

Building Contemporary China

2023 RIBA China Architects Exhibition

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RIBA China Architects: **building contemporary China**

The last 30 years have witnessed an unprecedented transformation of building practice in China. Supported by continuous exchanges with their international counterparts, Chinese architects have sought to respond to a multitude of contemporary architectural discussions in the context of China's social and economic conditions. This has resulted in the formulation of a panorama of projects shaped both by China's architectural lineage and its contemporary context.

Traversing across open plains to steep valleys, crossing through major cities to remote villages, the 33 projects here tackle serious questions, including environmental action, urban improvement, rural revival, and reconstruction after natural disasters. The collection of works is not limited by type, and ranges from domestic buildings for better living, the planning of public buildings and large-scale housing complexes to the simple tea house. The 11 participants come from different regions in China. Their varied backgrounds mean that they each have an outstanding role in the field of architectural practice. The models, images, photographs, and drawings exhibited here showcase their diverse investigative approaches, while they share between them the wider dimension of the cultural character unique to contemporary China.

The exuberance of works in this exhibition demonstrate the potential for a broad range of building practices. While the projects are collected under the same banner of contemporary architecture in China, we wish to provide the audience with a renewed understanding of the current state of the Chinese building industry, as well as communicating an optimism for the part these projects play in the enabling of greater exploration by architectural practices around the world.

— — LI Hua, Professor of Southeast University, China



WANG Jianguo

Professor at Southeast University, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

Since 1989, Wang Jianguo has been teaching at the Research Institute of Architecture, the Department of Architecture and the School of Architecture at Southeast University. He served as Dean of the School of Architecture from 2003 to 2014. He is now the Director of the Urban Design Research Centre of Southeast University, while holding several academic positions, including the Vice President of the Architectural Society of China, the Vice President of the Urban Planning Society of China, the Director of the Ministry of Education's Steering Committee on the Teaching of Architecture, and the Editor-in-chief of *Frontiers of Architectural Research*.

His research is focused on architecture, urban design and architectural heritage conservation, covering both frontier and engineering practice. His published work includes *Urban Design, Theory and Method of Modern Urban Design*, and other titles. He has directed several architectural and urban design projects such as the Main Exhibition Pavilion of the Expo Park for the 10th Jiangsu Horticultural Exposition, the integrative urban design for Guangzhou and the integrative urban design for Nanjing, and has gained nine first prizes and seven second prizes in the National Excellence in Architectural Design Awards and Urban Planning Awards, more than 30 first prizes in ministerial and provincial design awards, and several international awards.



WANG Jianguo

Main Exhibition Pavilion of the Expo Park for the 10th Jiangsu Horticultural Exposition

Date: 2018

Location: Yangzhou, Jiangsu

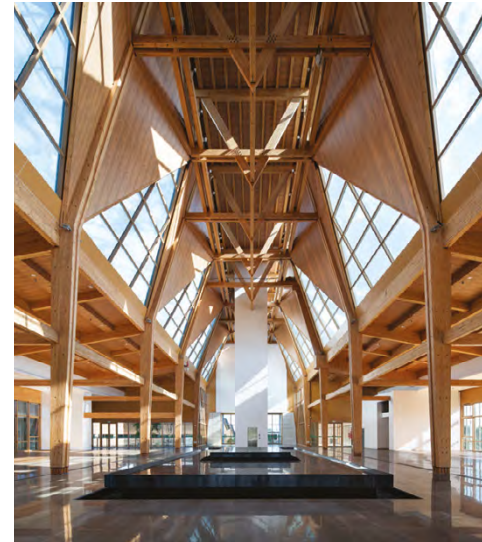
The 10th Jiangsu Horticultural Exposition was held in Yizheng, Yangzhou in September 2018. The Expo Park is located in Zaolinwan Ecological Park: the site is flat – it is near the mountain and beside the river, with the area reserved for the 2021 World Horticultural Exposition's construction on the eastern side. As the principal landmark building, the main exhibition pavilion is located in the entrance area of the Expo Park.

Drawing on cultural images of the local landscape architecture and gardens in Yangzhou and inspired by Yuan Yao's Qing Dynasty painting East Garden of Yangzhou, the main exhibition pavilion expresses the beauty of the large open and closed pattern of Yangzhou gardens with the image of a "sudden view of forest ridges". The southern entrance opens with the towering Phoenix Pavilion exhibition hall, and the stream under the bridge that connects with the science and technology exhibition hall runs down to the north and forms a water surface inside and outside, creating a coherent vision of the landscape.



Conforming to the terrain, the overall building volume gradually descends from the high point in the south east to the north west, forming a slowly descending horizon, with a waterfall courtyard. The design uses courtyards of different scales to deconstruct the building's volume, forming a sequence of exhibition halls that unfold with the water, which achieves the focus on nature taken by the Horticultural Expo buildings. The interlinked corridor between the exhibition hall and the forest and the hinterland integrates the building and landscape fully, with the interior and exterior connected.

The main exhibition halls adopt modern wooden structural technology. The main components are manufactured by factories and assembled on site. It is not only a green construction, which meets the requirements of energy saving and environmental protection:–, it also effectively makes the construction more efficient, solves the problem of a tight construction period and plays a positive role in demonstrating green design as well as sustainable development. Since the pavilion will be transformed into a boutique hotel after the Expo, the design also considers the rationale of the building's subsequent use. In 2021, the project won the First prize in the National Green Building Innovation Awards.





WANG Jianguo

Complex Pavilion and Nature Pavilion of the 13th China (Xuzhou) International Garden Expo

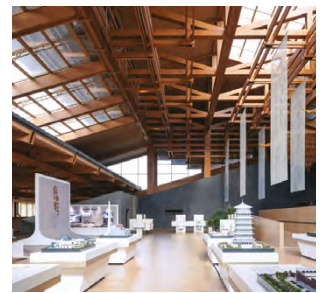
Date: 2021

Location: Xuzhou, Jiangsu

The Complex Pavilion and Nature Pavilion is located on the east side of the Expo Park, with the mountain to the east and the city exhibition parks to the west. Its architectural design, based on the appearance of the Xuzhou high-platform pavilion in the Han Dynasty, successfully combines the topography and history of the area to make full use of its location, meaning that the building harmonises with this mountainous area.

Given the complicated environment and conditions of the site, the architecture had to succeed in restoring the damage caused to the mountain, by mining and endeavour to strike a new balance with nature, thus becoming a striking part of the whole Expo Park. By staying true to the principle of harmonious coexistence with nature, the building fully responds to the features of its terrain in its design. For example, the stepped space that has been carefully designed for this section will enable visitors to feel the continuity of nature from an all-round perspective.

In referring to the image of the high-platform pavilion in Xuzhou Han culture, the design features a main exhibition hall with a steel and wood structure, contrasting with the base space. Natural light and scenery are introduced into the interior space, allowing visitors to view the mountain. Meanwhile, it also draws ideas from the Yuanyou (an enclosed ground for raising animals in ancient China) in Han culture, proposing the environmentally based design concept of building houses by restoring the mountain and creating platforms by renovating the pits. In this way, different landscape platforms will be connected with different elevations in different pits and sites, contributing to repairing the terrain down the mountain. The whole building and landscape descend from layer to layer to the west along the mountainside, providing people with a panoramic view from the Complex Pavilion to the Expo Park.



WANG Jianguo

Teahouse in Tangshan Quarry Park, Nanjing

Date: 2019

Location: Nanjing, Jiangsu

Tangshan has a long history, a rich cultural heritage and outstanding hot spring resources, but the extensive quarrying operation there has scarred the mountain. In recent years, thanks to the pioneering work of Double Urban Repairs in Nanjing, Tangshan has set about the ecological restoration of the mountain and the construction of cultural tourism facilities such as the Tangshan Quarry Park. The teahouse is one of the service buildings built from the former farmer's homestead in the park.





The design concept comes from the reinvention of the sense of belonging of the site. When the design team first arrived at the project site at the fishpond, they noticed the kitchen smells and the life of the farm: the farmhouse, the well, the cooking range, the chickens and domestic dogs. Thus, they proposed a simple idea – to create a building that not only enjoys the natural elements of the mountains and the water, but that also retains a little nostalgia. It is hoped that the teahouse can present the notion of “the contemporary countryside” and enhance the experience of the urban leisure crowd.

Fitting the topography, the design balances the main direction of flow from the lake and the secondary entrance adjacent to the motorway. The building's volume is combined with orthogonal and oblique dimensions, and the trapezoidal entrance plaza is connected with the waterfront boardwalk. The old well is retained on the plaza, combined with the iconic *ulmus parvifolia* tree to form a kind of “village entrance”. The raised red-brick gable creates a new passage and reproduces the reflection in the water, creating a familiar image of the former farmhouse. Another concept, “Y”-shaped reinforced concrete tree-like structures, is created by the operation of lifting the red wall, and this structure is repeatedly combined and used in various spaces to form a light, transparent viewing interface.





MENG Jianmin

**Chief Architect of Shenzhen General Institute of Architectural Design Research Co. Ltd.,
Distinguished Professor at Shenzhen University
Director of Benyuan Design and Research Center, Shenzhen University**

Meng Jianmin is an Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and a Chinese Architectural Design Master. Meng graduated from Southeast University with a PhD. He is a professional-level senior engineer and Class 1 registered architect. He is the Chief Architect of Shenzhen General Institute of Architectural Design Research Co. Ltd., Distinguished Professor at Shenzhen University, Director of Benyuan Design and Research Center, Shenzhen University, Part-time Professor at Southeast University, Distinguished Professor at Macau University of Science and Technology, Vice Chairman of the Architectural Society of China (ASC), Chairman of the Institute of Healthcare Facilities of the Architectural Society of China, the Chief Designer of Shenzhen Bay Super Headquarters Base, Chairman of Shenzhen Experts United Association, etc. He was given the title of Chinese Architectural Design Master, the Liang Sicheng Architecture Award, and the China Design Contribution Gold Award of Guanghua Dragon Award, as well as many others.

Meng presided over the design of the Memorial for the Crossing-the-Yangtze-River Campaign, the Memorial for the Yushu Earthquake, Shenzhen Qianhai International Conference Centre, the University of Hong Kong, the People's Hospital of Dapeng District in Shenzhen, Nanjing Jiangbei Civic Center, Shenzhen-Hong Kong West Passport Port Inspection Building, Kunming Yuntianhua Group HQ and more than two hundred other projects, and has received more than eighty professional awards of all kinds. He is the Project Leader of the Chinese Key Research and Development Program, on the project New Methods and New Tools of Goal and Effect Oriented Green Building Design. He has published "Primitive (Benyuan) Design", "Implementation of Innovation Healthcare Design", "Zero Gravity" and many other works; summed up the "Primitive (Benyuan) Design" theory. The concepts of All-Round Humanistic Care and Three-Way Methodology that he advocates have systematically provided engineering practices with an operable method and pathway.

MENG Jianmin**The University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital****Date: 2012****Location: Shenzhen, Guangdong**

The Shenzhen Municipal Government organised an international competition for the design of the University of Hong Kong (HKU)-Shenzhen Hospital in 2007 and this design won the competition. The hospital is located in the 16th block of the Reclamation Area of Shenzhen Bay, surrounded by urban highways. South of the HKU-Shenzhen Hospital is an area of mangroves, an ecological protection zone with a view of the Shenzhen Bay area, meaning that the building is endowed with unique environmental resources.



