The Gong

atelier oï x Smiling Gecko

Building with light, air and water

atelier oï is proud to present the cultural centre “The Gong”. The completion of the building is a milestone in the greater development of the Smiling Gecko Educational Campus in Cambodia.

*La Neuveville, 12 July 2024.* On 28 and 29 June 2024, “The Gong”, the new cultural centre of the Smiling Gecko educational campus, celebrated its grand opening in the presence of the project promoter, Smiling Gecko, as well as national and international cultural professionals and Dr Hang Chuan Naron, Cambodia’s Minister of Education, Youth and Sport. atelier oï was in charge of the planning and implementation of the building for a period of three years.

“If you want to invest in something sustainable, invest in people and in education”, says Aurel Aebi, founding partner of atelier oï. “That’s why we’ve been putting our creative energy into Smiling Gecko’s projects from the start.” Since 2018, our transdisciplinary team has been working on the big education campus for the aid organisation. “The Gong” is the first building that has been completed. The secondary school is currently under construction; the university of applied sciences is in the planning phase.

The project was born out of the desire to create a modern and sustainable location for cultural education in Cambodia. The building has an auditorium with around 100 seats and a stage, the Sonic Studios professional recording studios, as well as a café area. It will be used in future for classes on campus and is currently available to external cultural professionals.

In the attached interview, Aurel Aebi speaks about social responsibility, storytecture at The Gong, and bioclimatic architecture. In the attached architecture document, you can find key information about the building’s concept and composition.

atelier oï carries out projects in the fields of education, medicine, crafts and health all over the world. “We are interested in putting our knowledge, curiosity and transdisciplinary way of thinking in the service of a brand or organisation”, Aurel Aebi explains. “In Cambodia, we worked alongside local craftsmen and the Smiling Gecko carpentry workshop to create a building that is not only functional, but is also aesthetically rooted in the local culture. When participatory design processes put people in the centre, it is possible to create something socially and culturally relevant.”

Link to images and visualisations of the project :

<https://www.atelier-oi.ch/en/work/smiling-gecko-the-gong>

For further informations:

atelier oï SA - Moïtel

Route de Bienne 31

2520 La Neuveville / Suisse

Email : press@atelier-oi.ch

Telephone : +41 32 751 56 66

About atelier oï

Atelier oï is a community of creators that is made up of the three founding partners, Aurel Aebi, Armand Louis and Patrick Reymond, as well as a transdisciplinary team of 45 employees in the areas of architecture, interior design, scenography and other related disciplines. They think and work as a collective and are known for their innovative way of designing products, spaces and atmospheres.

atelier oï works for a large number of national and international companies, museums, health organisations and development projects such as Smiling Gecko. They have received many international awards for their work.

[www.atelier-oi.ch](http://www.atelier-oi.ch)

About Smiling Gecko

The Smiling Gecko charity is a non-profit association recognised by Swiss law with its headquarters in Dübendorf, Switzerland, and was founded by Swiss artist and photographer Hannes Schmid. Since 2014, Smiling Gecko has been working as a local aid organisation to develop a functioning rural community for work, education and agriculture. The aim is to counter poverty and a lack of prospects with a socially sustainable concept.

Children receive a bilingual school education in line with international standards; young adults get vocational training. The centre has its own craft and production facilities, agriculture and livestock farming, a hotel resort for paying guests, and performs humanitarian aid activities.

The Gong and Sonic Studios are part of the Smiling Gecko educational campus. The recording studios will be available for hire starting in autumn 2024. Income from The Gong and Sonic Studios will be reinvested in Smiling Gecko’s projects.

[www.smilinggecko.ch](http://www.smilinggecko.ch)

[www.gong-cambodia.com](http://www.gong-cambodia.com)

[www.recordingcambodia.com](http://www.recordingcambodia.com)