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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rural Urban Framework Wins 2015 Curry Stone Design Prize
Hong Kong---based Design Firm Recognized for Revitalizing Shrinking
Rural Villages in China

Chicago, IL (October 1, 2015)—The Curry Stone Foundation has named the nonprofit research and design lab Rural Urban Framework (RUF), as the 2015 Curry Stone Design Prize Winner. Founded in 2006 by University of Hong Kong professors, Joshua Bolchover and John Lin, Rural Urban Framework seeks to use design to help stabilize, reinvigorate and rebuild villages across China that are rapidly losing residents due to the country’s rural---to---urban migration.

“The work of RUF is addressing one of the most urgent current geopolitical issues, how to deal with the imbalances created by large mass migrations,” said Emiliano Gandolfi, the Prize Director. “Their work is exemplifying how architecture should establish a dialogue with the community and the environment in order to built structures that respond to their changing needs.”

China is undergoing an unprecedented migration from rural villages into urban cities. In 1980, approximately 80 percent of all Chinese lived in villages. Today, more than half of the population lives in cities. This trend is expected to accelerate under a government plan to move an additional 250 million rural residents into cities by the year 2025. As a result, China loses approximately 300 villages every single day, according to research by Tianjin University.

Rural Urban Framework uses design to address the hollowed---out cities and the poorly constructed urban sprawl that is fast replacing former villages. Both of the firm’s co---founders, John Lin and Joshua Bolchover, were raised in depopulating rural cities — Lin in the United States’ Rust Belt, and Bolchover in Manchester. Drawing inspiration from these landscapes, the design lab has built schools, community centers, hospitals, houses and infrastructure such as garbage collection in villages and urban sprawl settings across China. “When we began the collaboration I was most interested in understanding these volatile landscapes or ambiguous landscapes, but then also how to act,” said co---founder Joshua Bolchover.

2015 Curry Stone Design Prize

Jury: Eric Cesal, Clifford Curry, Gary Feuerstein, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Sergio Palleroni, Louisa Silva, and Delight Stone.

Prize Founders: Clifford Curry and Delight Stone, Bend, OR.

Prize Director: Emiliano Gandolfi, architect and curator, co---founder of Cohabitation, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Prize Advisors: Donna Cooper Read, Phoebe Curry Campbell, Rahul Mehrotra, and Kimberley Saunders

Past Curry Stone Design Prize
Winners

To date, Rural Urban Framework has worked in 18 rural villages in China areas that are about to undergo major transformation. The lab works in a collaborative and participatory manner with the local inhabitants. The scales of the projects vary, from small interventions, such as bridge---building and construction of prototype housing, to designing and planning entire villages.

The lab, which currently has four designers, including co---founders sees China as “an ideal laboratory” to explore the future of architecture and design. “In China and the world, we live in an urban age, but we believe its future course is intertwined with the fate of the rural,” states John Lin, co---founder, Rural Urban Framework.

Rural Urban Framework will participate in a panel at the Chicago Architectural Biennial, led by Prize Director Emiliano Gandolfi on Friday October 2, from 2:30---4pm CST, taking place at the Claudia Cassidy Theater inside the Cultural Center. A short film produced by the Curry Stone Foundation about RUF’s work will also be shown during the panel.

About Rural Urban Framework

Founded in 2006 by University of Hong Kong professors Joshua Bolchover and John Lin, **Rural Urban Framework** is one of the country’s most innovative architecture and design labs. John Lin, who often jokes that he is a “professional immigrant,” was born in Taiwan and raised in the United States’ Rust Belt, where he saw the impacts of massive depopulation. After studying at Cooper Union in New York, he taught at the Royal Danish Academy before relocating to Hong Kong. Joshua Bolchover grew up in Manchester, England, a former industrial stronghold that has also experienced population loss. Educated at Cambridge and London’s Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, Bolchover has worked in New York, London, and now in Hong Kong.

To date, the lab has completed 12 projects and worked in 18 villages, including building a hospital in Angdong Village, a school in Qinmo Village and an innovative design for new homes in Shijia Village to foster villagers’ traditional economic self---reliance by facilitating rainwater collection, food drying and an underground biogas system to produce energy for cooking. In 2013, Rural Urban Framework was awarded “Emerging Architecture Practice of the Year” by ICON and named a “Design Vanguard” by Architectural Record.

About Curry Stone Design Prize

Curry Stone Design Prize is one of the most recognized social impact design awards, celebrating socially engaged practitioners and the influence and reach of design as a force for improving lives and strengthening communities. Founded in 2008 by Clifford Curry and Delight Stone, the Curry Stone Design Prize’s goal is to inspire the next generation of designers to harness their ingenuity and craft for social good by sharing and supporting the impactful work of leading social impact practitioners. Nominees for the Curry Stone Design Prize are selected by an anonymous rotating group of social impact experts representing different fields of design, as well as humanitarian advocates from related disciplines. Emphasis is placed on emerging projects and ideas that may not have yet been taken to scale. Each year, the winners of the prize receive a cash prize with no strings attached and are featured in a short documentary about their work, produced by the Curry Stone Foundation.

The Curry Stone Design Prize will present Rural Urban Framework with their award at a ceremony in **Mumbai, India** on March 17, 2016. There will also be a conference with Sir J.J. School of Architecture in Mumbai with Rural Urban Framework, the Curry Stone Design Prize 2015 Vision Award Winner (to be announced), and other practitioners on March 16, 2016.

Photos will be available upon request

To view a short documentary about Rural Urban Design, and to learn more about the prize, other winners and upcoming events, go to: <http://www.currystonedesignprize.com>.
Twitter [@designprize](#), on Facebook and on YouTube.

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