

**Company Release: October 4, 2016**

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of our Founding Principal, Bing Thom. Bing suffered a brain aneurism while on a recent trip in Hong Kong and passed away in that city on the afternoon of October 4<sup>th</sup>. His wife, Bonnie Thom, who shared his life for over 50 years, was by his side.

Bing Thom was one of Canada's most admired and accomplished architects, a dedicated and artful city-builder whose global reputation was closely tied to Metro Vancouver, a region he cared for deeply and did much to protect and to improve. Bing's commitment to using architecture to improve the urban environment was recognized by a range of honours including the Order of Canada, the Golden Jubilee Medal, honorary degrees from Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia, the Margolese Prize, an honorary professorship from Tongji University in Shanghai, and the RAIC Gold Medal, the highest honour given to a Canadian architect.

Born in Hong Kong and immigrating to Canada as a child, Bing received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of British Columbia and his Master of Architecture degree from the University of California at Berkeley. A student of the 60's, Bing helped pioneer one of the first academic programs in Ethnic Studies in North America during his time in Berkeley. His career began in the offices of Fumihiko Maki and Arthur Erickson before he started his own firm, Bing Thom Architects (BTA), in 1982. His firm's commissions cover the globe, from the Expo' 92 Canada Pavilion in Seville, Spain, to Arena Stage Theater in Washington DC, Tarrant County College Trinity River East Campus in Fort Worth, Texas, to the current Xiqu Centre Opera House at the West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong, the University of Chicago Center in Hong Kong, the Binhai Cultural District of Tianjin, the Shijiazhuang Performing Arts Center, and Shenyang Kerry Centre in central Shenyang. BTA's local portfolio of projects include the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at the University of British Columbia, Central City Surrey, Sunset Community Centre, Surrey City Centre Library, the Guildford Aquatic Centre, and currently Simon Fraser University's Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering Building and First Baptist Church Redevelopment.

Bing Thom was a mentor to so many architects young and old, sharing his values and passion for creating beautiful spaces and places that better communities. He was never afraid to speak his mind. He saw himself first as a public servant and held a fundamental belief in the transformative power of great architecture to uplift not only the physical, but also the economic and social conditions of a community. He demanded the best from everyone and inspired each of us to achieve it. His positive impact will continue to be felt both in the communities in which our projects are built and in the profound influence he had on his many colleagues and so many others. BTA has evolved into an extraordinary place, rich with diverse global talent. We honour him for his generosity of spirit, mentorship, and the confidence he has placed in us to carry his vision and his creative and design values into the future.

In recent years, Bing expanded the leadership of the firm to include Principals Venelin Kokalov and Michael Heeney in Vancouver, Managing Director Francis Yan in Asia, and a team of experienced Directors, allowing the practice to grow and establish offices in three countries. Venelin Kokalov will now take on the role of Principal-In-Charge. Venelin has been working alongside Bing as Design Principal over two decades and has been integral in developing our award winning projects and international competitions during this time. It had long been Bing's wish to see Venelin lead the firm into the future, a view that was also shared and endorsed by the company's senior management team. In Venelin's words: *"I have been truly blessed to have been able to collaborate with Bing over the last two decades. Under his mentorship, I grew not just as a designer but also, through his example, as a leader. Bing has made my transition to Principal-In-Charge feasible and I am committed to carrying Bing's dreams and vision into the future."*