The British architect John Weeks promotes the notion of “indeterminacy” in relation to hospital design and has pointed out that the function of healthcare institutions is undergoing constant change and alteration. Thus the demands of the existing functions themselves cannot provide the basis for hospital architecture design. The architect cannot solely focus on the temporary coordination of architecture and its function. Instead, he argues, what an architect needs to do is to build architecture which suits the future functional changes of the hospital. HKU-Shenzhen Hospital is a realisation of this concept. In this programme, a 28-metre-wide “street” joins the different medical units and incorporates them all into an organic whole. The eastern edge of the hospital's street is open ended, which enables potential developments for future expansion. With the hospital's street in a fixed position, the structures can remain an organic whole, even after expansion. The hospital street is not only the controlling main axis of the whole medical programme, but also serves as the main traffic artery. It begins with an arching lobby, traverses the whole hospital and reaches each department as one of its destinations.



The green street is lined with banks, flower stores, shops, cafes, teahouses, bookshops, and environmentally friendly electric automobile stations. The whole street offers a dynamic and lively scene which relieves the impersonality and blandness of the hospital interiors.

To help ease the inconveniences of being on too large a scale, each department in the clinic is organised independently. There is the diagnosis room, fundamental equipment, the specialist pharmacy, and the cashier's office within each department to simplify the medical process and improve efficiency.



There are independent entrances and exits to the outpatient clinic, the accident and emergency rooms, the infectious diseases clinic, specialist clinical labs, medical check-up centre, administration and logistics, and the inpatient wards. The accident and emergency rooms are on the basement floor; the clinic, special clinical lab and the medical check-up centre are on the first floor. Patients who enter the hospital are divided at the entrance and arrive at different medical departments. In this way, the problem of many intersecting flows of traffic is solved. Three L-shaped inpatient wards and the specialist clinical labs are placed rhythmically to the south of the clinic and technical department building. The administration and information building and the logistics building are situated to the north of the clinic and technical department building. Two paths, running in a south-north direction, connect the three buildings, which, combined with the main hospital street running in an east to west direction, constitutes the main traffic structure of the hospital area. Meanwhile, many alleys are attached to the main street, which produces a logically connected “fishbone” traffic network.

The inpatient building faces south or south-east, and in front of it is a green courtyard. Together with the Mangrove Nature Reserve, the green courtyard produces a visual wholeness which further extends to the sea of Shenzhen Bay. This fantastic visual feast provided for patients has a therapeutic effect. The basement floor has general blocks, restaurants providing nutrition for patients and for VIPs, and the department of physical therapy affiliated to the specialist clinical lab. The continually descending courtyard supplies the blocks with sufficient light, fresh air and beautiful scenery.



The main entrance of the hospital forms a large, smooth arch which coexists in harmony with the city. The arching architecture of the hospital matches the main entrance in style, which produces an artistic whole and makes for a unique entrance image together with the dynamic protruding awning.

The HKU-Shenzhen Hospital is one of the major teaching hospitals in China. The hospital not only receives new hospital visiting teams every year, but also attracts representatives from medical institutions in Singapore, Israel, France, and Germany, whose medical personnel often visit and study at the hospital. Therefore it has become a showcase for the development of Chinese medical buildings.



MENG Jianmin

Yushu Earthquake Ruins Memorial

Date: 2013

Location: Yushu, Qinghai

At 7:49 on the morning of April 14, 2010, an earthquake of 7.1 magnitude occurred in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province: the total number of victims was more than 2800. The China Architectural Society, representing the Construction Department of China, organised a group of architects to reconstruct Yushu. I was also honoured to be engaged in the design of Yushu Earthquake Ruins Memorial.

Yushu Earthquake Ruins Memorial is not particularly large, with a total floor area of about 3000m³. With the design brief to record the disaster and reflect a view of life in the Tibetan region, the biggest difficulty that architects faced was how to comprehensively understand the cultural differences resulting from the different religious beliefs in the Tibetan region. For Yushu people living in the Tibetan region, religious belief, as a strong spiritual power, is deeply embedded in their ritualised lifestyle. When the ritualisation becomes a normal way of life, it inevitably has an impact on people's philosophy of life and understanding of space. Architects tried to look at the differences from a horizontal point of view and rethink the cultural meanings that an earthquake ruins memorial should communicate: the earthquake ruins memorial should not only be a repository of memories of the disaster, but also an everyday place for local Tibetans.



The memorial is located beside the King Gesar Palace Relics at the southern entrance of the town of Jiegu and is the gateway to Yushu. The project takes the preserved King Gesar Palace Relics as the main body of exhibition, and the main body of the memorial is hidden below the ground. Old and new structures are above and under the ground respectively, thus the volume above the ground is controlled in order to emphasise the visual impact and commemorative meaning of the relics themselves to maximum effect. The ground is defined by two linear elements, and the square enclosed by the elements is the commemorative location for ceremonies and gatherings. The faultline-shaped “cracks” that run through the square define the protected area of the relics like lightning cracks; on the other hand, they establish the visual connection between the relics and the underground exhibition halls. The minimal long linear commemorative wall is made of bluish ashlars and points directly to the Jiegu Temple. The wall not only implies inherent spiritual meanings but also becomes the background of the relics, and the 85 prayer wheels installed along the wall also become an important part of people’s gateway to Yushu and the path of prayer.



The main body of the building is hidden below the ground, and pure “square” and “rotund” are taken as the basic prototype. The project adopts the strategy of regional architectural design, showcasing the unique characteristics of Tibetan architecture with the application of three basic architectural elements – material, colour and light. The interior space creates a modest and solemn spatial atmosphere by applying modern materials such as bluish ashlars, plain concrete and saffron weather-proof and anti-rust steel plates. When people gradually walk into the central blessing hall via the linear spatial sequence, the cohesive round space and surrounding niche matrix attempt to arouse a spiritual resonance deep inside the visitors’ hearts, transforming the sad memories of the disaster into a blessing for lives that remain, and conveying a philosophy of life that promotes the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature.

MENG Jianmin

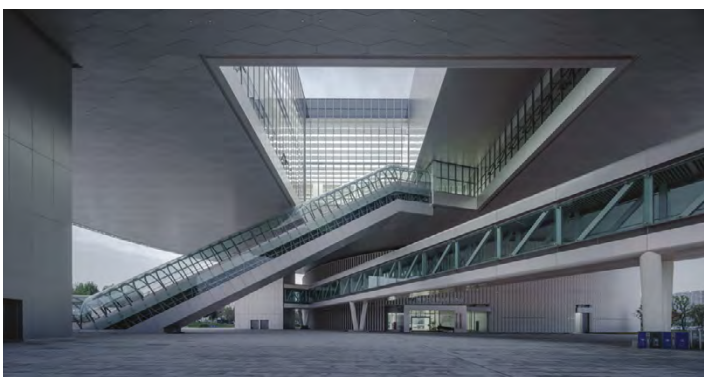
Nanjing Jiangbei Civic Center

Date: 2020

Location: Nanjing, Jiangsu

The project is sited in the open urban space at the intersection of the Central Avenue (now called Dingshan Street) and Binjiang Avenue. Rising at the gateway to the New District and backed by the super high-rise cluster of the Central Business and Social Area, the project overlooks the main urban area of Nanjing across the river. As the starting point of the north-south urban spatial corridor of the district, the site boasts a unique urban and natural landscape. The total site area is about 5.5hm² and the originally planned GFA was about 53,000 m² (later increased to about 75,600 m², subject to functional adjustment).

In the early phase of the competition, the client anticipated the creation of a complex that integrated civic activities, public services, planning and exhibition functions etc. to serve the citizens and enterprises in the New District and realise the development of the vision of an “urban parlour”. Traditional urban public buildings, subject to singular functionality and limited accessibility, tend to look stereotyped and unwelcoming. In contrast to the real and vivid scenes of urban life, activities in public buildings are often too formal and rigid. Therefore, it is hoped that the design of Jiangbei Civic Center will not only exhibit a high level of urban recognisability but also closely centre on the real needs of people’s lives. In this way, diverse scenes can be created as a source of urban vitality.





The site is a triangular plot near the waterfront landscape (of the Yangtze River), with the site level nearly 3m lower than the banks of the Yangtze River. How to resolve the difference in elevation and create an open, generous and friendly place has become a key focus for the design. Taking circular shapes as the motif, the design eases the relationship with the surrounding urban areas and attempts to extend the open riverscape into the site through natural sloping, hence establishing a landscape clue connecting Laoshan Mountain with the Yangtze River, and the city with people. Most of the site is designed as an open urban park, and the artificial boundary of the original triangular site is thus softened by meandering grassland and gently undulating green hills and slopes, subtly dissolving the height difference of the site into a continuous landscape interface. This fenceless approach facilitates the public accessibility of the site from all directions and provides a diverse spatial experience to visitors. The interaction and integration of rustic charm with modern architecture also triggers a series of civic activities.

Inspired by the idea of a “slowly opening treasure box”, the project is designed as two giant circular boxes, 104m in diameter and 16m in height. The two stacked boxes open slowly, creating a distinctive urban image and open urban spaces. For the sake of actual needs and efficiency, functions such as public services, civic activities and science education are placed in the lower box, and, following design programme adjustment with the client, some functions more related to people’s daily life, such as art displays, performing arts training, science education for children, creative spaces, etc., are added to make the project a functional cluster that can truly satisfy the needs of public activities.

To highlight the local characteristics, an oriental-style multi-level garden is planted in the lower box. This garden, featuring bridges over flowing water and pavilions, is closely connected with the urban park via its open access, realising a consistent natural landscape both internally and externally. The pathway, as a typical element of traditional gardens, connects modern facilities and requirements such as training, creativity, science education and bookstores, offering a unique experience of encountering different views during a walk around the garden. The courtyards, instead of the traditional distribution hall, has become a secondary location for civic activities in addition to the designated functions and ensures the complete openness of the garden. While trying to restore the spatial elements of traditional Chinese gardens, we also anticipate a dialogue to be established between modernity and tradition.

In the upper box is the urban planning exhibition hall, with an ultra-long escalator leading to the exhibition functions here. In order to create a precise structural, architectural and spatial logic, four sets of gigantic symmetrical column cores are planned to support the upper box, at the centre of which is the atrium. Around the atrium functions are organised into street-lane-style spaces, connecting the physical mock-up area, digital sand table area, regular exhibition halls and supporting spaces such as conference rooms and offices. Along the way, people weave through spaces of various sizes and forms, as if wandering along streets and alleys. Suspended up to 16m high, a distinctive aerial exhibition hall is created, where people can explore the future of the New District while enjoying the stunning beauty of the Yangtze River and downtown Nanjing. Both the upper and lower boxes are evenly wrapped in white blinds, which, in the changes between daylight and night-time, makes the Civic Center look like a “treasure box” that opens and closes slowly. This vivid, dreamlike image also inspires people’s interest in exploring this “treasure box”.

