



Media release

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2nd edition of Sino-Swiss Architecture Dialogue kicks off; China premiere of Mario Botta documentary to further exchanges

Building on the success of the inaugural Sino-Swiss Architecture Dialogue (SSAD) in 2018, the second edition returns to Beijing and Shanghai, with an additional stop in Chengdu. The three-city dialogue, held from 10 to 14 April with the participation of the world's renowned Swiss architect Mario Botta and film director Loretta Dalpozzo, consists of a rich program of documentary screening, lecture, master class, and panel discussion.

Initiated by the Embassy of Switzerland in China and co-organized by its Consulates General in Shanghai and Chengdu, the SSAD, an interactive platform to further exchanges between Switzerland and China, is supported by prestigious local partners of Tsinghua University Art Museum (TAM) in Beijing, Tongji University in Shanghai and Luxelakes-A4 Art Museum in Chengdu. Mario Botta, a prolific and creative crafter of space, will share his decades-long experience in the profession, and give inspirations to young architects and talents from China.

Through the program, the dialogue will also showcase Swiss innovation in architecture, which is highlighted by cutting-edge technology and aesthetic creativity, and led by master architects including Le Corbusier, Peter Zumthor, Herzog & de Meuron and Mario Botta.

Documentary: Mario Botta. The Space Beyond

Directed by Loretta Dalpozzo and Michèle Volontè, *Mario Botta. The Space Beyond* (*Mario Botta. Oltre lo Spazio*, 2018) is a rare, in-depth artistic journey into the work of the internationally acclaimed Swiss architect. In the film, Botta tries to understand why a globalized society experiences the urge to build sacred spaces. At 75, Botta is one of the few architects who has built places of worship for the three main monotheistic religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Having designed many churches, chapels and a synagogue, he is now working on a mosque in Ningxia, China.

The directors travelled to China, South Korea, Israel, Italy and Switzerland to discover a passionate and tireless artist, his buildings and part of his creative process.

“People need to go beyond materialism. They need a space for their souls, where they can find peace and calmness,” says Mario Botta in the documentary while explaining his huge interest in building sacred places, noting it is also a big responsibility for an architect to build a symbol of faith and humanity. “I would like to create only buildings linked to the human’s need to reach beyond matter.”

Panel discussion, lecture, master class with Chinese students

After the screenings, Botta and film director Dalpozzo will join the audience in Beijing and Chengdu for Q and A sessions and panel discussions on culture, spirituality, art and architecture.

Panelists for discussions at TAM: [Zhang Li](#) (Professor of Architecture / Chair of the Architecture Department in the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University), [Wang Hui](#) (architect, designer of The Today Art Museum, Beijing's first non-governmental and non-profit art museum).

Panelists for discussions at A4 Art Museum: artist Liang Chen, Sunny Sun, director of Luxelakes-A4 Art Museum

One of the founders of the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio, Switzerland, Botta has carried out intense teaching activities with lectures, seminars and courses in many schools of architecture in Europe, Asia and America since the early days of his career. During his time in China, Botta is scheduled to host a lecture at Tongji University, a master class at Tsinghua University’s School of Architecture and a discussion with young architects at Vitra’s Showroom in Chengdu.

“Switzerland is a leading country in innovation in a wide range of areas, architecture is no exception. It is a place where the architecture mixes tradition and innovation wisely. Many of the works by Mr. Mario Botta are the best examples of the case. By having Botta back to China for the second edition of the Sino-Swiss Architecture dialogue, we hope to share with the audience the Swiss innovative spirit, our approach and our know-how,” said Swiss Ambassador Bernardino Regazzoni prior to the dialogue.

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Architect Mario Botta

Born in Mendrisio, Ticino, on April 1, 1943. After an apprenticeship in Lugano, he first attended the Art College in Milan and then studied at the University Institute of Architecture in Venice. Directed by Carlo Scarpa and Giuseppe Mazzariol he received his professional degree in 1969. During his time in Venice he had the opportunity to meet and work for Le Corbusier and Louis I. Kahn.

His professional activity began in 1970 in Lugano and since then he has carried out an intense teaching activity with lectures, seminars and courses in many schools of architecture of Europe, Asia, the United States and Latin America. He served as visiting professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Lausanne in 1976 and at the Yale School of Architecture in New Haven (USA) in 1987. In 1983 he was appointed professor of the Swiss Polytechnic Schools. From 1982 to 1987 was member of the Swiss Federal Commission of Fine Arts.

From the single-family houses in Ticino his work has comprised many other building typologies such as: schools, banks, administration buildings, libraries, museums and sacred buildings.

Among his realizations must be remembered the SFMOMA museum in San Francisco; the cathedral of the Resurrection in Evry; the museum Jean Tinguely in Basel; the Cymbalista Synagogue and Jewish Heritage Centre in Tel Aviv; the municipal library in Dortmund; the MART museum in Rovereto; the Kyobo tower and the Leeum museum in Seoul; the office buildings Tata Consultancy Services in New Delhi and Hyderabad; the church Papa Giovanni XXIII in Siate; the restoration of the Theatre alla Scala in Milan; the church Santo Volto in Turin; the wellness centre Tschuggen Bergoase in Arosa; the Bechtler art museum in Charlotte; the Campari headquarters and residences in Sesto San Giovanni; the Tsinghua University library and the Tsinghua Art Museum in Beijing; the urban planning of the ex Appiani area in Treviso; the Hotel Twelve in Shanghai and the restaurant Fiore di Pietra on Monte Generoso.

His work is recognized worldwide and has been presented in many exhibitions. Honorary member of many cultural institutions, he was awarded the honorary degree in different universities of Argentina, Greek, Rumania, Bulgaria, Brazil and Switzerland.

In 1996 he was among the prime movers and founders of the Academy of architecture in Mendrisio where he still teaches and was dean in 2002-2003 and 2011-2013. A further instrument for the promotion of the cultural debate on architecture is the Theatre of architecture in Mendrisio, that started its activity in October 2018.