

## Architectural Activities of Foreign Architects in China in the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010, when foreign architects are said to have begun to become more active, and collects data mainly from literature surveys and on-site investigations related to that period. Based on this data, 1) it compiles a list of architectural works designed by foreign architects in China from 2000 to the present, and grasps an overall picture of the architectural activities of foreign architects. 2) It discusses the characteristics of the architectural activities of foreign architects by examining the designs of museums, theaters, exhibition facilities, etc., which are said to have a relatively large number of works by foreign architects.

**Key words:** 21st century in China, Foreign architects, Architectural activities, Cultural facilities, Design

### 1. Introduction

This paper aims to clarify the characteristics of the architectural activities of foreign architects in China by examining their works in the early 21st century.

As is well known, China has entered a period of rapid economic growth since the beginning of the 21st century, bringing about remarkable developments in the construction industry. In particular, since the 20th World Congress of Architects, held in Beijing on June 23, 1999, established the Beijing Charter<sup>1)</sup>, many foreign architects and architectural firms (hereafter referred to as architects) have become active in metropolitan areas such as Beijing and Shanghai, and have become particularly involved in the design of large-scale public facilities. Individual works of these, particularly sports facilities related to the Beijing Olympics, have already been noted worldwide. However, there has been little research to date that takes into account the architectural activities of foreign architects as a whole.

Therefore, in this paper, we first focus on the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010, when foreign architects are said to have started to become more active, and collect data mainly from literature surveys and on-site surveys related to that period. Then, based on these materials, we compile a list of architectural works designed by foreign architects in China from 2000 to 2010, and grasp the overall picture of the architectural activities of foreign architects. Next, we discuss the characteristics of the architectural activities of foreign architects by examining the designs of museums, theaters, exhibition facilities, and other facilities that are said to be relatively frequently created by foreign architects.

Clarifying the characteristics of the architectural activities of foreign architects in China in this paper is not only important in understanding contemporary architecture in China in the 21st century, but is also an interesting subject in terms of clarifying one real picture of the activities of foreign architects in a different cultural sphere. Note that, because this paper focuses on examining design characteristics, it does not touch upon much about the architectural planning field.

### 2. The current status of architectural activities by foreign architects in China

#### 2.1. Works designed by foreign architects

According to the Journal of the Architectural Institute of China and other literature sources<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>, many public buildings were built by foreign architects between 2001 and 2010. In order to clarify the design activities of foreign architects in China and the characteristics of their works, it is important to understand the overall picture of the designs by foreign architects. Based on a survey of various literature and on-site investigations, architectural works designed by foreign architects were compiled into a list categorized by name, completion date, designer/affiliation,