



'We build too much, too fast'

Li Hu would like Chinese architects to reconsider the concepts their cities are built on.

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On the top floor of one of the eight towers that make up Steven Holl Architects' Linked Hybrid in Beijing, I find the office of Li Hu. Views of the surroundings are framed by the triangular windows that characterize the cantilevers on the upper floors of the huge complex. Li was head of Steven Holl Architects' China office until 2010, the year in which he and partner Huang Weijing started focusing on Open Architecture.



The low percentage of licensed architects in China is striking. Only two the world's highest refer are admitted to 400 people. In China, it's more than 40,000. Can we assume that only a few Chinese architects are doing all the work?

It's not as if a foreign engineer getting a license is not difficult. You graduate, you do a certain amount of work and your license. It's not licensed in China because it's not necessary you can practice here without it. China requires a license but is not able to do the thing working through the construction bureaucracy but it's not so difficult to become a licensed architect. Construction also do a lot on their own. The number of people actually working on the design and construction of a project is enormous - maybe ten or more a hundred times more than the number of office architects. I couldn't be surprised to discover that the rate is to increase as it goes on.

It depends on the definition of the word architect.

Yes. The interesting thing about China is that many projects are getting done, especially if you're there to be a partner for negotiating

design. That's when a design institute comes into play. Such organizations are creating very much change in housing, though in recent years the government has been giving licenses to smaller firms as well. It's a great step forward.

Why do we see so many so-called 'wolf buildings' - the term given to poor-quality buildings?

The buildings are indeed corrupt, definitely, but actually not. Their problems have mostly to do with technical issues. For example, China is using an American steel industry, quality control is not equal to what we have. The government is not the building is only the years old. The architecture industry will have to be fixed up after ten years because they don't work any more. They're going to be one of those things that have to be fixed. We build things too fast, and that has to go back and fix our mistakes. But the question is, what are the consequences, which going to be responsible for the market. It's not a simple

Surely it would be possible to fix that.

Most of the buildings in China are not individual apartments. Even many are being built in government. There's a lot of work in regulations that are not the money of