

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.
June 27, 2014

bāc-tā-gon presents A.M. Brainstorm: July Edition

Constructing Lives: The Paths of Jenny Chou and WAI Architecture Think Tank

Beijing, China. bāc-tā-gon is proud to present **A.M. Brainstorm's** fourth conversation on **Saturday, July 26th** at **11am** at **The Other Place**.

As architecture is a multi-disciplinary profession, what are some of the life experiences, interests, and values that encourage someone to study and practice in it? What skills do aspiring architects need to recognize, possess, and develop to practice it ethically/successfully/meaningfully? And what additional skills do architects need to learn or be aware of after entering the field? As given projects can involve the voices of powerful and sometimes competing clients and interested parties, how do architects negotiate for a healthy creative balance? What about the day-to-day work of architectural practice can lead individuals to different creative outlets, such as "pure" artistic practice and exhibition design? When one's training, practice, and interests lead to different veins of inquiry, how does one avoid the trap of being "spread too thin"? To what extent can one (or should one) really separate the day-to-day, bill-paying work from more personally-motivated projects? Is there an archetypal "architect", and if so, has this conception shifted (or how is it shifting) in the early 21st Century? What opportunities and challenges is the field presenting for today's young architects and architectural thinkers?

For the July edition of A.M. Brainstorm, multidisciplinary designer and architect **Jenny Chou** and Cruz Garcia and Nathalie Frankowski of **WAI Architecture Think Tank** will discuss the above questions and others posed by our hungry-minded attendees.

A.M. Brainstorm is a series of casual, monthly conversations inviting distinguished speakers to discuss the research and skills-set behind their creative practices. The brainstorms serve as a platform for multidisciplinary dialogues and collaborations between the local Beijing and transient creative communities. The conversations will be self-moderated between two individuals of similar discipline on a chosen topic, with a new topic each month. Speakers will include practicing artists, curators, designers, architects, chefs, poets, publishers, filmmakers, musicians + composers, amongst others. All talks will be recorded and posted as audio podcasts available for free download from 8actagon's digital archive. AM Brainstorm will occur monthly at 11am on the fourth Saturday of the month at The Other Place, and will run for one hour. Coffee and light refreshments to be provided. Admission is free.

About

Jenny Chou (b. 1981, Taipei) is a multidisciplinary designer based in Beijing. She received her Bachelor of Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2004 with a minor in Contemporary Theory and Criticism, and her Master of Science in Architecture and Urban Design from Columbia University GSAPP in 2008. A cross-disciplinary creative, Jenny explores different mediums and materials and in recent years has worked with Taiwanese Architect Hsieh Ying Chun, actively involved with the craft sector and working with local people and material to create sustainable housing systems. Using design and technology to interface with the skills and knowledge of artisans, she strives to make objects of daily use invaluable, accessible, and enjoyable. She has also served as visiting critic at City College of New York, Konkuk University in Seoul, the University of Hong Kong, and the China Academy of Arts in Hangzhou. Jenny was the assistant curator and exhibition designer for the International design exhibition at the 2011 Chengdu Biennale, and she also designed the exhibition for the Taiwan Pavilion at The 55th International Art Exhibition- la Biennale di Venezia 2013, "This is not a Taiwan Pavilion", curated by Esther Lu.

WAI Architecture Think Tank is an international studio practicing architecture, urbanism and architectural research. Founded in Brussels in 2008 by Puerto Rican architect, artist, author, and theorist Cruz Garcia (b. 1983, San Juan) and French architect, artist, author, and poet, Nathalie Frankowski (b. 1985, Dundee), WAI and its parallel artist practice Garcia Frankowski are currently based in Beijing. WAI seeks to understand and execute Architecture by employing a panoramic approach, drawing from theoretical texts to architectural artifacts, narrative architectures, buildings, and urban and cultural conditions. WAI strives to make significant contributions to the collective intelligence of architecture, from the conception of intelligent buildings and masterplans to the production of fresh research projects and innovative publications.

Recent international projects include the shortlisted design of the *National Centre for Contemporary Arts* (NCCA) in Moscow and the design of the *Housetelier* in Beijing. The work of WAI and Garcia Frankowski has been featured in exhibitions at the *Museum of Modern Art* (MoMA) in New York; *Storefront for Art and Architecture* in New York; *Vitra Design Museum* in Weil am Rhein; *Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art* (CFCCA) in Manchester; PIFO New Art Gallery in Beijing; and several prominent cities across the Americas, Europe, and Asia. Recent and upcoming publications include the well-received *Pure Hardcore Icons: A Manifesto of Pure Form in Architecture* (Artifice Books on Architecture, 2013); self-published WAIzine, *What About It?* (a public resource on The National Art Library of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and part of the collection of Archizines); *Shapes, Islands, Text: A Garcia Frankowski Manifesto* (forthcoming, Vibok Works, Sevilla); children's book *The Story of the Little Girl and The Sun*; and several artist books, including *The Book of Shapes*.

Garcia and Frankowski are also co-founding curators of Intelligentsia Gallery in Beijing.

bāc-tā-gon (pronounced "bāc-tā-gon") is a curatorial collective that cultivates research-driven projects to explore cultural engagement in China via the hybridity of disciplinary practice across visual art, design, architecture, performing art, music, literature, moving image and cuisine. Implementing strategic partnerships to sustain its projects, **bāc-tā-gon** serves as a platform to collectively identify and (re)define alternative research methodologies, funding channels and content distribution pathways.

Conversation Details

Date: Saturday, July 26, 2014

Time: 11am

Location: The Other Place

Beijing, Dongcheng District, Langjia Hutong #1 (At the corner with Beilouguxiang) | 北京, 东城区, 郎家胡同1号 (北锣鼓巷北口)

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