



BCKJ ARCHITECTS FROM CHINA NAMED WINNERS OF THE 2020 ROYAL ACADEMY DORFMAN AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE

The Royal Academy of Arts announced this evening on Thursday 3 December 2020 at an online presentation, that **Dong Mei** and **Liu Xiaochuan**, of **BCKJ Architects**, an architectural practice from China, have been awarded the **2020 Royal Academy Dorfman Award**, honouring an international talent that represents the future of architecture.

The award, supported by the Dorfman Foundation, was to be decided from four finalists and announced in March 2020, but was delayed due to Covid-19. The distinguished international jury recently convened to decide the winner, chaired by the Royal Academician and founder of Foster + Partners, **Norman Foster**. Jury members included co-founder of Stanton Williams, **Alan Stanton RA**, artist duo **Jane and Louise Wilson RA**, Pondicherry and Berlin-based architect, **Anupama Kundoo** and Professor of Urban Studies at the London School of Economics, **Ricky Burdett**. They were joined by last year's winner of the Royal Academy Dorfman Award, Thai architect **Boonserm Premthada**, and the winner of the 2020 Royal Academy Architecture Prize, **Cristina Iglesias**.

BCKJ Architects is located in Beijing, China and was founded by Dong Mei (b.1967) and Liu Xiaochuan (b. 1967) in 2004. Over the past 15 years, BCKJ's work has spanned urban planning, architecture and interiors, with a focus on cultural heritage and social engagement. The practice is acutely aware of the environmental damage caused by the construction industry and believes that a balance between surrounding terrain, vegetation and regional approaches is the way to ensure a more harmonious relationship with nature. This can be seen in projects such as the *Badaling Forest Experience Center*, one of the earliest natural exploration centres in China, and the *Clove Valley ECO-hotel*.

BCKJ Architects were selected from four finalists nominated for the 2020 Royal Academy Dorfman Award, including **AAU Anastas (Palestine)**, **AOR Architects (Finland)**, and **WHBC Architects (Malaysia)**. The £10,000 award was announced at an online event today, 3 December 2020.

Dong Mei and Liu Xiaochuan, BCKJ Architects said: "Being selected as the winner of the RA Dorfman Award has been a great honour and a new experience, as this is the first time our work has been recognised outside of China. The award gives us new confidence to pursue future projects and move forward more clearly."

Norman Foster RA, Founder and Executive Chairman of Foster + Partners and Chair of the Jury, said: "As a jury we were hugely impressed by the way in which you as an architect were returning to the core values of individual's within society. Addressing heritage, history, the importance of nature and respect. We agree that these are hugely important messages anywhere in the world, but given the context of urbanisation in China become particularly important."

Lloyd Dorfman, Trustee of the Royal Academy Development Trust, entrepreneur and philanthropist, said: “I congratulate BCKJ Architects on becoming the third winner of the RA Dorfman Award. As a foundation, we wanted to continue our support for exceptional emerging talent in architecture, especially in times when many practices are facing greater challenges than ever before. Over the three years, the winners of the RA Dorfman Award have come from Iran, Thailand and China. It highlights the role of the arts in transcending politics.”

Kate Goodwin, Head of Architecture and Drue Heinz Curator, Royal Academy of Arts, said: “The 2020 Royal Academy Dorfman Award is part of the third annual Royal Academy Architecture Awards, part of the RA’s increased commitment to Architecture. The Royal Academy Dorfman Award creates connections and opportunities for architects in an increasingly uncertain world. With the **British Council** as International Partner, its impact has reached practices across the globe and created networks that are more valuable now than ever.”

Notes to Editors

The Royal Academy Architecture Awards

Inaugurated in 2018, collectively the awards demonstrate the RA’s role as a global advocate for architecture, realising the RA’s mission to garner a wider appreciation and understanding of architecture’s vital relationship to culture and society. The awards are a vital part of the architecture programme at the Royal Academy, which includes debates, lectures and activities to inspire the profession and deepen the public’s understanding of architecture.

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About The Dorfman Foundation

The Dorfman Foundation is a charitable foundation based on the entrepreneurial success of its chair, Sir Lloyd Dorfman CBE. Founded in 2007, its main areas of focus are the arts and culture, education, healthcare and the Jewish community. The Foundation was a major donor to the Royal Academy for its 250th anniversary. As part of that, it was a founding partner of the RA Architecture Awards in 2018. Sir Lloyd serves as a Trustee of the Royal Academy Development Trust, and sits on the boards of five other charities.

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About British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org

About the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by a group of artists and architects, under the patronage of King George III, in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded charity led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to promote the creation, understanding and appreciation of the visual arts and architecture through exhibitions, education and debate.

The Royal Academy is an independent charity. It does not receive revenue funding from the government so is reliant upon the support of its visitors, donors, sponsors, patrons and loyal Friends.

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