Sejima, Kumiko Inui, Ohno Laboratory, OnDesign, Riken Yamamoto, Ryue Nishizawa, ryuji fujimura architects, Schemata Architects/Jo Nagasaka, Sou Fujimoto Architects, Terunobu Fujimori, Tezuka Architects, UID architects, 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Lokaldesign, Mass Studies, Moongyu Choi + Ga.a architects, Studio K Works, Field Office Architects, Ying-Chun Hsieh, Marco Casagrande, MINIWIZ

Research, images, maps, and artistic contributions by:

Alke Thamsen, Atelier Bow-Wow, Evan Chakroff, Haewon Shin, Iwan Baan, Jun Jiang, Jürgen Krusche, Li Mo + CASTudio, Libbie D. Cohn/J. P. Sniadecki, ListentotheCity, MAP Office (Gutierrez + Portefaix), Roan Ching-Yueh, Rural Urban Framework (RUF), Studio Gruber, Susanne Klien, Wa Wa Project, Xin Gu, Michele Tabet

A publication will accompany the exhibition.

With the kind support of BAI – Bauträger Austria Immobilien GmbH.

Visuals for the exhibition can be downloaded at MAK.at/press.



Press Fact Sheet

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Guest Curators	Andreas Fogarasi, Christian Teckert
Project Coordination	Marlies Wirth, curator, MAK NITE Lab
Publication	<i>EASTERN PROMISES. Zeitgenössische Architektur und Raumproduktion in Ostasien / EASTERN PROMISES. Contemporary Architecture and Spatial Practices in East Asia</i> , edited by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Andreas Fogarasi and Christian Teckert, with essays, numerous project descriptions and background material by Andreas Fogarasi, Christian Teckert, Roan Ching-Yueh, Harry den Hartog, Jun Jiang, Sung Hong Kim, Bert de Muynck/Mónica Carriço, Christina Nägele, Alke Thamsen, Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Julian Worrall et al., German/English, 304 pages, MAK Vienna / Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2013. On sale in the MAK Design Shop for € 39.
Guided Tours	Saturdays and Sundays, 5 pm
Continuous information service and short guided tours	Saturdays, 3 pm – 5 pm
Curator guided tours	Thursday, 20 June, 5 September and 3 October 2013, 5 pm



Background program

Wednesday, 5 June 2013, 4 pm-6 pm
Round table discussion "Upcycling the City"
with Marco Casagrande (Taipei), Roan Ching-Yueh
(Taipei), Moongyu Choi (Seoul), Go Hasegawa
(Tokyo), KUU/ Kok-Meng Tan and Satoko Saeki
(Shanghai), Ou Ning (Beijing), Julian Worrall
(Tokyo), et al.
MAK Column Hall, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Admission free

Wednesday, 5 June 2013, 7 pm
Lecture by Go Hasegawa
Akademie der bildenden Künste - Academy of Fine
Arts
Schillerplatz 3, 1010 Vienna
Admission free

For detailed information on the symposium on
Tuesday, 24 September 2013 in the MAK Column
Hall followed by the MAK NITE Lab, also on the
complete communication program: MAK.at.

MAK Admission

€ 7.90 / concessions € 5.50 / Family Ticket € 11
Free admission for children and young people up to
age 19

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Vienna, 22 May 2013