



Seoul

photo: LEE Sang Ku

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DAZ_FORUM

MEGACITY NETWORK Contemporary Korean Architecture

++++ Between globalization and cultural identity: Megacity Seoul's current tendencies in contemporary Korean architecture +++ After its kick-off at the DAM in Frankfurt, the exhibition 'Megacity Network' is now on show in the German Center for Architecture DAZ in Berlin ++++

Exhibition: 27.06. till 17.07.2008 in the DAZ_Scharoun Saal
Tue to Fri 12am - 7pm, Sat + Sun 2 - 7pm. Free entrance.

Opening on 27.06.2008 in DAZ Scharoun & Taut Saal:

Press Preview: 5pm

Project Presentations: 6pm

Introduction
(20min): KIM Sung Hong, Kurator + Professor, University of Seoul

Short lectures
(7min each):
YOO Kerl (iarc Architects)
CHO Nam Ho (Soltos Architecture)
HWANG Doo Jin (Doojin Hwang Architects)
CHUNG Guyon (Professor, Sungkunkwan University)
Ubac -group urbanistic architecture)
YI Jong Ho (Studio METAA)
AN Se Kweon (photographer)

Opening: 7.30pm

Speakers: KIM Sung Hong, Curator
Ambassador of the Embassy of the Republik of Korea
Kristien Ring, Director DAZ



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photo: AN Se Kweon

Berlin, June 2, 2008. In the exhibition, sixteen leading architects present a section through contemporary Korean building culture, each showing two of their most significant projects. »Megacity Network« presents the work within the urban context and paints an overall picture – a network within the Megacity Seoul. This network pursues ideas that question architectural stereotypes throughout the entire country and has set new processes in motion. The photography of AN Se Kweon captures the rapidly emerging urban landscape of the Megacity Seoul to complement the exhibition.

Seoul is deemed to be the quintessential Korean city and a symbol of the nation itself. South Korea's capital has currently become the most populated city of the world, with over ten million people living in the capital city proper. Furthermore, approximately half of the total population of South Korea resides in the greater Seoul metropolitan area. The architectural development of Seoul is the main theme of the exhibition »Megacity Network«.

Korea's architects have been challenged by rapid industrialization, accompanied by an enormous population explosion. Their solutions lie within the problematic of a high densification of urban areas on one side and the preservation of small, traditional structures on the other – between globalization and cultural identity.

History

One of the most important influences on modern urban architecture in Korea is the stunning population growth in Seoul. With almost eleven million people living in the capital city proper and about the same number of inhabitants in the greater metropolitan area, Seoul became one of the world's most populated cities like Sao Paulo or Mumbai. Although Seoul has a population density twice as high as London or Tokio, it has the second lowest building density of all megacities. This disparity indicates high urban density and is creating tremendous pressure on spatial intensification, amplification and verticalization of architecture. As a result there is a demand for new building types: A mix of different functions in one building, like e.g. architect CHO Minsuk demonstrates in his design for the high-rise building „Boutique Monaco“, where he created green outside spaces on different levels.

Besides its booming industrialization the conservation of cultural identity is big challenge for Korea, which was in the shadow of the China and Japan for long time. The generation of young Korean architects has mostly studied abroad, mainly in the USA, and is part of globalization itself. It can also be said that they are often found to be more intellectual, dynamic, flexible and able for cultural adoption than their superpower neighbours. Koreans often find their own cultural identity by modern interpretation of traditional building styles. Architect HWANG Doo Jin for instance is part of a movement that enhances the Korean housing type "Hanok".

Another challenge is the upgrading of public and semipublic spaces. The demolition of a multilane highway in 2005 and the exposure of the River Cheonggyecheon underneath as a promenade is a successful example for high quality outside spaces in the city.

The exhibition

MEGACITY NETWORK is curated by KIM Sung Hong. The professor of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Seoul has been the vice-commissioner of the Korean pavilion for the 9th International Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2004. The exhibition's layout is designed by two of the participating architects, HWANG Doo Jin and CHO Nam Ho. They chose an urban approach that is comparable to the Seoul city structures. Each of the sixteen architects is given a "lot", defined by a "property line" and a "building limit line" etc.. HWANG and CHO also designed "folding screens", made from aluminium and acrylic, which allowed each architect to design his or her "micro exhibition". The photographer AN Se Kweon in turn puts these into a context with Seoul as a megacity. Fascinated by the process of destruction and reconstruction, the young Korean photographer documents the rapid changes of the city in a poetic beauty. For MEGACITY NETWORK he assembles a range of his powerful images into a large-scale video projection called "landscape of silence".

The participating architects are YOO Kerl, KIM In Cheurl, CHO Byoung Soo, CHO Nam Ho, HWANG Doo Jin, CHUNG Guyon, YI Jong Ho, JOO Dae Khan, KWON Moon Sung, LEE Chung Kee, KIM Young Joon, CHOI Moongyu, CHO Minsuk, YOO Suk Yeon, SPACE Group/LEE Sang Leem and JUNGLIM Architecture. The exhibition will present recent projects from the last ten years. They will span the breadth of building enterprise: from traditional wooden single family houses to high-rise office and apartment accommodations, shopping centres, cultural and educational centres and churches.

Book accompanying the exhibition

A book accompanying the exhibition "Megacity Network. Contemporary Korean Architecture", is published by Jovis, Berlin, edited by KIM Sung Hong and Peter Cachola Schmal, in English and German, 264 pages, 400 coloured and b/w photographs, Flexocover. ISBN 978-3-939633-37-2

An exhibition of German Architecture Museum DAM in collaboration with the Korea Architects Institute (KAI)



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