For the convenience of people’s everyday needs, commercial, F&B, service, and supporting functions etc. are added in the underground space on top of the original programme. Two sunken squares, one interior and one exterior, connect the two ends of the underground space with the inner courtyard and square, creating a well-ventilated and daylit “market” that is full of vitality. The market, with optimally mixed business formats, can be open to the public separately for all-weather operation. This supplements the functions of the project well, avoiding the cold and impractical image common to public buildings, while offering friendly public services and a unique spatial experience.

In our design, we always keep in mind our original intention to create diverse scenarios. In fact, lasting urban vitality usually comes from diverse spaces, while scenes following a prescribed form are often seen in ancient and modern cities around the world. For example, Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival vividly conveys the vitality of Bianjing, the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, more than one thousand years ago by portraying the landscape of the ancient capital and scenes from the daily life of different social groups through continuous segments of countryside, gardens, streets and alleys, markets, etc., and evenly distributing them on a two-dimensional painting scroll. Inspired by this, we tried to reconstruct the fragments of Oriental life in the three-dimensional spaces of the Civic Center, in an effort to show the unique charm of Nanjing.





CUI Kai

In 2000, CUI Kai was honored as a National Engineering & Design Master. In 2011, he was elected as an Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering. CUI Kai is currently the Honorary President & Chief Architect of China Architecture Design & Research Group (CADG), as well as the founder and chief architect of the Land-Based Rationalism Design & Research Center of CADG. He is also Vice President of the Architecture Society of China, a professor at Tianjin University, an adjunct professor at Tsinghua University, and a professor at the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

For the past 39 years, CUI Kai has been committed to academic research and practice in architecture. He has been the principal architect of over 200 projects with national or local significance, winning over 200 design awards at home and abroad. He has been honoured with the titles of National Excellent Science & Technology Worker and Expert Enjoying Special Allowance from the State Council, as well as the French Medal of Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters and the Liang Sicheng Architecture Award, etc. He has promoted development and research into the architectural practice of land-based rationalism in China and has published a series of books including Project Report, Land-based Rationalism, Green Architecture Design Guidelines and Design Research Series for Regional Climate-adaptive Green Public Buildings. Through the long-term study of Chinese traditional architectural culture and wisdom, he has been exploring the potential for innovation in land-based rationalism in China and has put forward the theory of this approach, which adopts local characteristics of buildings on the basis of cultural and natural resources of the land.



CUI Kai

Main Exhibition Hall of Tianfu Agricultural Expo Park

Date: 2018

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan

The design of the Agricultural Expo Park's main exhibition hall aims to merge the venue with the landscape and promote a green and sustainable lifestyle with an "agricultural expo held in the field".



To fully embrace the fields, pavilions extend to the river bank like five fingers, with open walkways located among them, integrating the river landscape with the vast fields. The main function of the park is for conferences and conventions, with cultural creative display as a complementary function, achieving the goal of an "all-year-round agricultural expo".

Semi-outdoor spaces covered with arched sheds are not air-conditioned: only a small portion of the built space has air-conditioning, thus effectively reducing energy consumption. The main structure of the sheds is built with wood, which is a zero-carbon emitting material with natural texture and colour. Subtly referencing the fields, the sustainable concept of the main exhibition hall is conveyed through its prefabricated structure.

The luminous coloured shed, covered with membranes with random colours forming a gradient pattern, seems to merge into the fields. It is also equipped with rainproof shutters.





ZHOU Kai

Chief Architect, Tianjin Huahui Architectural Design & Engineering Co.,Ltd.

I'm always in favour of buildings which are concise and efficient and that show a clear idea. Ones that have simple but effective design strategies. They respect the environment and create appropriate space. They are constructed in clever and rational ways and take advantage of limited conditions creatively. These buildings form a balance between the perceptual and the rational, generating a poetic space and atmosphere. While emphasising personal ideals, these buildings also consider social responsibility, and return to the essence of the building under a kind of informal but effective control.



ZHOU Kai

Jingdezhen Taoxichuan Art College

Date: 2022

Location: Jingdezhen, Jiangxi

In 2019, a cluster design project titled “Comprehensive Conservation, Development, and Expansion of Modern and Contemporary Ceramic Industrial Heritage” was launched in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi. We were invited to participate in the design along with academicians Cui Kai, master Zhang Jie, David Chipperfield, Dong Gong, and Qing Shan Zhouping. Our design encompasses the design of artists’ apartments, exhibition spaces, creative workshops, and supporting commercial facilities, collectively known as the “Taoxichuan Art Academy.”

The project site is located within the former ceramic machinery factory plot in the central part of the old town area of Jingdezhen, adjacent to the first phase of the Taoxichuan Cultural and Creative District. The site is situated at the south-west boundary, close to urban highways. The original factory area retains numerous single- and multi-storey industrial buildings and other industrial remnants, with well-preserved vegetation. The art academy will serve artists and art students involved in creativity and research in Taoxichuan, providing spaces for communication, creation, and living.

The initial question we focused on was what kind of art academy we wanted to create.

Brick houses, large-scale continuous structures, sloping tiled roofs, and towering trees all contributed to the initial impression of Taoxichuan. In terms of material selection, we strived for a sense of simplicity and chose a combination of materials such as red brick, concrete, tiles, and steel plates.

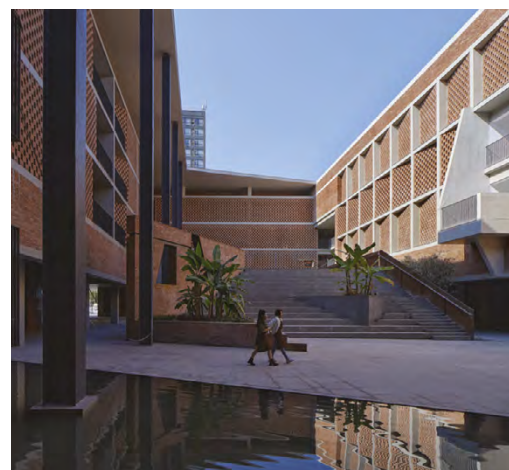


The architecture incorporates a series of semi-outdoor spaces such as courtyards, arcades, eaves corridors, and gardens, providing shelter and ventilation to adapt to Jingdezhen's hot, rainy climate. These semi-outdoor public spaces can also accommodate exhibitions, performances, gatherings, and other activities.

Located in the bustling old town area, close to the road, the hotel apartments do not adopt the conventional approach of large windows. Instead, we took inspiration from the large-scale structures of factory buildings and combined them with enclosed flower brick walls to create a tranquil and inward-looking living environment, conveying a sense of seclusion within the bustling city. The externalisation of the factory structure on the facade also echoes the environmental imprint of the original ceramic machinery factory. The brickwork brings delicate changes to the building's facade, and the texture of the bricks and the flexible and varied masonry techniques create rich architectural textures and spatial experiences.

The west side of the building serves as an apartment space for artists and art students: the height of the building harmonises with the preserved factory buildings along the street. The master apartment on the east side is designed with staggered levels and large sloping roofs, creating a transition and connection with the surrounding buildings in terms of massing.

The main staircase on the north-east side of the building climbs up from the park road, connecting the outdoor platforms on the second, third, and fourth floors. These platforms serve as elevated squares, offering high viewpoints for visitors to look at the future central plaza. The platforms extend through corridors to other public activity areas. The public circulation path traverses externally and, without interfering with the residential circulation path within the academy, connects the most distinctive art exhibition and activity spaces within the art academy. The main staircase on the north-east side of the building climbs up from the park road, connecting the outdoor platforms on the second, third, and fourth floors. These platforms serve as elevated squares, offering high viewpoints for visitors to look at the future central plaza. The platforms extend through corridors to other public activity areas. The public circulation path traverses externally and, without interfering with the residential circulation path within the academy, connects the most distinctive art exhibition and activity spaces within the art academy.



ZHOU Kai

Shijiazhuang Urban Exhibition Hall

Date: 2020

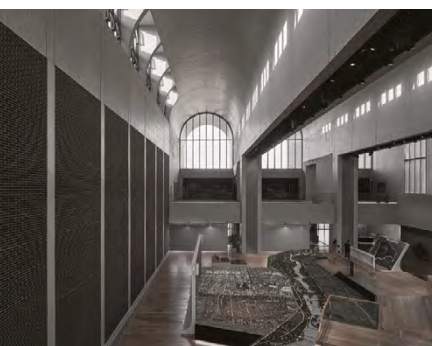
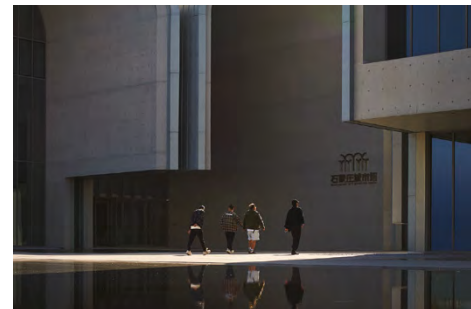
Location: Shijiazhuang, Hebei

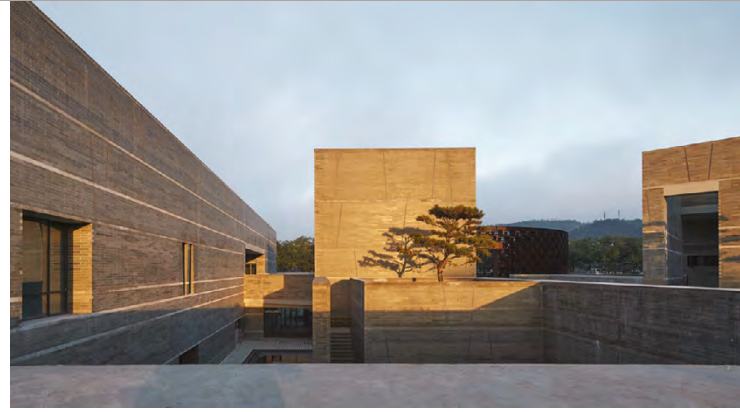
The Shijiazhuang Urban Exhibition Hall is located in the initial area of the Zhengding New District in Shijiazhuang. It is adjacent to Longxing Avenue to the north and faces the Central Park of the New Town to the west. It harmonises with the government service centre to the north and the new library to the west, forming a central architectural cluster with the government centre, new library, and new archives building in the new district.

The architectural design concept of the building is inspired by industrial factories, representing Shijiazhuang's urban development and collective memory. The building adopts the spatial form of old factory buildings, with similar vertical spatial units arranged side by side. Rows of skylights form a rhythmic pattern, giving the building the unique charm and appeal of industrial architecture. On the other hand, the building also incorporates arch elements that represent Shijiazhuang's history and urban style, creating a distinctive architectural image for the Shijiazhuang Urban Pavilion, which has become one of the most prominent public buildings in the Zhengding New District.

The total area of the Shijiazhuang Urban Exhibition Hall is 45,000 square metres, with 30,000 square metres above ground and 15,000 square metres underground. The above-ground structure is divided into three parts: the Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, the Public Exhibition Hall and Conference Center, and the logistics office building. The Urban Planning Exhibition Hall and the Public Exhibition Hall and Conference Center are the main components of the Urban Pavilion. These two exhibition halls are formed by a series of vertically extended arch spaces, creating a unique architectural image and exhibition space.

