

Press release

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WKCD Project Illustrates Fosters Commitment to Architectural Integrity in a New Hong Kong

August 29, 2011 Hong Kong Foster + Partners: the Art of Architecture a major new exhibition about the work of Foster + Partners, curated by the renowned writer and Times critic, Richard Cork opens today at the Hong Kong Arts Centre.

Hong Kong has played an important role in the evolution of the Foster studio, since winning the competition for the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in 1979.

Spencer de Grey, Senior Partner and Head of Design, Foster + Partners, said This city has been a constant source of inspiration for designs such as Chek Lap Kok airport, Kai Tak Cruise Terminal and, most recently, the masterplan for the West Kowloon Cultural District. Unprecedented in its scale and ambition, the new cultural district with its sustainable agenda is the largest initiative of its kind in the world today and is set to transform the cultural life of Hong Kong.

Through a thematic display based around the issues of infrastructure, sustainability, urban planning, history and culture the exhibition sets the context of many of the offices projects including West Kowloon.

The exhibition features a timeline representing the 227 projects in 20 countries

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completed by the practice since its inception in 1967 as Foster Associates. On display are models of seminal projects, such as the Bank in Hong Kong; the **Reichstag** and the Free University in Berlin; the Great Court at the British Museum in London; cultural projects, including the Carré d'Art in Nîmes, The Sage Gateshead music centre, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Winspear Opera House in Dallas; and transport projects, including Beijing International Airport and the world's first commercial spaceport in New Mexico.

Alongside completed works, the exhibition showcases some of Foster + Partners projects currently under construction, such as the sustainable masterplan for Masdar City in Abu Dhabi. It also features designs currently on the drawing board, including the competition model for the West Kowloon Cultural District.

Richard Cork, curator of Foster + Partners: the Art of Architecture adds, The computer has revolutionised the way architects work, yet the language of drawing and model making still plays a central role in the studio the exhibition offers incredible insight into the art of architecture through a display of sketches, which show some of these stepping stones in the design process.

While the projects featured in the exhibition highlight the exciting diversity of the Foster studios work, they also demonstrate the changing nature of architectural practice although the international scope of this work continues to grow, the same set of values underpins every design, regardless of its size or type. Each is united by a common thread a belief that the quality of our surroundings has a direct influence on the quality of our lives.

Allied to this is an integrated approach to issues of energy and the environment: a central theme of the Foster studios work since the 1970s. This is a thread that runs through all of

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the studios work as, with new technologies at their disposal and the opportunity to comprehensively tackle the issue of sustainability with more recent large-scale projects, many of the 'green' ideas that were explored in early projects are now becoming a reality.

Fosters + Partners: the Art of Architecture is at the Hong Kong Arts Centre in Wanchai from 27 August to 22 September 2011. An extended outreach programme - guided tours and screenings of the acclaimed Norman Foster film How Much Does Your Building Weigh, Mr Foster? complements the exhibition.

Notes for editors:

About Foster + Partners

Foster + Partners is an international studio for architecture, planning and design led by its founder and chairman, Lord Foster, together with chief executive, Mouzhan Majidi, two heads of design, Spencer de Grey and David Nelson, six design directors and eight senior partners. The practices work ranges in scale from the largest single building on the planet, Beijing International Airport, to furniture and product design. There is also a strong interest in city planning and the infrastructure of communication. Projects can be found on six continents throughout the world: Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australiasia.

Since its inception, the practice has worked in 75 countries, completed 227 projects, received more than 600 awards and citations for design excellence, and has won over 100 national and international competitions.

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About the film *How Much Does Your Building Weigh, Mr. Foster?*

The film traces the work of Norman Foster and his quest to improve the quality of life through design. Included in the film is Foster's inspiration for emblematic projects such as the world's largest building Beijing Airport, the Hearst building in New York and the tallest bridge ever built in Millau France. In the near future, mankind will live entirely in cities. Foster offers some possible solutions to the problem that this event will create. Complementary screenings on 11, 21 and 22 September 2011 at the Agnes B Theatre, Hong Kong Arts Centre. For more details and registration: www.britishcouncil.org.hk/arts

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