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THE MAK URBAN FUTURE INITIATIVE (UFI) PUBLIC FORUM SERIES PRESENTS *Heterotopias: Themed Suburbs in Shanghai and Los Angeles*



Photo courtesy of Xiangning Li

A lecture by UFI Fellow and Architect Xiangning Li

Wednesday, January 21
Reception at 7 p.m.
Presentation beginning at 7:30 p.m.
Followed by Q and A

Free with admission to the Schindler House

(West Hollywood, January 9, 2009) The MAK Center for Art and Architecture is pleased to announce ***Heterotopias: Themed Environments in Shanghai and Los Angeles***, the fourth event in its new series, the MAK UFI Public Forum. *Heterotopias* will feature Xiangning Li, a UFI fellow and urban theorist whose research focuses on the transplantation, application, adaptation and distortion of Western models in China. His presentation will include an overview of Shanghai's "One City Nine Towns" development plan, in which nine suburbs have been designed as large-scale replicas of traditional European towns, reflecting the preference for Western culture, architecture and urbanism in contemporary China. Examples include the "Italian town" of Pujiang, designed by an Italian firm and featuring a palazzo and Venice-like canals.

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Li's research is aimed at evaluating the consequences of such "themed" urban environments. During his UFI residency in Los Angeles, he has found an abundance of examples for comparative analysis, from Disneyland's Main Street USA to the canals of Venice, California. Examining both the positive and negative aspects of these themed environments, Li has identified lessons for Shanghai as it grows and expands.

More about Xiangning Li

Xiangning Li is an associate professor of architectural history, criticism and theory at the Tongji University College of Architecture and Urban Planning in Shanghai, China. He also serves as the college's assistant dean for international programs and collaboration. He received his Ph.D. from Tongji University in 2004, and in 2006 he was a visiting scholar at the MIT School of Architecture and Planning.

Li has published widely on contemporary Chinese architecture and urbanism, including a book based on his dissertation, *The Real and the Imagined: An Analysis of Value Perspectives in Contemporary Urban Studies*. Since 1999, he has been a guest editor and frequent contributor to the Shanghai-based academic journal *Time+Architecture*.

Li recently served as a curatorial consultant and contributor to the 2007 Shenzhen Biennale and the 2008 Shanghai Biennale. He was also a member of the curatorial committee for the Shanghai 2010 EXPO Village's public art program. In the summer of 2008, Li's work will be featured in an exhibition of Chinese garden architecture in Dresden, Germany.

More about the MAK Urban Future Initiative

Funded by a major grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the MAK Urban Future Initiative (UFI) is a fellowship program in which cultural researchers from diverse nations come to Los Angeles for two months, live in the exemplary L.A. modern Fitzpatrick-Leland House (R. M. Schindler, 1936) and pursue a research topic related to urban phenomena. Fellows come from nations that are under-represented in the Los Angeles discourse; the MAK Center works closely with them to create a meaningful cross-cultural exchange. The goal is to generate concepts for the urban future by stimulating dialogue and mining both Los Angeles and international resources. At the end of their fellowship sessions, UFI fellows present their research at a MAK UFI Public Forum event.

The MAK Center is located at the Schindler House, 835 N. Kings Road in West Hollywood. Public hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Regular admission is \$7/\$17 with the guide book, *Schindler By MAK*; students and seniors, \$6/\$16 with book; free for Friends of the Schindler House and on Fridays, 4 to 6 p.m. Parking is available at the public structure at the northeast corner of Kings Road and Santa Monica Boulevard. For further information, the public may contact www.MAKcenter.org or call (323) 651-1510.

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