



Ningbo History Museum, Amateur Architecture Studio. Photo: LV Hengzhou

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## DAZ\_FORUM

**M8 IN CHINA**

## Contemporary Chinese Architects

**05.12.2009 – 21.02.2010**

+++ M8 IN CHINA explores new trends in contemporary Chinese architecture. The exhibition is dedicated to showcasing small, flexible and independent firms in China. A focus on regional typologies, the rediscovery of traditional handicraft techniques and the attention paid to the specifics of the local context distinguishes all eight architectural practices that are shown in the exhibition. Within the context of globalization they are exploring new ways for architecture "Made in China". +++

**EXHIBITION:** 05.12.2009 – 21.02.2010 // DAZ Scharoun Saal  
Tue to Fri 12.00 am – 7.00 pm, Sat + Sun 2.00 pm – 7.00 pm.  
Entrance free.

**PRESS PREVIEW:** 04.12.2009, 6.00 pm // DAZ Scharoun Saal

**OPENING:** 04.12.2009, 7.00 pm

## Speakers (amongst others):

Michael Frielinghaus, President Association of German Architects  
BDA

LI Xin, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of  
China

CHEN Ciliang, Vice President and Editor-in-Chief Liasong Science and  
Technology Publishing House, Shenyang

Peter Cachola Schmal, Curator, Director Deutsches  
Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt am Main

DAI Chun, Editor Time & Architecture, Shanghai (on behalf of ZHI

Wenju, Curator, Editor-in Chief Time & Architecture)

MADA s.p.a.m. Architecture design office, Shanghai

**SYMPOSIUM:** 05.02.2010 // DAZ Taut Saal  
More information shortly on [www.daz.de](http://www.daz.de)



Songzhuang Artists' Residence, DnA\_Design and Architecture. Foto: Savoye/ZHOU Ruogu

Berlin, November 2009. **M8 IN CHINA** explores new trends in contemporary Chinese architecture. The exhibition is dedicated to showcasing small, flexible and independent firms in China which want to mediate between modernity and Chinese architectural tradition.

China has changed rapidly during the last two decades. Economic openings in the 1980s triggered an ever expanding building boom. Today the Chinese architectural market is one of the most dynamic in the world. But it is still the more than 10.000 state-run design institutes, each with more than 1.500 employees, which dominate the scene. Among these, ECADI (East China Architectural Design & Research) and SIADR (Shanghai Institute of Architectural Design and Research) are the best-known.

Private architectural firms have only been allowed in China since 1994. As individual designs became more sought after, the chances for young architects grew. Just like foreign offices which were assigned solely for design work, they at first had to cooperate with the state-run — by now commercially orientated — design institutes to realize their projects. This was inevitable, considering the extremely short time assigned to the construction of a building in China and the constantly changing, very complex socio-economic situation. By now, more and more private clients commission small projects outside the big cities which can be realized without the logistics of the big institutes. These projects became the breeding ground for an independent architectural scene whose works also gain recognition abroad.

“M8 in China” is dedicated to showcasing these small, flexible and independent firms in China. Their founders are young architects, most of them studied in western countries, mainly the USA. They still maintain their international networks and participate successfully in architectural competitions.

Those architects who studied in the early 1980s, however, such as LIU Jiakun, TONG Ming and WANG Shu, were not able to leave China to study in other countries. Today this is almost inevitable for young architects. Their international networks often form the basis for practices set up with partners from various countries which are registered in China and abroad. While architects educated in China mostly seek solutions using the means available the returnees develop conceptual and formal methods clearly influenced by international discourse.

Most of the projects selected for the exhibition are comparatively small public buildings. Public buildings do not have to fulfill such strict regulations as housing projects concerning lighting, functionality, etc.. Especially those projects located in the periphery or special areas dedicated to culture or education are less constrained by commercial interests and provide more creative freedom.

What distinguishes all eight of the architects is the attention they pay to regional typologies, to the uniqueness of the specific local context, and their rediscovery of traditional handicraft techniques. These young architects are the innovative laboratories of contemporary Chinese architecture. The wish to connect between modernity and local tradition in architecture is common to them all. This is what sets them apart from the concepts developed by the large-scale design institutes that, having detached themselves from the old Chinese traditions mainly focus on erecting gigantic buildings in China's megacities. The work of the freelance architects constitutes only a very small and exceptional part of China's building activity. Within the context of globalization they are exploring new ways for architecture "Made in China".

