Press Invitation for the European Première of the movie

Last Call for Planet Earth®

A movie about sustainable development sharing the views of 12 leading world architects on architectural, social and urbane issues.

Presented by

Euraf (European Architecture Foundation) and ArchiWorld.com

When: Thursday, 31 January 2008

Where: European Commission – Berlaymont Building’s press room
Press Release

The challenge

The planet is in danger. The cry for help has been made, loud and clear. The challenge is very simple and it’s a matter of survival.

There is only one possible escape: the quick and energetic mastery of sustainable development. Its application to architecture and town planning concerns us all.

What to do? Working differently in order to build differently and do everything in order to protect our vulnerable environment. Solar energy, renewable materials, targeted changes in city design, passive houses and bioclimatic architecture, are the many answers possible to define a highly topical issue.

The movie

Davis Guggenheim’s documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth”, gives the microphone to Al Gore, who is sensitive to the ecological issues that humanity should react to before long. In response to this documentary, we wanted to question twelve of the most important architects of our time as to their environmental efforts in practicing architecture. We took a trip around the world, from Japan to Brazil and passing through China, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States, and travelled tens of thousands of kilometres in order to film their testimony and projects fitting within the sustainable development outlook. Twelve people, twelve contexts, and twelve perspectives that we will be delivering very shortly.

Without wanting to teach a lesson, Archiworld®’s film “Last Call For Planet Earth®” aims to draw, with critical hindsight, the outline of a true "cultural revolution", which will do away with architectural biases.

The European preview will be shown in Brussels on January 31, 2008 at 06.30 pm in the Berlaymont Building of the European Commission.

Registration is open online on the dedicated website www.lastcallforplanetearth.eu as from December 3, 2007 and on www.eusew.eu.

The Belgian preview was held in Hasselt on October 12, 2007 among the presence of numerous Belgian and Flemish political representatives.

Further international presentations in Paris, Venice, Athens, Luxemburg, Vienna and Düsseldorf, Prague, Warsaw, will be soon announced on www.lastcallforplanetearth.eu.

All this presentations will take place during the first semester 2008.

Since the first launch in October, our foundation has been contacted by 22 european channels interested in broadcasting the movie to a larger audience. We are now taking into account all these proposals.

Since our goal is essentially educational, we intend – after to send a free DVD copy of our movie to all architecture schools in Europe.
The film “LAST CALL FOR PLANET EARTH” tries to take on this challenge through the voice of 12 world acclaimed architects. These 12 architects tell us about the solutions they have applied each in their own way.

Françoise-Hélène Jourda tries to take her efforts as far as they will go, to work with renewable materials, soft tech and bioclimatology, whilst taking along her partners and clients. Her goal is to encourage a different way of living, in other conditions, in order to put a stop to the destruction of the environment.

The concept of large glass spaces with an innovative design can be found in projects by Christoph Ingenhoven, focused on ecology and the sophisticated use of technology. His building for Lufthansa in Frankfurt is an exemplary project linking "High Tech" to "Low Energy”. It offers 1,800 people workspace bathed in light. Straddled by a glass roof, the green areas allow the building to breathe whilst protecting it from the heat, the cold and noise.
With the new Milan fair in Rho Pero, which covers a surface area of 120 hectares, Massimiliano Fuksas redeveloped a section of the city. A huge glass blanket, supported by steel tree columns, undulates in a succession of hills and craters and protects a long footpath as well as independent architectural structures.

Today, confirms Thom Mayne, architecture is global. The American architect and 2005 Pritzker Prize winner today designs prestigious buildings resulting from a desire for sustainable development (buildings for the Caltrans transport company, Los Angeles 2004 or Federal Building in San Francisco, 2006). Backed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Thom Mayne was recently chosen to develop a zero energy school project.
Ivan Harbour, partner of Richard Rogers at the London agency of Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners confirms that clean technologies are unavoidable today. The office participated actively in the development of passive design by using water, wind and sun. But it is through new technology that solutions to our planet’s problems can be found. The prestigious RSH-P buildings are fitted with an electronic nervous system controlling heat, ventilation and all start-ups.
Examples from the East

In the Far East, we chose two renowned architects who are total opposites of each other: **Kengo Kuma** and **Qingyun Ma**. The Japanese uses ancestral cultural tradition, which thoroughly blends architecture, nature and human beings. To him, it is in this triangle that he attempts to create new harmony. His projects favour the use of wood, bamboo, stone and even raw earth, which he applies along with new technologies. Evoking the issues specific to his country in full over-consumption, the Chinese on the other hand, is involved in megastructures that he tries to manage by taking into account environmental data, such as the Longyang residential complex in Shanghai with its 16 buildings covering an area of 185,000 m². For Thumb Island, also near Shanghai, Quingyun Ma designed a building in a park whose roof functions as a public garden.
Attention to derivatives

Finland is a country sensitive to environmental matters. So is Markku Komonen. The architect allows us to reflect on his housing projects in Guinea and efficient offices in a former warehouse, which is part of Helsinki's industrial heritage. However, he warns us: sustainable architecture should not be a style or a label. It’s not about a trend!
The Canadian Daniel Pearl responds along the same lines and fears "green washing" for marketing purposes: a project appears to be "green" through added technologies, disconnected from the architectural aspect. His social housing renovation projects in Montréal and his residential constructions integrated into the landscape are exemplary in more ways than one.
“Curitiba, the city people love”

The future of the planet is played out in the cities where urgent problems are expressed, which require bold solutions. The capital city of the State of Paraná, in the south of Brazil, Curitiba, that seemed destined to its fate as the anarchic city faced with blatant inequality and poverty. And yet, with few means and lots of creativity, the town planner **Jaime Lerner**, mayor of the city and Governor of the State has on several occasions been responsible for the urban revolution, which made Curitiba an international reference in ecological, economic and social terms. He informed us of his contributions of "urban acupuncture": efficient public transportation, playful green spaces, systematic recuperation of waste, an education system unequalled in the country, and active participation of the citizens in this perpetually evolving human adventure.
In practical terms

In his day-to-day work, the Belgian Jo Crepain favours architectural quality, which he views as the first form of sustainability: quality of the structure, insulation and materials – of bricks for the most part – high ceilings, adequate natural ventilation and integration into green spaces. Responding to the new office concept, his building for Telindus near Leuven multiplies glass volumes so as to allow daylight to enter abundantly into the 20,000 m² office space.
In Vienna, **Georg Reinberg** showed us the quality of passive houses. He explained how they work. This Austrian pioneer of ecological construction is extremely demanding when it comes to energy solutions. His residential building projects in Vienna and the Biotop building are there to convince us.
Enhanced with contributions by professor Hugo Hens (KU Leuven), the great specialist of sustainable construction and European Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, the film aims to show that sustainable development is thus materialised by a series of proposals on a new concept of the city, on a new way of approaching the home, with increased freedom and intelligence, on a more sensitive focus on materials, on water, air and energies. Critical aspects for future generations!