The interior of the Shijiazhuang Urban Exhibition Hall is designed with large areas of exposed concrete, which complements the interior arch spaces and creates a distinctive atmosphere. The exterior of the building is covered with a titanium-zinc panel metal curtain wall. The use of new materials imbues the building with a modern and industrial feel, showcasing the characteristics of Shijiazhuang as a modern industrial city.





ZHOU Kai

Chengde Museum

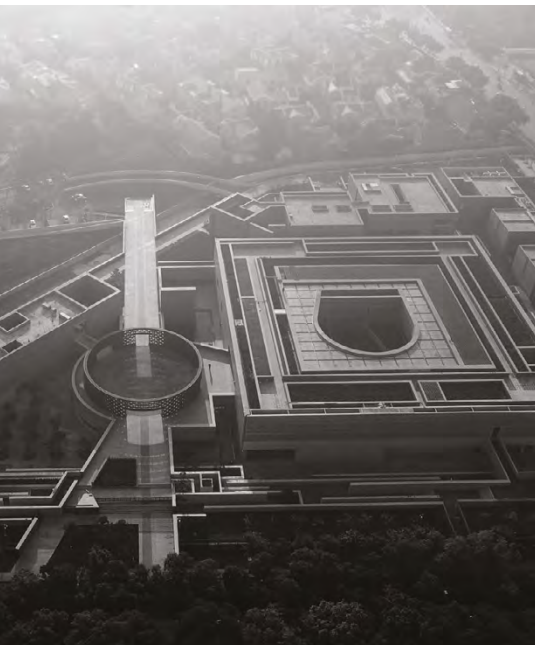
Date: 2019

Location: Chengde, Hebei

Chengde is most famous as “The Mountain Resort”, as the Royal Palace of the Qing Dynasty: “The Eight Outlying Temples” form the temple complex which has been listed as a World Cultural Heritage site. They give the city a special and grand historical feel. In designing the City Museum under such circumstances, our first clear direction has been to respect history and nature and to integrate architecture into the environment with a humble approach.

The site is surrounded by ancient buildings and scenic spots and belongs to the three-level cultural relics protection zone. It is restricted by the State Cultural Relics Bureau, Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau and other units.

The construction conditions are very strict. The most restrictive condition for the construction is the maximum permitted height of seven metres.





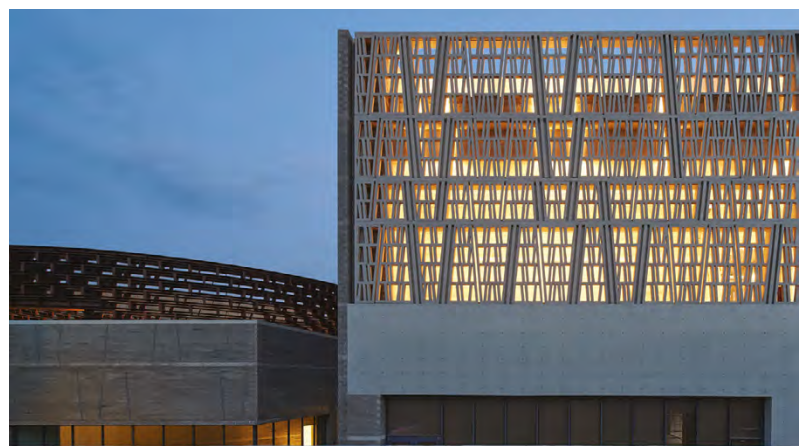
The first step was to adapt and organise the building site. The whole base was dug to about six metres to make the sinking courtyard look like a new “ground”. The building is thus arranged two floors upwards, so that this part out of the ground is within the seven-metre limit, as if “hidden” in the environment. The building is combined with the scattered layout of the courtyard, forming a good lighting and ventilation effect, eliminating the sense of closure of conventional underground buildings. The edge of the sinking courtyard, combined with the common platform foundation form found in local ancient construction sites, has made a platform that descends layer by layer.

Combined with the “hidden” volume and the special and unique characteristics of the surrounding landscape, the roof is designed as a viewing platform for the city, providing people with the opportunity to see the cultural relics and heritage sites from a distance. The function of the building is magnified. It can be integrated into the environment and can express the environment at the same time; visitors can not only see specific exhibits inwards and downwards, but also appreciate the lively World Heritage site upwards and outwards. The museum is a “museum” in every sense of the word, and this is what sets it apart from other museum buildings.

The centre of the building is a horseshoe-shaped outdoor courtyard. We embellished it with two *Pinus tabulaeformis* trees representing the Mountain Resort, creating a quiet atmosphere, showcasing the historical context and artistic conception of Chengde from the perspective of “seeing the big in the small, the forest at hand”.

The courtyard as a whole continues the artistic conception of the Mountain Resort, providing tourists and staff with a comfortable standing space and walking experience.

The classic element of Tibetan architecture is the trapezoidal window. Therefore, this element was abstracted into a new design language. In addition to the use of inclined strip fair-faced concrete on all masonry walls, a “trapezoid” was also used directly on some walls.



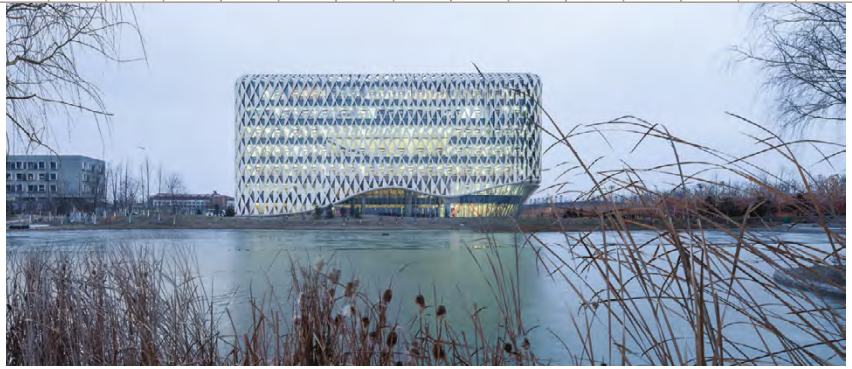


REN Lizhi

Vice President and Chief Architect of Tongji Architectural Design (Group) Co., Ltd.

Senior Member of the Architectural Society of China, Member of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, RIBA Chartered Architect. Member of the 4th APEC Architect China Supervision Committee, Managing Director of the Academic Committee of Architecture and Culture of the Architectural Society of China, Managing Director of the Architectural Planning and Post-evaluation Committee of the Architectural Society of China, Managing Director of the Academic Committee on High-rise Habitat Environment of Architectural Society of China.

Lizhi's projects have won six international awards and 175 domestic awards such as those of AIA and CTBUH etc.: these include the African Union Headquarters and Conference Complex, the China Enterprise Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015, Museum of the Loushanguan Battle Site, Shanghai Tower (632m), Chongqing Jiangbeizui International Financial Center (470m), Beijing Construction Engineering College New Campus Library, etc. His architectural approach focuses on the rational logic and natural laws of architecture, ways to optimise the urban spatial structure system with architectural elements, and the boundaries and diversity of different cultures in the context of globalisation.



REN Lizhi

**New Campus Library for Beijing University of
Civil Engineering and Architecture**

Date: 2014

Location: Beijing

The new campus library for Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture is located in the central area of the campus and houses the university's own existing library, as well as the state-supported China Architecture Library. Located at the centre of the central axis of the campus, the library fulfils the requirements of being at the heart of the campus and is visible from all directions of the orthogonal campus network. Pure geometric forms are used to represent the significance of the building in an abstract way as the core of the campus, being positioned at its centre.

A highly centralised design strategy establishes an inherent cultural characteristic in the library, as a spacious multi-level landscape space in front of the library enables it to extend into and penetrate the surrounding academic atmosphere.

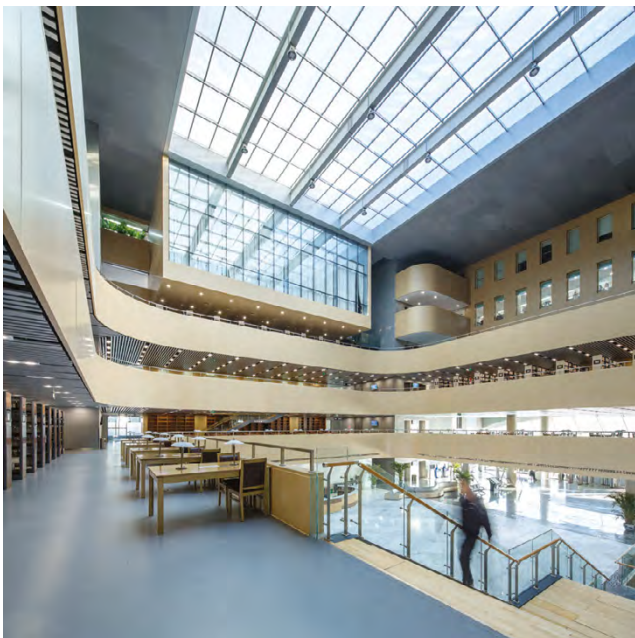
The GRC (glass fibre-reinforced concrete) grid cladding on the upper façade of the building integrates an abstract illustration of the five elements in traditional Chinese belief – wood, fire, earth, water, and metal – as well as complying with functional shading requirements in different orientations. The building skin provides a modern interpretation, in abstract form, of traditional hollow lattice windows, deriving new forms and meanings in this design. The skin grid is repeated in 4.2 by 2.1-metre modules to form a rhombus-shaped basic skeleton; the warping is made in a quantitative way based on the light requirements, which is controlled within nine types of unit modules to reduce costs. The non-linear curved shape of the base of the building is realised by using a special curved steel furnace processing technology that can change in multiple directions.



The coffee lounge, exhibition space, and academic salon migrate the focus of the library beyond just centring on its book collections to include people orientation, cooperation, and communication. The spiral staircase in the atrium connects the reading space seamlessly, satisfying both purposeful book-locating or non-specific browsing – in which case visitors can either access materials in a targeted manner, or be inspired by the collections on the shelves as they wander through the aisles.

Unlike the one-way transfer of knowledge in traditional libraries, the new library pays more attention to information-sharing and communication and provides a variety of places that can meet different learning styles, from collaborative work to quiet learning. To facilitate this, a flexible information-sharing space around the atrium, a semi-open reading space combined with a side atrium, and a small independent study space on the top floor have been included in the programme. Reading rooms with various themes are also integrated on different reading floors in an informal and flexible spiral layout.

The library also features eco-friendly features in its design, such as energy-saving and emission-reducing systems that enhance environmental benefits: the waterscape on the north side establishes a suitable microclimate; the double skin effectively provides a shading function; the high central atrium combines with the surrounding side atrium to channel the flow of air, and the skylights placed in the atrium provide sufficient natural light within the interior.



