

An exhibition in the MAK in Vienna called EASTERN PROMISES presents how Asian new emerging architecture in countries like China, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea are currently producing architectural and urban projects that amalgamate social awareness, ecological strategies and artistic practices in new ways.

« The reflection on local traditions and conditions as well as a critical awareness of global media technologies lead to an architectural approach that is less interested in iconic objects and spectacular forms than in a structural realignment of society in its spatial dimensions....

...This development heralds the emergence of a social aesthetic of architecture in the East Asian cultural sphere whose strategies and tactics could prove decisive for the way we deal with dwindling resources on a global scale.

The exhibition features a great variety of architectural projects, showing the relationship between architecture and everyday spatial practice and points to specific symptoms and phenomena within the region—from mass housing in South Korea’s major cities to illegal parasitic architectures in Taiwan, the influence of state architectural firms in China to forms of protest against social displacement processes in South Korea, China’s enclave-like urban villages to Japanese and Taiwanese convenience stores, the mass appeal of China’s new, creative districts to micro-urbanism and nomadic ways of life in Japan, along with new lifestyles in the devastated Tōhoku region...

....This conception of space differs highly from the dualisms and dichotomies of inside and outside, private and public, transparency and opacity; this architecture also avoids, to a large extent, any clear specification of “functions” and “programs.” »

Even if it is difficult to transfer the Asian problematics in Europe, some questions of this exhibition could inspire a topic for European 13 considering that small urban interventions can play a larger role than the size of the site if they are located in spatial articulation but also oare linked to social innovation. This topic of a « social esthetic in architecture » can produce some interesting strategies with which the architecture of different European regions can respond to the social and ecological challenges of the present day.

Some examples of topics could be in the expanding urbanization, what consequences such as shrinking villages? Or how the persisting economic crisis calls for radical new approaches to architectural practice.

The citations “...” are taken from the exhibition Eastern promises MAK 2013

http://www.mak.at/en/program/event/eastern_promises?