### The eight architects

#### Amateur Architecture Studio (WANG Shu, LU Wenyu)

Hangzhou, founded 1998

WANG Shu and LU Wenyu of Amateur Architecture Studio are well-known from the 2006 Venice Architecture Biennale where visitors were delighted by their installation made from thousands of reused roof tiles. The recycling of used materials taken from demolished buildings in their region is intended as criticism of the destruction of traditional building culture and, in addition to the transfer of the historical patina, wants to draw attention to the quality of the historical substance. Their most recent work, the fort-like Ningbo History Museum with its walls looking like a collage of different kinds of brick, demonstrates how impressively they stand their ground within the Chinese architecture scene.

#### Atelier Z+ (ZHANG Bin, ZHOU Wei)

Shanghai, founded 2002

ZHANG Bin and ZHOU Wei of Atelier Z+ particularly attracted attention to their work with new buildings for Tongji University. Their buildings characteristically aim for spatial as well as haptic qualities which they pursue by way of a three-dimensional approach to spaces and carefully selected material. The Sino-French Center located in the southeast of the Tongji Campus, for example, features a building skin of corten steel and dark steel constructions combined with wooden walls and floors and dividing walls of glass in the interior.

#### DnA Design and Architecture (XU Tiantian)

Beijing, founded 2004

After studying at Harvard and working for OMA in Rotterdam, XU Tiantian founded her practice in Beijing in 2004. One of her first projects was the spectacular Ordos Art Museum. It is the pioneer building of the new city Ordos, which is being built in the Inner Mongolian steppe. The museum's structure reacts to its surrounding topography, melting nature and art into an exceptional experience. In 2008, Xu Tiantian completed the Songzhuan Artists' Residence. Here living and work units are stacked on top of each other to form a complex structure resulting in an interesting interaction of interior and exterior spaces and of light and shadow.

#### Jiakun Architects (LIU Jiakun)

Chengdu/Sichuan, founded 1999

LIU Jiakun studied architecture in Chongqing in the late 1970s but turned to literature in the 1980s. Although successful as a writer, he came back to architecture in 1993. Artist friends of his commissioned him to build a number of studio houses in a rural region near the city of Chengdu. This group of buildings profits from the expressive force of local material and the simple composition of elements like wall and courtyard. His "rebirth brick" project, which was part of the Chinese presentation at the 2008 Venice Architecture Biennale, brought international attention for the firm. The architects developed a new light-weight hollow concrete block made of straw and debris from the ruins left by the earthquake in Sichuan on 12 May 2008. In addition to the simple and economic production the integrated straw provides sufficient tension to be used in earthquake regions.

**MADA s.p.a.m. (MA Qingyun)**

Shanghai, founded 1996

The group's architect known best in the West, MA Qingyin who studied at the University of Pennsylvania, commutes professionally between East and West. Following several years as a visiting professor worldwide, he is now Dean of the Department of Architecture at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. The works produced by his Shanghai practice MADA s.p.a.m. keep surprising the public with a diversity rooted in a sure sense of their own style. Eccentric buildings like the administrative building for SOHO, one of the most extravagant project developers of the country, alternate with projects like Jade Village where traditional brickwork dominates the appearance.

MA Qingyun wants to see the rapidity of the construction process as a chance and to gain as much liberty as possible from the numerous restrictions that have to be observed.

**Standardarchitecture (ZHANG Ke, ZHANG Hong, HOU Zhenghua, Claudia Taborda)**

Beijing, founded 2001

Standardarchitecture was originally founded in New York in 1999. After winning several architectural competitions in China the group resettled to Beijing in 2001. Both interiors and exteriors of their buildings are characterized by an attentive use of a variety of materials such as natural stone, brick or bamboo. This way they relate to the urban context as well as they design the outside space which is seen as an important part of the building. Climatic conditions and extreme pressure regarding function are answered with robust solutions incorporating the surfaces' ability to mature. The boat terminal at the Yaluntzangpu River and the Namchabawa Visitor Center in particular are masterly projects in the Tibet region which employ typical regional details and materials to blend into the landscape's topography like sculptures.