Awards

- First Prize, National Excellence in Architectural Design Award 2017
- First Prize, Excellence in Architectural Design Award of the Ministry of Education of China, 2017;
- Excellence Award of the Architectural Creation Award from the Architectural Society of China, 2016;
- Excellence Award for Architectural Creation Award from the Architectural Society of Shanghai China, 2015

REN Lizhi

Changning Bamboo Culture Center

Date: 2021

Location: Changning, Sichuan

The Bamboo Culture Center is Located in Changning County, Sichuan Province, featuring a dense, vast bamboo forest as well as regular misty weather, where native people make a living from the fields which are scattered in the mountains. As a result of this lifestyle, a typical landscape known as “bamboo forest plate” takes form, which contains houses, fields, forests and rivers. Inspired by this, we divided the building of the Bamboo Culture Center into three units: an exhibition hall, a multi-functional hall and a tearoom. These units are hidden in clusters of bamboo, covered by each other, forming an enclosed courtyard that can be seen as a natural museum displaying various local bamboo species.

The design concept is taken from the bamboo pavilion in ancient gardens - the natural bamboo is bent to form an enclosed space, representing an ideal realm for people to return to nature, also containing the building philosophy of following the “thingness”. We chose the arch structure to portray the state of tension of the bending bamboo and take the real expression of its physical properties as the logic of the form.



As an important public centre in the town, the building provides a large flexible space that can accommodate local cultural activities. Compared with traditional bamboo buildings, this project required a more public scale, so we used bundled jointed bamboo to extend the length of a single bamboo and achieve a large span and height. The arches are made of selected native bamboos with a diameter of 80mm, with 22 fixed in each group. After anti-corrosion treatment, they are fixed to the base of concrete, formed by firing, and then stacked in turn to form a double helix. The spatial overlap of the bamboo arches links the discrete structural units into a whole system, creating a fluid, reciprocal, natural internal space, and enabling the small-span arch to provide support for the large-span arch, maintaining the consistency of the cross-sectional dimensions of arches with different spans.



We adopted an adaptive strategy for construction techniques using native materials. As bamboo in an outdoor environment is easily affected by changes in temperature and humidity, we detached the exposed part of the bamboo from its internal structure and combined it with waterproof material, so that the need for demolition can be minimised and the service life of the entire building can be prolonged.

Awards

- Honor Award for 2022 China Design Excellence Awards by AIA



REN Lizhi

The Museum of Loushanguan Battle Site

Date: 2017

Location: Zunyi, Guizhou

The design concept of The Museum of Loushanguan Battle Site draws on ideas from conceptual art, explores the possibility and logic of interpreting historical events with minimalist and abstract architectural vocabulary, and respects the natural attributes of the site. The design concept of The Museum of Loushanguan Battle Site draws on ideas from conceptual art, explores the possibility and logic of interpreting historical events with minimalist and abstract architectural vocabulary, and respects the natural attributes of the site.

The main function of the building is placed underground, with two curved surfaces – a vertical retaining wall and horizontal ramps, forming a set of exhibition spaces around the sunken courtyards.

Through the “rigid” intersection between the initial texture of the material and the volume, the building expresses the hardships and cruelty of warfare, and creates a literary mood. The curved wall surface is made of rusted corrosion-resistant steel plate and the texture that is retained as a result of the natural oxidation process reveals a sense of roughness, which is in sharp contrast to the delicate and natural background.

Architectural details continue the principles of abstract construction, drawing on local traditional materials and construction methods.

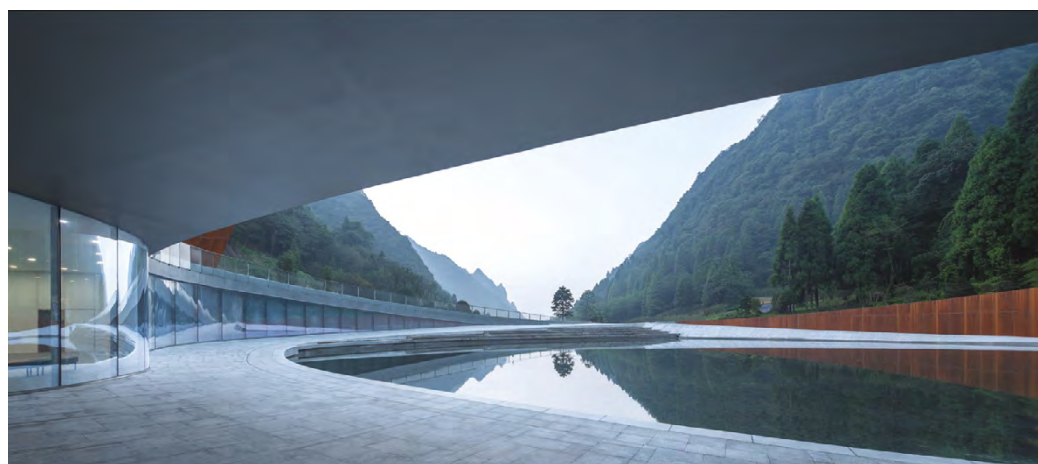


Awards

- Gold Award for HKIA Cross-Strait Architectural Design Symposium and Awards 2019
- Excellence Award for Architectural Creation Award of Architectural Society of Shanghai China 2017

Exhibition

- 2020 17th International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia





DONG Gong

Founder / Design Principal of Vector Architects; Foreign Member of French Academy of Architecture

DONG Gong founded Vector Architects in 2008. He was elected as the Foreign Member of French Academy of Architecture in 2019. He has been successively employed as design tutor at Tsinghua University and Central Academy of Fine Arts, Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Visiting Professor at the Polytechnic University of Turin, Italy. DONG Gong has been invited as a guest speaker and critic by academic and professional institutions including Tsinghua University (China), the University of Hong Kong (China), the Technical University of Madrid (Spain), the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA), the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich-ETH (Switzerland), la Société Française des Architectes (France), Polytechnic University of Turin (Italy), and Casabella Formazione (Italy).

He and Vector Architects have been invited to various major exhibitions, including the first exhibition of Chinese architecture at MoMA, New York and the 2018 Venice Biennale, "FREESPACE". DONG Gong's practice has earned him international recognition: works which represent his practice include Seashore Library, Seashore Chapel, Yangshuo Sugarhouse, the Renovation of the Captain's House, and Changjiang Art Museum.



DONG Gong

Yangshuo Sugarhouse Hotel

Date: 2017

Location: Guilin, Guangxi

Yangshuo Sugarhouse Hotel is located in a col near the Li River in Yangshuo, Guangxi. Surrounded by picturesque natural landscape, the site is located in a typical karst region. An old sugar mill built in the 1960s is beautifully preserved, with an industrial truss used for sugar cane transport. We envision industrial heritage as the representation of the spirit of the older generation. This became the premise of this project. Our main design strategies include the following:

Old and New

Flanked by a newly added suite building and villa, the old sugar mill and its industrial truss occupy the central part of the hotel complex. The sunken plaza and reflective pond further accentuate the spiritual symbolism and significance of the old structure. In order to create a sense of consistency, instead of simply copying the former materiality and texture, we tried to seek a nuanced use of more contemporary materials and construction methods while retaining the hue and masonry structure of the old building. Hollow concrete block and wood-formed cast-in-place concrete serve to make the new volume lighter and more transparent visually without disturbing the existing order and enhance its natural lighting and ventilation at the same time. We kept the profile of new building as simple as possible to avoid unnecessary distraction from the form of the old sugar mill with overly elaborate geometry.

The roof slope is consistent with the original one: after the completion of the hotel complex, its profile becomes a cluster of pitched roofs. We hope that the new has evolved in a progressive way and conveys a sophisticated consistency with the old.



Promenade Experience

We view our site as a garden for guests to wander in and ponder: the old sugar mill with its industrial truss, new volumes, the reflective pond and path define spaces of different kinds. Two circulation systems pass up and through the suite building: one is a completely functional corridor system while the other serves as a free public walkway, connecting three important cave-like nodal spaces. The public walkway is an extension of the promenade experience on ground level. Wandering around the resort hotel, guests experience the alternation of light and dark, changing framed landscape views, distance and elevation.



Human-made and Natural

The site is surrounded by karst peaks, facing the Li River to the south and a busy highway to the north. The horizontality of the architecture and the verticality of the karst mountain demonstrate the interaction between the human-made and the natural. In addition, the public walkway is a recreated geometric version of the pathways and caves that have been carved into the karst mountain since ancient times. The 'caves' are carefully located so that they visually connect architectural space with the natural mountainous landscape.



DONG Gong**Renovation of the Captain's House****Date: 2017****Location: Fuzhou, Fujian**

The Captain's House is located on the southeast end of Huangqi Peninsula, Fujian Province. The damp and erosive conditions of the coast have caused much damage to the existing structure. The precariousness of the structure and the extensive water leakage over the past two years were the primary issues to be addressed. The captain also hopes to add a third floor to the existing structure to accommodate the inhabitants' current lifestyle needs.

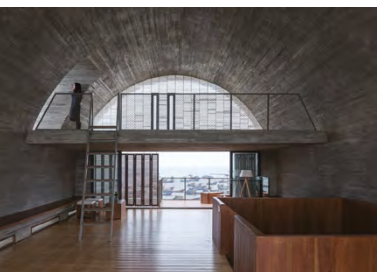
Our design work started by planning structural reinforcement. After a series of careful studies, we decided to add a 12cm thick layer of concrete to the original brick masonry wall. This strategy created the possibility of building additional spaces.

Layout

The intervention of the new concrete walls allowed us to make changes to the layout to some degree. Both of the original bathrooms on the first floor and the second floor were moved from the side overlooking the sea to the side close to the neighbouring building. In this way, the living room, dining room and master bedroom are given better views, as well as more natural light and fresh air.

"Window-furniture" system

The openings of the house were carefully considered in terms of form and location. The extended concrete window frames extend from the exterior wall, which prevents excessive rainwater from seeping inside the glass windows. The thickness of these window frames is then designed into a "window-furniture" system. The window is no longer just an opening. It also serves as a mediated space situated between nature and the interior.

**Vault**

We chose a vault form for the structure of the third floor. It reduces water leakage drastically because it allows almost no rainwater to remain. The vault is directional. It connects the two sides of the water with dramatically different characters: one side is the serene sea, whereas the other is the chaotic port. The additional third floor serves as a multifunctional living space. It not only accommodates visiting family members and friends but also functions as a gym as well as an activity room. Additionally, the captain's family is Christian; therefore the space under the vault also functions as a family chapel. At dusk, a gentle light emanates through the translucent glass blocks.

We hope the house gradually becomes a place of emotional resonance for the captain's family. In our design, we hope that the house gives well-deserved dignity and decency to the daily life of ordinary people, a particularly meaningful need within the contemporary Chinese context.

DONG Gong

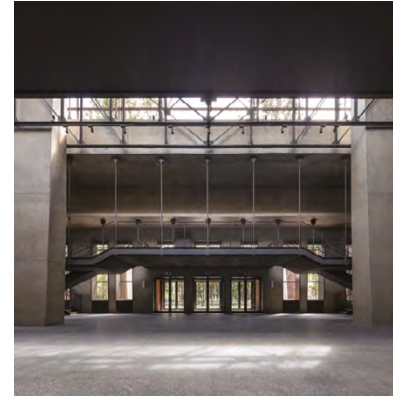
Haibing Center, Nankai University

Date: 2019

Location: Tianjin

Haibing Center at Nankai University aims to provide the old campus with a multi-functional cultural space for students, faculties and alumni. As well as being used for teaching, the building can also host conferences and exhibitions. The site is flanked by water on both sides, the east side facing Horseshoe Lake, on the central axis of the original Republic of China-era campus dating from a hundred years ago. The west side faces the human-made Xinkai Lake, excavated during the later expansion of the campus in the post-Liberation era. These two artificial bodies of water differ significantly in their atmosphere, scale, vegetation and daylight environment. Their respective styles reflect a rich socio-political and cultural legacy. In and around the building itself grow a large number of trees. Amid these are the remnants of a large dining hall built in 1952, which is enclosed by red-brick walls and a shallow vaulted roof.

