Fieldoffice Architects: Living in Place

Friday, July 10 – Saturday, September 12, 2015
Venue: TOTO GALLERY-MA
(TOTO Nogizaka Bldg., 3F, 1-24-3 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo)
Closed on Mondays, National Holidays & during Summer Break period (August 8 – 17)
Hours: 11:00 – 18:00
Admission: Free

Lecture: Friday, July 10, 2015 at 18:30
Venue: Kenchiku Kaikan Hall (5-26-20 Shiba, Minato-ku, Tokyo)
Prior registration required
TOTO GALLERY·MA will be holding an exhibition by Fieldoffice Architects, an architectural practice based in the regional city of Yilan in Taiwan.

Fieldoffice Architects is an architectural team composed of architect Huang Sheng-Yuan and youths from throughout Taiwan who have found resonance with Huang’s architectural philosophies and visions. After being founded in 1994, the office has gradually enlarged its ranks of individuals with common minds to develop into the large atelier with many staff members that it is today. Huang, the studio’s founder, graduated from the Department of Architecture of Tunghai University before traveling to the United States, where he acquired his master’s degree at Yale University. He later built his experience working in an architectural firm in Los Angeles, but he returned to Taiwan after he had developed doubts about the practice of focusing on producing signature architecture. He found Yilan as a new place where he could engage in his activities while maintaining his belief that architecture must serve as an interface for dialogue that connects people, society, nature, and the environment.

When Huang established his base in Yilan, he held a wish to create an “ideal city” in Yilan with his architecture. He sought to identify an ideal form for the city by listening to the voices of the inhabitants, speaking with the authorities, and carefully researching the climate and lifestyles in the rich landscape of Yilan, which is situated between the ocean and mountains. His work has not been limited to designing independent architectural projects; rather, he has been actively shaping the city by drawing out the potential of Yilan through making promenades to connect together his buildings, developing infrastructure that generate flows of people, and drawing up grand urban plans with a long-term perspective. His office’s work, which has been expanding like the vascula bundle(vessels) that deliver water and nutrients by splitting and growing from the roots, stems, and leaves of a plant, continues to be at the center of attention in the architecture community of Taiwan.

This exhibition introduces the work of Fieldoffice Architects through models, photographs, videos, and installations themed on four “afterthoughts” that the studio has gained through their efforts to shape the community of Yilan over the past 20 years.
Exhibition Concept

Living in Place

Rooted in the landscape of Yilan, Fieldoffice Architects is an “alliance of gathered will” of nearly a hundred people’s size that is growing and expanding steadily in contemporary Taiwan. It has gradually come to form through 20 years of seeking truth in the way of living. Because of its natural formation and genuine intentions, this way of living has unexpectedly become one of the common choices of the young generation when pursuing the ideal of “creating a newly-found local life through professional integration!” Please pardon us for not being able to systematically, structurally, and distinctively present our exhibition, for all of the events overlapped upon one another, and are still in a continual state of progression and revision. Thus in line with Gallery MA's spatial qualities that change with daylight, we attempt to use four "afterthoughts" to share our moments of hardships as well as joy along the way.

I. “Time as Friend”
I fled to America to seek new possibilities but failed, then fled back to Taiwan and settled in Yilan. Inspired by the unique climate condition, geography, mythology, history and rebellious spirits, I slowly realized that this land’s democratic nature has always been very much alive, that as long as the young generation is free from the restraints of specialization, they could start from every possible corner and freely search for their own clients. As such realizations accumulated with time, and as the various strips of public connecting corridors were achieved, our work came to be appreciated by the people from their hearts.

II. “Life with Mountain, Sea, Earth and Water”
The breezes, the water, and the ecosystem pass through the city. A city cannot enjoy long prosperity if it only cared about itself. The urban and the rural have to help each other and inspire creative governance from each other. When others finally realized that we will not give up and walk away from this problem, people from all fields of studies began to voluntarily lend us their wisdoms until we acquired the necessary working knowledge.

III. “Canopy as Reference Line”
The real function of a canopy may include a conscious effort of “creating emptiness,” which implies the spatial feature of a democratic, classless venue. A good artificial reference line usually reveals the beauty of the otherwise accustomed landscape to the public eye. Through these canopies of varying urban scales, we came to believe that architecture can not only tolerate cultural diversity, political unrest, but also embrace the passing of time.

IV. “Remember Our Own Bodies, and Naturally Forget About Time”
The climax of this exhibition space is the Yilan County's Cherry Orchard Cemetery. In addition to its civil, environmental, and structural bridge engineering, we recreate its atmosphere through a mixture of video images exhibiting clear sky, rain, fog, and echoes referring to true nature. Through these videos, one could perhaps see from his or her heart the sight of Yilan with its three rivers joining at the center of the Delta and the countless layers of sand dunes that spread towards the Pacific Ocean.

I hope everyone has a chance to strive for the beauty of his or her own hometowns through our afterthoughts.

Huang Sheng-Yuan

Fieldoffice Architects

Fieldoffice Architects was founded by Huang Sheng-Yuan. The studio continues to work out of Yilan, Taiwan.

Huang Sheng-Yuan was born in 1963 in Taipei. After graduating from Tunghai University, he traveled to the United States, completed the master’s program at Yale University, and worked at the office of Eric Owen Moss. He returned to Taiwan in 1994 and settled in Yilan, where he established Fieldoffice Architects. The office has been awarded over 20 domestic and international awards in the two decades since its founding, including the China Design Exhibition Outstanding Spatial Design Award (2012) and Chinese Architecture Media Awards Best Architecture Award (2012).
Related Event

Huang Sheng-Yuan Lecture: Living in Place

Date: Friday, July 10, 2015 at 18:30 (doors open at 17:30; event scheduled to end at 20:30)
Venue: Kenchiku Kaikan Hall, Architectural Institute of Japan(5-26-20 Shiba, Minato-ku, Tokyo)
Capacity: 350 people
Admission: Free Entry:
Online pre-registration required. Visit www.toto.co.jp/gallerma for details.
Registration period is from Thursday, May 20 to Sunday, June 21.
Selected registrants will be notified by Thursday, July 2.

Organized by TOTO GALLERY·MA
Planned by TOTO GALLERY·MA Planning and Management Committee
(Special Advisor: Tadao Ando; Members: Waro Kishi, Kazuyo Sejima, Hiroshi Naito, Erwin Viray)
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Related Publication

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Images for Media Use 1/2

[1] Fieldoffice Architects © Chen, Min-Jia


[4] Cherry Orchard Cemetery Fly-over Bridge © Chen, Min-Jia