**Studio Pei-Zhu (ZHU Pei, WU Tong)**

Beijing, founded 2005

With his practice *urbanus*, founded 1999 in the USA, ZHU Pei was one of the first bringing new impulses to China. With his partner WU Tong he founded Studio Pei-Zhu in Beijing in 2005. Their interest in experimental materials, as used for example at the façade of the Blur Hotel in Beijing which is composed of translucent plastic elements, and their expressive designs for museums have made them internationally well-known. Studio Pei-Zhu was one of the first Chinese practices assigned major projects abroad.

**TM Studio (TONG Ming)**

Shanghai, founded 2000

In addition to his position as professor at Tongji University in Shanghai, founder of TM Studio TONG Ming works on small projects with remarkable devotion to detail. Thanks to his careful treatment of proportion and scale buildings blend in naturally with existing structures. In his buildings TONG Ming appropriates traditional appearances by combining local materials with contemporary functions. Thus applying a traditional yet transformed Chinese design, his buildings do justice to the modern inhabitants' need for identity. An impressive example for this approach is TONG's Suquan Yuan Tea House in Suzhou with its striking play of light and shadow.

**M8 IN CHINA** is a project by Deutsches Architekturmuseum DAM, Frankfurt am Main. The exhibition is organized in cooperation with the General Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China, China National Publications Import & Export (Group) Corporation and Liaoning Science and Technology Publishing Houses Co. Ltd.. The curators are ZHI Wenjun (Editor-in-chief Time & Architecture, Shanghai) and Peter Cachola Schmal (Director DAM).

The catalogue *M8 in China. Contemporary Chinese Architects* is published in line with the exhibition. Edited by Peter Cachola Schmal and Zhi Wenjun, English/German, 160 pages with 140 coloured images, Hardcover, 21 x 29,7 cm, Euro 28.00, JOVIS Verlag, ISBN 978-3-86859-025-8. The book will be available soon at the DAZ book shop.

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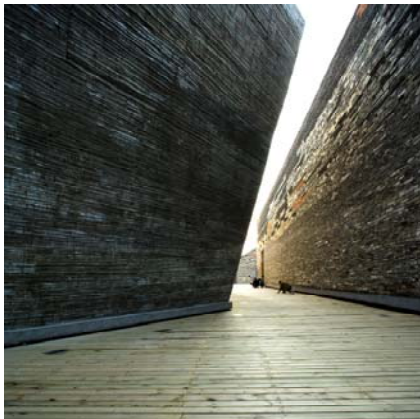
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Press photos on request

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#### 01 A

Ningbo History Museum, Ningbo, 2006 – 2008  
Architects: Amateur Architecture Studio

Photo: LV Hengzhong



#### 01 B

Ningbo History Museum, Ningbo, 2006 – 2008  
Architects: Amateur Architecture Studio

Photo: LV Hengzhong



#### 02

Building C, College of Architecture and Urban  
Planning, Tongji University, Shanghai,  
2002 – 2004

Architects: Atelier Z+

Photo: Atelier Z+



**03**

Songzhuang Artists' Residence, Beijing,  
2008 –2009  
Architect: DnA\_Design and Architecture

Photo: Savoye/ZHOU Ruogu



**04**

Lu-ye-yuan Stone Sculpture Art Museum,  
Chengdu, Sichuan, 2001  
Architects: Jiakun Architects

Photo: Jiakun Architects & Associates



**05**

Jade Village, Xi'an, 2007  
Architects: MADA s.p.a.m.

Photo: MADA s.p.a.m.



**06**

Yaluntzangpu Boat Terminal, Linzhi, Tibet,  
2008  
Architects: standardarchitecture

Photo: CHEN Su



**07**

CAI Guoqiang Courtyard House Renovation,  
Peking, 2007

Architects: Studio Pei-Zhu

Photo: FANG Zhenning



**08**

Suquan Yuan Tea house, Shiquan Jie,  
Suzhou, 2005 – 2007

Architect: TONG Ming, TM Studio

Photo: LV Hengzhong