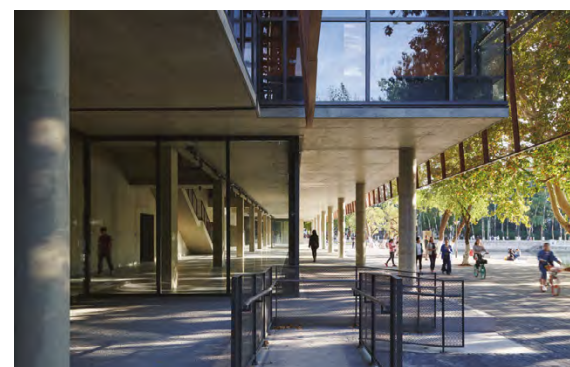
The core issues we considered at the start of the design process were how the new building could respond to both these two bodies of water as well as to the original red-brick dining hall, while preserving the existing trees and their relationship to the site as much as possible. Compared to a strategy of wholesale demolition and rebuilding, an idea focusing on preservation helped us to unite the new with the old in a more authentic way, maintaining the actual history of the location.



In terms of layout, we worked from the scale and open plan of the original dining hall, dividing the space into a central grand hall and a 1000-capacity multi-functional auditorium. The grand hall is the tallest vertical space of the building, with its concrete roof slab supported by four giant pillars. In the cross section, the pillars narrow and widen in two directions with different heights, implying the load borne by the structural components and giving the space a directionality at various heights. We located entrances to the east, south and west. In this way, the grand hall can serve as a space for connection and convergence within the overall layout. Outside the southern entrance to the grand hall, we designed a small public plaza, enclosed on three sides. The plaza opens out onto Horseshoe Lake to the east and incorporates the southern wall of the dining hall as its northern boundary. Its western and southern interfaces are framed by newly constructed volumes raised at various heights above the ground, visually and spatially linking the plaza with Xinkai Lake and the main artery of the campus, Dazhong Road, in different directions.

The west side facing Xinkai Lake provides an expansive view, suggesting the scale of the campus. Acting as a response, the building on this west side establishes a serene horizontal elevation stretching out in harmony, parallel with the body of water. The western volume rests on a single-storey height piloti, forming an internal colonnade. Taking advantage of the limited depth of space, we located classrooms, small and medium-sized conference halls, circulation hubs, restrooms and other service spaces here. In the narrow three-storey high “canyon” space adjacent to the original western wall of the old dining hall, a straight staircase threads together the various programmes vertically at different levels. In comparison to the simple and uniform volume at the Xinkai Lake side, the part along the Horseshoe Lake side appears to be a more dispersed cluster, as befits the more intimate scale and more richly layered space of Horseshoe Lake within the campus. Because the site and its surrounding area have numerous lush trees, creating an aesthetically pleasing surrounding landscape, we decided to use clear glass as the major material for the façade. Only the red brick of the old dining hall was retained. In order to reduce the energy consumption associated with direct sunlight, we originally designed a copper mesh skin for shade affixed to the glass façade. Unfortunately, due to the pressure of the completion schedule in the later phase of construction, we had to modify the original design, in which a double skin was applied to the whole building, and only utilised this feature on the Xinkai Lake section, much to our regret.

For us, Haibing Center is an attempt to build a spatial response particular to a specific site. We hope that this newly embedded space will further stimulate a positive and high-quality modern campus lifestyle in a way that respects the natural environment while retaining the texture of the old campus.





BO Hongtao

D.E.(doctor of engineering).

Chief Architect, Director of CCTN, Architect-in-charge of Urban Regeneration Centre (URC), CCTN. National first-class registered architect, Professional-level senior engineer, RIBA Chartered Member.

Winner of the Young Architect Award from the Architectural Society of China, Shanghai Outstanding Young and Middle-aged Architect Award, RIBA China Architect 100.

Bo Hongtao's practice continues to be outstanding in the field of urban regeneration and its overall development, and has completed a series of significant urban regeneration projects, such as Beijing Xishi Winter Olympic Square, Shougang No. 3 Blast Furnace Museum and Global Premiere Center, Winter Training Center of the State Physical Culture Administration, Beijing's Chang'An Mills, Shangri-La Hotel (Shougang Store), Shougang Jin'an Bridge Transportation Complex Integration and Heritage Park, Cloud-Gate Complex of Hangzhou West Station and others. He has become a pioneer in the field of urban regeneration in China.

His work has won many important international awards and has been selected for well-known exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and the UIA World Congress of Architects and has received significant attention and reporting in the public and professional media.

BO Hongtao

Beijing Xishi Winter Olympic Square

Date: 2018

Location: Beijing



The Beijing Xishi Winter Olympic Square is located at the northwest part of the original factory, to the east of Shijingshan's Yongding River, to the south of Fushi Road, to the north of Xiuchi pool and to the west of Xin'an Street. The project is named after the original Peking-Mukedun Railway Xishi Freight Branch to the north of the base, which also marked the beginning of the building of Shougang, a century ago.

The Xiuchi pool to the south and the Shijingshan Mountain and Yongding River Ecological Corridor to the west all create a splendid natural landscape. Correspondingly, there is a dense layout of silos, bins, feed corridors, transfer stations and water supply pumping stations inside the base, which comprised the complex giant system of the ironmaking process carried out by the No.1 and No.3 ironmaking blast furnaces in the park. Taking the opportunity of the Winter Olympic Organizing Committee moving into the office, the project implements the concept "green, inclusive, open and clean" to host the Olympic Games. Nine industrial heritage sites, including transfer stations, bins, silos and pumping stations, can enjoy a second life, guided by the concept of sustainability, and are transformed into a green park integrating an office, conference centre, exhibition and supporting leisure facilities.

Respect for Industrial Heritage

The project is designed to transform the industrial heritage site into new offices and parks through "faithful preservation" and "careful addition", giving a second life to the old buildings.

To retain the original surviving concrete and steel frames, it was important to not destroy the building's own structural strength. The original structural space is used as the main functional space, and the building elevator room is built externally, which not only avoids breaking through the original floor slabs, but also strengthens the original structural rigidity through the addition. At the same time, the original main structure is reinforced by carbon fibre, steel plates and damping anti-seismic bracing to adapt to the new functional requirements. Similar structural constructions are used as the core elements of the building façade. The use of lightweight quartz sheets and perforated aluminum plates also fits the principle of strictly controlling the volume weight of the façade materials in the renovated building, avoiding excessive structural load on the original structure.

Thus, the design expresses the difference between what is new and what has been preserved in an honest way, showing our respect for the site's industrial heritage.

Communication with the Environment

The Shijingshan Mountain to the west and Xiuchi pool to the south retain a strong industrial sense. The "closure wall" was broken down and an open landscape corridor, main entrance gallery and public space were inserted into the 150-metre-long structure of the renovated original combined pumping station, which contributes to the communication between the inside and outside areas. Fifteen tall old trees were retained in the base, as a green bridge to the Shijingshan Scenic Region.



The designer set up a pedestrian system of outdoor stairs and bridges between the buildings and the roofs, which maintains the original appearance of the industrial heritage site and adds a strong feeling of the classical Chinese garden to it. The whole building group is like a vivid industrial landscape. As the view changes with circulation round the site, it conveys the unique mode of a Chinese reading featuring spatial dynamics.

The Construction of the Scale of the Yard

As the main feeding area for the No. 1 and No. 3 blast furnaces, the industrial heritage site, including the original silos, transfer stations and belt corridors in the area, are laid out entirely based on the production process, lacking the sense of order normally found in urban space. In addition, the giant industrial scale also lacks a sense of intimacy and safety.

A new mid-scale building of one or two floors has been inserted between the industrial scale of tens or even hundreds of metres and the refined ergonomic scale, with rusted weather-resistant steel fronts, glass foyers and courtyards, shady trellises and other structures, bridging the gap perfectly between the original large and the new small scales. Wonderful highlights are added to shape a delicate and rich scale relationship in the park by adding a series of small buildings on a human scale, including the special Olympic exhibition hall, converted from the preserved small water tower in the boiler room and the coffee shop, converted from a pressure differential power generation room in front of the dry precipitator.

The Return of Human Space

Through a series of insertions and additions, the scattered industrial structures of the original site are delicately “stitched” together, and the craft-oriented layout is subtly transformed into a scenic and vibrant irregular pentagonal courtyard.

The “yard” was one of the most humane living and working spaces in old Beijing. The designer hopes to recreate the oriental philosophy of architecture that emphasises the beauty and advantages of “community”. This yard-like characteristic integrates tranquillity and peace by eliminating the industrial hustle and bustle, reflecting respect for humanity in the post-industrial era, and is an essential quality for a top garden office.

The Winter Olympics Plaza is the first project designed and implemented in Shougang North District, a core function actively encouraged by the Beijing government to support Shougang’s transformation, and also the key anchor and focal point for functional positioning when arriving in Shougang North District and even for the overall park.

The design techniques of “mending”, “linking” and “stitching” reorganise the spatial scale relationship of the structures by making them people oriented. The approach of trying to preserve the industrial heritage of the site in the design sets a generous tone by respecting history and exploring the value of industrial heritage.





BO Hongtao

Shougang Chang'An Mills

Date: 2022

Location: Beijing

At 7:49 on the morning of April 14, 2010, an earthquake of 7.1 magnitude occurred in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province: CHANG'AN MILLS project is located in Shijingshan District, western Beijing, in the middle of the two lakes (Qunming Lake and Xiuchi Lake) area of Shougang Park, with a total construction area of 223,753 square metres. It is well known at home and abroad for serving the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, where Gu Ailing and Su Yiming made history and achieved China's breakthrough in the aerial skiing event. The urban renewal of Shougang continues in the post-Olympic era. CHANG'AN MILLS, as a comprehensive heritage reuse project integrating business, offices and leisure, has become a highly dynamic urban business and leisure destination in the west of Beijing, marking the development of Shougang's regeneration from "Sports+" to the brand-new stage of "City+".

Spatial Contribution

The central green ridge of Shougang Park connects Qunming Lake on the south side and Xiuchi on the north side, making it the most dominant ecological green lung of the park. The CHANG'AN MILLS Sedimentation Pond, Time Pendulum Memory Park and Urban Vitality Park, which are integrated into the central green ridge of the park, enliven the exterior space of the shopping centre. The entrance plaza of the shopping centre, the family plaza in the former powder-making workshop, the west plaza of the accelerated clarification pond, the west plaza of the cooling tower, the east plaza of the May Day Theatre and the south plaza of the three blast furnaces on the north side, along with the east plaza of the winter training centre on the west side together link all the busy functional buildings of the area around the green ridges of the two lakes. The spatial layout of small neighborhoods with a dense road network avoids excessive heaviness, makes the neighborhoods pedestrian friendly and provides an effective vehicle for urban vitality.

