



Media release

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First Sino-Swiss Architecture Dialogue focuses on sustainability, mountain architecture; Swiss master Mario Botta to be leading speaker and guest of honour

Today, the inaugural Sino-Swiss Architecture Dialogue, with sustainable architecture as the main topic, took place in Beijing. Organized by the Embassy of Switzerland in China, in collaboration with Tsinghua University Art Museum (TAM), the dialogue aimed to offer a first-class platform for young Swiss and Chinese talents and accomplished masters to meet and exchange around a topic that combines science, economy and art.

The dialogue was held on the sideline of the exhibition “The Realm of Idealism: Mario Botta Architecture and Design 1960-2017” at the TAM. Mario Botta, a world-renowned Swiss architect, who also designed the significant TAM, was attending the dialogue as a leading speaker and guest of honour, and gave keynote speeches along with well-known professionals from China including Professor Li Xiaodong from Tsinghua University.

Following the keynote speeches, a panel discussion took place among young architects from both countries. Architects taking part in the discussions were: Nicola Baserga, Giacomo Guidotti, Wang Hui, Lu Yichen, Zhu Xiaofeng and Zhuang Shen, who distinguish themselves in mountain construction, structural architecture and have received various awards and distinctions at home and abroad. With their successful cases, the architects shared their insights into the topics such as mountain architecture, sustainable development, mobility, as well as issues related to ecosystems, climate control solutions, and innovations in construction details.

Switzerland, a reputed champion in the field of innovation, new technologies and sustainable development, is also a country of cutting-edge architecture in terms of technology and aesthetic creativity. Many iconic buildings in Switzerland, such as the Monte Rosa mountain hut at an altitude of 2,883 meters and the spa resort 'Bergoase' (mountain oasis) in Arosa, are creative and bold combinations of tradition and high-tech innovation adapting to landscape and environmental constraints.

“Thanks to our country’s profound and rich architectural culture and heritage, Switzerland has earned a reputation as an open-air museum. On top of that, contemporary architecture in Switzerland, located either in mountains or cities, is celebrated around the world particularly for its high-tech, creativity, incorporation of sustainability and harmony with nature. We owe this reputation to Swiss masters such as Le Corbusier, Peter Zumthor, Herzog & de Meuron and Mario Botta,” said Swiss Ambassador Jean-Jacques de Dardel.

Since the establishment of the Innovative Strategic Partnership between Switzerland and China in 2016, the two countries have been working on ways to develop platforms and institutionalize frameworks to promote innovation. “The Sino-Swiss Architecture Dialogue is an exemplary of such efforts and a constructive platform to bring the brilliant minds of Switzerland and China together, which in no doubt will stimulate every bit of creativity and innovative capacity of architects involved in the meaningful dialogue,” he added.

Mario Botta who traveled from Switzerland to China for the dialogue cited 8 of his mountain buildings as examples to illustrate his thoughts on mountain architecture during his keynote speech in Beijing. “Mountain architecture is a challenge but they also have their own charm. Now the concept of mountain architecture is becoming more and more important. Each time architects need to make new analysis depending on the local landscapes and conditions and each building needs to be environment friendly. It is the case in Switzerland, so is in China. Architects need to make their own efforts in order to achieve the balance between the nature and humankind, and show their respect to the local landscapes. Many successful mountain buildings are not only the showcase of the concepts of the architects, but also the demonstration of the wisdom of local residents.” Tomorrow, Mario Botta will go to Shanghai for the Shanghai edition of Sino-Swiss Architecture Dialogue, which is organized by the Consulate General of Switzerland in Shanghai, in collaboration with Shanghai Pearl Art Museum.

Enclosed: Biographies of speakers and panelists

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