

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Katie Plocheck

Phone: (713) 348-5668

Email: Katie.Plocheck@rice.edu

### **Rice Design Alliance Lecturer Wins Architecture's Highest Honor**

*Wang Shu awarded The Pritzker Prize*

**Houston, Texas** (2 March 2012) - The Rice Design Alliance (RDA) is pleased to announce that Wang Shu, a lecturer in RDA's fall lecture series, Chinese Architecture, has received the 2012 Pritzker Prize, architecture's highest honor. The Pritzker Prize's purpose is "to honor a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture".

RDA's fall lecture series on Chinese Architecture focused on current architectural practices amid rapid growth - a reality familiar to many Texas cities, particularly Houston. Shu's studio, Amateur Architecture, is based in Hangzhou, The People's Republic of China. "The fact that an architect from China has been selected by the jury, represents a significant step in acknowledging the role that China will play in the development of architectural ideals," says prize sponsor, Thomas Pritzker. Shu's work presents a contemporary and progressive approach that acknowledges the rich tradition of Chinese architecture. After rigorous academic training, Shu began to work with local craftsmen to gain experience in traditions that are in danger of being lost.

Shu's major projects include the Ceramic House in Jinhua, the Ningbo Contemporary Art Museum, and five scattered houses in Ningbo that received acknowledgment from the Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction in the Asia Pacific. The upcoming issue of *Cite*, a publication of the RDA, focuses on Chinese cities and features an interview with Shu.

Funds from a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts helped bring Shu to Houston and allowed *Cite* to send one of our brightest design leaders, Christof Spieler, to China. Much of the new China has been designed by foreign architects including a great deal of work by the Houston office of SWA Group. Spieler writes, "I spent two weeks in China last summer to see what these cities are like on the ground. I came away simultaneously impressed, depressed, startled, and awed. I was also left with an odd feeling of familiarity. We can see China as a way of looking at ourselves, a mirror reflecting our own cities back to us. In looking at Beijing or Shanghai, we see how another culture sees us. Often it's an unsettling view." Spieler has contributed a feature article in the upcoming issue of *Cite* about his discoveries.

To view the video of Shu's lecture at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, please visit RDA's website, [www.ricedesignalliance.org](http://www.ricedesignalliance.org).

### **ABOUT RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE (RDA)**

The Rice Design Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture, urban design, and the built environment in the Houston region through educational programs, the publication of *Cite: The Architecture + Design Review of Houston*, and active programs to initiate physical improvements. Membership is open to the general public.