Industrial Contribution

The Winter Training Center serves as an industrial anchor for Athletics+, a supporting service facility during the Olympic Games; the renovated CHANG'AN MILLS provides an important urban support for Industry+Life, becoming a source of urban vitality after the Olympic Games. CHANG'AN MILLS is a new type of urban complex that brings together low-density modern creative office space, a complex commercial, multi-functional activity centre and green office space. The significant number of technology, creative and science-related industries moving into the site has built up a favourable industrial ecology. The flexibility of the open public space provides the possibility of hosting a large number of adaptable industries, allowing the park to form a rich, interesting and vibrant mix of high- and low-tech service industries.

Sustainability Contribution

Low carbon sustainability: the reuse of existing industrial relics to extend their life cycle and effectively reduce carbon consumption throughout their life cycle. The renewal of the second pumping station for KFC's first national small green store (near-zero energy consumption pilot store) provides a benchmark for the low-carbon renewal of historical buildings, which, combined with the overall building complex of the CHANG'AN MILLS, which has achieved three stars for green construction, provides a good model for the low-carbon sustainable operation of the city.

Ecological sustainability: the remains of the existing railway line for industrial transportation and the industrial sedimentation ponds have been transformed into a north-south green ridge, which becomes an important ecological corridor linking the two lakes, and the groundwater circulation pipeline of the Yongding River - Qunming Lake - CHANG'AN MILLS makes the area a complete system that co-exists with the urban ecology.

Employment sustainability: Many former industrial workers of the park are re-employed after training and transformed into staff for property, cultural tourism and technical and support services for the park, which will continue to contribute to its renewal and revival.

Humanistic Contribution

The remains of structures such as the 1940s Second Pumping Station, the 7000s Wind Turbine Room in the 1970s, and the Ninth Chief Substation in the CHANG'AN MILLS Shopping Center project become witnesses to a history that is constantly in progress, and also carry a unique industrial memory, making CHANG'AN MILLS Shopping Center a unique place that carries collective memory. The opening spaces on the periphery of the shopping centre (such as sedimentation ponds and cooling towers) have also been regenerated as the optimum spatial opportunity for attaching collective memories and new urban life. The "industrial-style" space of the renovated shopping centre project conveys the effect of being a "mixture of old and new", making its layout a high-quality space for a variety of types of products (especially immersive, experiential and social consumer products).

Contribution to Vitality

During the daytime, CHANG'AN MILLS is energised by the presence of many technology, creative and science-related industries. At weekends and every evening, the urban green ridge linking the two water areas of Qunming Lake and Xiuchi and all the plaza spaces opening to the green ridge become everyday spaces for the residents to relax in. CHANG'AN MILLS shopping plaza, combined with the May Day Theatre and the powder-making workshop family centre then becomes a vibrant destination for leisure shopping and experiencing the landscape in the urban area. Promoted by the management team, many indoor and outdoor linked family, camping, dating and off-road activities are gathered here, as well as music festivals and creative fairs, to make the daily life of the local residents richer.



Thanks to the excellent networking effect after the renewal of CHANG'AN MILLS, the park has been able to break away from the “traditional commercial underdevelopment zone” in the western part of Beijing and has gained a significant amount of commercial traffic and a regional clustering effect.

Operation Data

The cultivation and development of traditional business districts are generally promoted gradually along the geological edge of the city, and rarely jump across the empty zones to create another development.

Because of the uniqueness of Shougang Park's spatial characteristics as an industrial park far from the city, CHANG'AN MILLS has the potential to develop across traditional business districts. With the convenience of online communication and the hosting of conferences, tasting exhibitions and various group public events, it has become the “destination of the west of Beijing” at weekends and holidays.

Thanks to the excellent networking effect after the renewal of CHANG'AN MILLS, the park has been able to break away from the “traditional commercial underdevelopment zone” in the western part of Beijing and has gained a lot of commercial traffic and regional clustering effect. In the second half of 2022, CHANG'AN MILLS began operating and immediately became one of the most popular spaces in the western part of Beijing, with a combined traffic of nearly 200,000 visitors during National Day. In early 2023, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Beijing did not dampen the enthusiasm of the public to come here to celebrate the holidays, and CHANG'AN MILLS also prepared an elaborate Chinese New Year market for visitors during the Spring Festival. According to the Shougang News Center statistics, from the 30th to the 5th day of the New Year, the total number of visitors to Shougang reached more than 176,000, and total sales reached more than RMB 8 million. During the recent May Day holiday, CHANG'AN MILLS launched a special exhibition of “Spring Always On” and a botanical friend festival, which resulted in an accumulation of more than 122,000 visitors and RMB 16.97 million in spending during the first four days of the holiday, an figure 8.9 times higher year-on-year.

The CHANG'AN MILLS project has built a new business opportunity of technological innovation, cultural and sports creativity, leisure and entertainment and a unique cultural lifestyle with an international vision, becoming an important source of urban vitality in the west of Beijing in the post-Olympic cycle, and contributing to the construction of an international consumer-centred city in Beijing. The enthusiasm of the public to come here to celebrate the holidays has continued to generate strong interest from various industry players, and the industries established here are being spontaneously upgraded and iterated.



BO Hongtao

**Small Update of the New City Memory
Museum on Yuyuan Road, Shanghai**

Date: 2017

Location: Shanghai



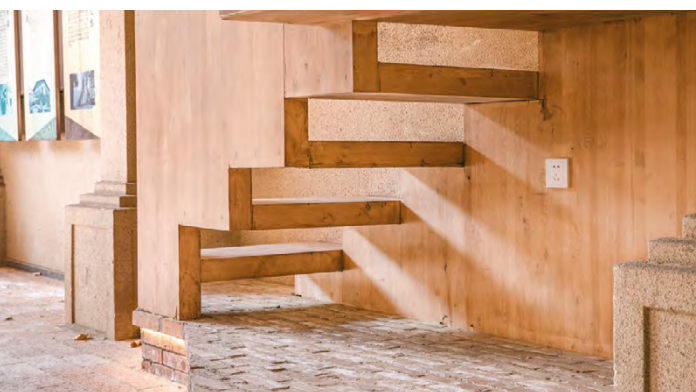
Yuyuan Road, over 800m long, running from Jiangsu Road to Dingxi Road in the Jing'an District of Shanghai has left the traces of numerous historical figures. On 1065 Yuyuan Road is an obscure cross-street passageway with a top corridor. "The Wall of Historical Figures" lies there peacefully, like a sealed magnificent memory. Walking in it provides a hide-and-seek feeling, as well as the sense of time and stories hidden behind the passage of time.

It serves as a space to display the life stories of historical figures and a passageway for the life of local people. People who live in the area have developed the habit of crossing the space of the Wall of Historical Figures to visit Changning heated swimming pool and the sub-district activity centre on Jiangsu Road. Although the distance is the same between it and the external route, there are green trees, alleys and Western-style houses, and it is like passing through the enduring scent of Shanghai.

In the reconstruction of the Wall of Historical Figures, the designer has paid attention to how to present more memories of the city in the narrow space that is full of the scent of Shanghai and to transform the static passageway of the Wall of Historical Figures into a warm venue of urban communication and reception. As a result, a miniature city memory museum with voices, images and recollections came into being.

The design remains close to the city, its blocks, and daily life practices. It revisits the theme of "human scale and urban life scenario building".

A tubular space of about 90m² made of laminated and glued Douglas fir plywood was erected to integrate the street corner, colonnade and courtyard which have entirely different temperaments. The designer has created a multi-defined space with a façade of continuous folds, and keeps the integrity of the original space and the convenience of walking. The simple wooden geometric shape and audio/video equipment have created an "eye of the city", a meandering alley, an attic library, staircase lecture room, media box, temporal post office, and other interactive spaces.





The past, present and future of Shanghai hide behind the reconstructed Wall of Historical Figures. Newcomer or local, you can find your own Shanghai memory here to enhance the warm scent of the city.

A group of visitors might walk up to the street corner and find suddenly that the scene here looks like the Shikumen shaft and meandering alley they have just seen in Tianzifang. They will curiously pick up the receiver on the colonnade and find in surprise that voices which belong to Shanghai city sound in their ear, such as the ringing bell of the traditional Shanghai tramcar, the sound of the long horn on the bank of Huangpu River, and whistles of pigeons hovering in the sky.

This is a Magic Box Containing Embodied Memories

A kid after school passes by and chooses his favourite picture book from the miniature library. He climbs up to the turning “attic library” and enjoys quietly reading by the window just like his father thirty years ago, who climbed up to the attic of his home and enjoyed a picture-storybook he has just borrowed from his classmate. Although this attic is gone, the memory of being curled up and cuddled warms him through time and encounters his young mind here.

This is a magic box that shows visual memories.

An old lady in the sunlight at the entrance to the alley comes across a story written down by an old man in the neighborhood in the street. With the help of her grandson, she rapturously tells one of her stories at the delayed camera photoshoot point on the end of the memory box. She laughs happily at seeing her image played in the LED called the “eye of the city” next to the street.

This is a Magic Box Revealing the Scales of Time and Space

A group of young students are suddenly attracted by the red between the green at the end of the meandering alley and find two old post boxes. They elaborately write a postcard and send it to time, one to their ignorant present selves, one to their hope for future growth, and one to poetry and the distant future.

Of all the pop-up art events of the Shanghai Urban Design Festival in 2017, the plot of land allocated to the Wall of Historical Figures is the only one left intact and converted into a permanent building. Through technological promotion, including local fortification and waterproofing of the roof, etc. it became an “urban living room” full of memory and vigour on Yuyuan Road.





MENG Fanhao

Co-Founder & Chief Architect of line+ studio

Mr. Meng has long been committed to the architectural practice of both urban construction and rural revitalisation, actively exploring and considering the possibility of the improvement of the urban environment and rural revitalisation within the current system and state of social development. He constantly focuses on extracting value beyond the noumenon of architecture and expanding the influence of architecture into essential issues such as contemporary society, economy and culture.

Meng has won a series of important awards at home and abroad, such as the International Awards for Excellence of the Royal Institute of Architects, the gold winner of Arcasia Awards, the ASC Young Architect Award, first prize in the ASC Architectural Design Award, Highly Commended award in the WA Design Experiment Award, and the winner of Dezeen Awards, and others. He was selected as one of the RIBA China Architect 100, and was invited to participate in the 17th Venice International Architecture Biennale. His studio has won the 2022 Architectural Record Design Vanguard, Dezeen Awards Emerging Architecture Studio of the Year and Architecture Masterprize Architectural Firm of the Year.



MENG Fanhao

Dongziguan Rural Revival Project

Date: 2018

Location: Hangzhou, Zhejiang

Currently the living conditions in a large part of rural China are desperate for improvement, and in Dongziguan Village the local government decided to fund an exemplary affordable housing project for local farmers.

The design intention is focused on the preservation of the vernacular morphology of rural settlements to maintain the original local way of life. Also, we fight to get the best building quality within a very low budget and explore contemporary ways of representing local traditional architectural characteristics. This project opens a dialogue on how architects can help to build and improve the country with support from the government.

