

## HOUSING WITH A MISSION

*Dutch and Chinese architects' designs for the ants tribe*



*Housing with a Mission at the 2011 Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism and Architecture*

### HOUSING WITH A MISSION

Dutch architects have been active in the Chinese market ever since the opening up of the Chinese economy. What has been the effect of their presence in China for their practice and how did it affect their architectural language in this fascinating country? Have we seen a process of integration, or did their work by and large remain isolated? And if they worked together, did their common efforts lead to creating solutions for specific problems in Chinese society today?

In the exhibition, *Housing with a Mission*, dutch and chinese architects' designs for the ants tribe, tries to find an answer to these questions. The exhibition is showcasing a unique project in which the NAI brought five Dutch architecture offices together with five Chinese, to work on an actual project to be realised in Beijing by VANKE real estate developing.

The selected offices all vary in scale, background, experience and working methods, but they all share a

strong desire to contribute to the social challenges of their time. The ten architects all derive from different historical backgrounds in housing. *Housing with a Mission* shows these backgrounds: its past, the present and the future.

The project focuses on housing for low income graduates, also known as "ants tribe". They are large in size, smart, talented and vocal: the future of China lies in their hands. Up till now this group often lives in poor circumstances. Good quality housing for this group is in many ways a priority for the Chinese government but also for project developers and for architects. Clearly, it's an investment in the future of a peaceful society.

The exhibition *Housing with a Mission* focuses on the process of working together to find a common language, but also showcases the low living conditions in which low income graduates are living today and what their improved housing of tomorrow might become.

**GENERAL FACTS**

- About 200m<sup>2</sup>
- 1 overall project, 10 detailed sub-projects
- Supervision curator: Ole Bouman / curator: Jorn Konijn
- Exhibition Design: Duoxiang Studio
- Graphic Design: THONIK
- Award: Organizer Committee Award (First Prize) 2011 Shenzhen Biennale
- Fee: €10.000,-



### DESIGN ELEMENTS

- 1 overall enclosed space with three separate spaces inside
- 10 largescale 1:15 models on masterplan floor
- 1 process wall with complete info, pictures, sketches and impressions
- 1 media corner with 1 documentary film
- 1 library corner with 1 book table and multi books
- 1 do-it-yourself corner with tables and chairs
- 16 benches



Duoxiang exhibition design seen in birdview from above.

### ABOUT HOUSING WITH A MISSION

'Housing with a Mission' is the product of NAI's matchmaking programme in which Dutch architecture expertise is matched with international community projects. With this background in mind, NAI selected five Dutch architecture firms (NL Architects, Arons en Gelauff architecten, NEXT architects, KCAP and BARCODE Architects) and five Chinese architecture firms (Urbanus, Standard, NODE, O-Office and CAFA University) for this project, which consisted of developing new concepts for high-quality affordable housing.

### SPATIAL & GRAPHIC DESIGN

The specially conceived exhibition-architecture by duoxiang architects from Beijing is based on a linear story path with in the middle of the exhibition the centre piece: the 10 1:15 models. The rest of the exhibition is made from recycled wood, including the three life-size apartments inside the exhibition, the library corner, the media corner and the do-it-yourself part. The outer walls are made of see-through plastic.

The graphic design is created by renowned Dutch design firm THONIK. Their design takes the simplified image of the ant and the house as a starting icon that has been adjusted to all the exhibition graphics. THONIK also designed an mini-catalogue and floor plan for visitors guidance through-out the exhibition.

### 3 X 1:1 HOUSING SPACE

- 1 standard Dutch Low Income House (24m<sup>2</sup>)
- 1 standard Chinese Low Income House (8m<sup>2</sup>)
- 1 Low Income House created in cooperation (15m<sup>2</sup>)

### 1:1 HOUSES IN THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition main subject is housing for low income graduates. To illustrate the situation at present state, to highlight the architectural tradition from both countries in this domain and to show the new possibilities for housing for this group in the future, the exhibition shows three life size 1:1 housing rooms. The first is an example of how Dutch low income graduates live, not only in terms of space but also in terms of furniture, commodities and life style. The second house shows how Chinese low income graduates live, again not only the furniture but also the commodities and lifestyle. The last life size 1:1 house is one that is designed by both Dutch and Chinese architects. It shows the potential of the collaboration and the improvement in living situation over the original house.



Various impressions of the 3 x 1:1 houses within the exhibition *Housing with a Mission*

**CENTRE PIECE**

10 X 1:15 Detailed models

**ARCHITECTS**

NL Architects, Arons en Gelauff architects, NEXT architects, KCAP, BARCODE Architects, Urbanus, Standard architecture, NODE, O-Office and CAFA University



**CENTER PIECE**

The center piece of the exhibition is divided into several parts. First there is the process wall which shows in detail the project's history. All the designs of the 10 architects are also displayed extensively. The second part of the exhibition is the main center piece: the 10 1:15 models, placed on a 1:15 scale masterplan. The models are extremely detailed with a perfect eye for the smallest details.



*Various impressions of the detailed models, the center piece of the Housing with a Mission exhibition*



**DETAILED DESIGN**

All the ten feature projects are also shown in the process wall and an extensive book about the project. The feature sketches, masterplan, first designs, impressions, rendering and a large number of different overviews. The designs are detailed up to ground plan level. Apart from these designs, the specific thoughts and inspiration for the works has also been included in the exhibition.



*Various impressions of the detailed designs that are presented in the exhibition Housing with a Mission*



### INTERESTED?

The exhibition *Housing with a Mission* opened as one of the main exhibitions of the International Shenzhen Architecture Biennale on December 12 2011. To exhibit *Housing with a Mission* at your venue please contact:

Alma Ploeger  
NAI International Projects  
+31 (0)10 4401290  
a.ploeger@nai.nl  
[www.nai.nl/international](http://www.nai.nl/international)



### BOOK

A richly illustrated book accompanies the *Housing with a Mission* exhibition. It includes the full process, all the sketches, detailed designs and texts by mr. Ole Bouman (director of the NAI) and mr. Mao Daqing (vice president VANKE Beijing)