Typology / Rural Settlements

Unlike typical bar-shaped high-rise blocks built for affordable housing in China, the project seeks to organise the form of the buildings in the vernacular style of a courtyard typology, a local traditional urban morphology.

Basic Unit

There are six different buildings in two different types of footprints (11x21 metres and 16x14 metres), belonging to six different households, surrounding a courtyard as a place for communal communication and participation.

Unit-Group-Village

The prototype varies between four different specific types of courtyard in the overall site plan, which was generated through the aggregation of courtyards following a fundamental principle, providing shared open space. The site plan also reflects the pattern of vernacular clusters in the historical Chinese urban tradition. This “unit-group-village” mode of growth is consistent with the traditional logical order of village agglomeration. Compared with the previous arrangement, it has significantly improved the land economy, the level and privacy of courtyard space, and also provides clear operability and the possibility for future promotion.



Locality / Modern Transformation of the Tradition

The preservation and inheritance of the charm of Jiangnan vernacular dwellings is another difficult problem for the project. The buildings are designed in a vernacular language with detailed consideration of the roof. The traditional dual-slope roof is developed into a continuous-slope roof asymmetrically. The independence of each unit volume and the continuity of the group roof make a subtle contrast and construct a harmonious but different overall relationship in which diversity and unity coexist.

White walls and grey tiles, abstract roof lines, old tones with grey bricks: no symbols, but at a glance one can distinguish its Jiangnan characteristics.

Promotability / Local Expression of Industrialisation

Focusing on the principles of economy, practicality and durability, considering the comprehensive cost of the whole life cycle of the building and the simplicity of its construction, it is also convenient for villagers to maintain and use. Commercially available materials such as white paint, grey brick and imitation wood-grain metal are selected to reduce the use of wood, rammed earth and stone. The most economical brick-concrete structure, thermal insulation rigid roof slabs and waterproof thermal insulation exterior walls should be chosen without avoiding the contemporary approach to industrialisation. The landscape environment adheres to an approach involving practical value, and ornamental landscapes such as waterscapes have been avoided. The space in the streets and lanes is dominated by a rigid interface, supplemented by green planting, and has living facilities.

Publicity / Village Activity Centre

The village activity centre was jointly built by the villagers, and this “village vitality source” was built with the architecture as the medium. Compared with most villages, which have lost their vitality due to long-term closure of their village activity centre, the open space it offers meets the functional needs of different times, and together with the continuous undulating roof, has built a “miniature small world under the big roof”.

Significance to Society / Urban and Rural Integration, Rural Rejuvenation

This is a social experiment related to the rural environment. Particularly in the current digital context, Dongziguan forms an unexpected flow effect, thus stimulating the generation of new businesses and industries, and promoting the return of indigenous people and the influx of new people, including artists and young entrepreneurs, to the area. The practice of rural revival in Dongziguan has formed a new form of rural community, which transcends urban and rural settlement and offers the possibility of rural revival.



MENG Fanhao**Dali Erhai Lake Rest Station****Date: 2022****Location: Dali, Yunan**

The site is located in the south-west, along the western portion of the ecological corridor around Erhai Lake, near to the Xiaoyizhuang Village, and has a flat terrain and a wide field of vision. The east side of the area is near to the cycle path and the ecological wetland and Erhai Lake. The west side is near to farmland and has a lake view of Cangshan Mountain. The design objective is to intervene with a landscape treatment, offering a space that can offer temporary accommodation and co-exist with nature, in order to produce a building that fits in perfectly with the site, the environment, and the required activities.

New Terrain on the Ground

Responding to the dual need to avoid trees and connecting roads, with Cangshan Mountain behind it and facing Erhai Lake, the building develops from west to east and gradually slopes, as if growing from a “crack” in the earth, setting up a platform for climbing and looking at the view and a shelter for a short stay in the continuously undulating terrain. Climate impact was another important design consideration. Due to the abundant local wind energy and light resources, in addition to the functional areas such as the toilet and the shop, required by the building, we tried our best to release the space under the folding plate roof from closure, including the separation of the rubble wall base and the concrete folding plate to form a complete air convection and introduction of the landscape, so that the internal and external environment can penetrate each other freely and have a sense of breathing.

Construction Strategy

Considering the scale of the building, the flexibility of construction, and the completion of the articulation of the scheme, we finally chose low-tech manual rubble masonry and low-carbon concrete grouting, and these two low-maintenance and sustainable materials are also more suitable for the use of public buildings. The roof is made of black wood grain fair-faced concrete in situ, which is realised by parametric structural calculation, and the grain density of the wood formwork is accurately controlled by means of modularisation and mock-up. The base of the building is made of rubble in the ground to form a deeper anchoring relationship with the earth. Adhering to the concept of sustainable environmental protection, the construction site has left many waste steel bars and steel plates and other industrial materials through secondary processing, which have been used for railings, stair steps, flower troughs and other components, so that they become a part of the building's life.

Ordinary Platform for Public Life

In the post-pandemic era, Dali has become a destination for many digital nomads and travellers. As an everyday resting place, the station is not only a viewing platform and rest station, but also a platform for urban public life. We hope to open it to everyone, with a common appeal. Although its structure itself is hidden and silent, it has the energy to reach people's hearts, and it leans over Cangshan Mountain and Erhai Lake in an extremely stretched organic form, becoming a link between people and nature.



MENG Fanhao**Hangzhou Lingyin Temple:
Cultural Preservation and Enhancement****Date: 2020****Location: Hangzhou, Zhejiang**

Built in the first year of the reign of Emperor Xianhe of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (A.D. 326), Lingyin Temple, also called Temple of the Soul's Retreat, is located to the west of the West Lake between two mountain peaks – the Beigao Peak behind and the Feilai Peak at the front. Though the temple has undergone several major renovations, its essence and “light” remain as strong, embodying a rich history of more than 1,700 years, intertwining with the lingering scent of incense, which burns to this day. The historical city of Hangzhou has developed over time to become a major hub for the online economy and now the city's ancient Buddhist culture and related spaces, too, face new functional challenges. For example, the demand for large-scale Buddhist events such as Buddhist conferences and communal meals has challenged the decentralised layout of traditional temples.

An Implicit Order

Like many ancient Chinese places of worship, Lingyin Temple has a strong axial layout and sense of order. The main axis is dominated by the Daxiongbao Hall, while a side axis to the east features the Abbot's Hall. In addition, a cross-axis for traffic leading from Zizhu Square to the driveway in the west was created based on contemporary needs, resulting in a distinct spatial hierarchy of “one horizontal and two verticals.”



Based on this spatial layout, the design proposed the following modifications in the design and layout to meet the temple's stipulated requirements and overcome the anticipated design hurdles: the first is to create a third vertical axis for Lingyin Temple starting from the intersection of the project site with the horizontal east to west traffic axis. Important public spaces such as the Counselling Center, the Lobby, the Culture Center, and the Meditation Hall are arranged along this third vertical axis. The new extension places a focus on the meditation hall, which is located to the west of Zhizhi Hall in the main cluster, where the Songtao Pavilion used to be; it echoes Lingyin Temple's main hall and its traditional shape. The third vertical axis mirrors the existing side axis of the Abbot's Hall, opposite the main axis of the Daxiongbao Hall, to form a layout arranged in the form of a main centre with support in the east and west. Apart from the newly added axis, the relatively private areas at the north and south ends of the project site provide resting spaces, including monks' cells, guestrooms, (staff) householders' quarters, and restrooms.

By strategically incorporating the topography of the site's vertical dimension, the design consciously enhances the spatial order of the extension area. The entire public area is intentionally lowered, while the Meditation Hall is raised to echo the main hall of Lingyin Temple. The guestrooms and monks' cells are enclosed in a series of courtyards, while the householders' rooms and the restrooms in the north align with the mountain contour and "fade" into the surroundings.

Restored Nature

Confronted with the natural landscape on the site, the extension adopts an approach of light intervention, with the aim of preserving the sustainable vegetation of the site after the extension is completed, and to maintain the temple's green and lush ecological mountain scenery. The entire extension area, from south to north and from the bottom to the top, combines different programmes to form a pattern of interconnected secular gardens, grand spiritual spaces, and secluded meditation halls. Between the buildings, shaded paths wind up the hill past murmuring mountain streams, resembling traditional Chinese landscape paintings.





LI LI

PhD

Professor of Architecture.

College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, Founder and Principal Architect, Rurban Studio

Dr. Li Li received his M.Arch. and PhD degrees from the Architectural Research Institute of Southeast University in Nanjing, China, in 1997 and 2002 respectively. He has been teaching at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University since 2005.

Dr. Li's teaching, research, and practice focus on design ontology. His built work includes museum design, historical conservation, and rural settlement renewal. He led his team to complete numerous large-scale museums and art galleries, such as the Shanghai Museum East, Erlitou Site Museum of the Xia Capital, Tibet Art Museum, and Taicang Art Museum.

Through architectural practice, Dr. Li experiments within the dynamics and complexity of social, economic, and cultural transformations in China. He investigates vernacular construction in relation to modern building technology, modern ways of life in relation to Chinese customs, as well as modernism in relation to the architectural roots in Chinese culture. Dr. Li has received prestigious awards, including the Young Architect Award and Architectural Creativity Award (China Architectural Society) and the National Excellent Project Exploration and Design Award (China Engineering & Consulting Association).



LI Li

Erlitou Site Museum of the Xia Capital

Date: 2019

Location: Luoyang, Henan



Erlitou Site Museum is located at the archeological site of the Xia Dynasty capital. Xia was the earliest Chinese dynasty, around 3,800 years ago, while Erlitou was the largest capital settlement in China and East Asia of its time. The vulnerability of the site co-exists with its historical significance. Both qualities are transformed into the design of the museum.

Amorphous Formal Language.

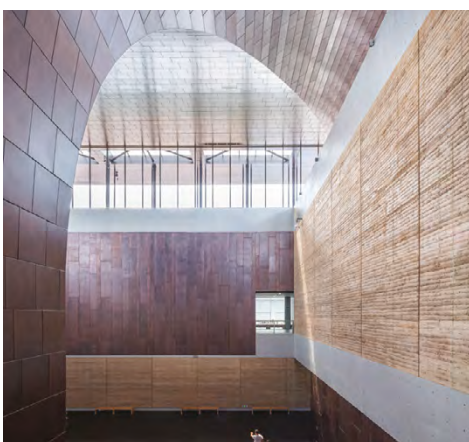
The design concept of the museum originates from a photograph of the winding marks left from archaeological digs on the site. This formal characteristic is captured by the meandering spatial sequence of the museum. To certain extent, the museum can be thought of as amorphous, echoing the formal ambiguity of the archaeological site.

Material choice connecting to history

The choice of materials and the construction methods of the museum are rooted in the local culture of Erlitou. Archeological findings show evidence of the earliest bronze workshops and buildings made with large rammed earth walls. Inspired by these findings, the materials chosen for the museum were copper sheet curtain wall, rammed earth, and exposed concrete. The total amount of indoor and outdoor rammed earth finally completed exceeds 4,000 cubic metres, which makes it the largest single rammed earth building in the world at present.

Museum Design Extending to Rural Development

A heritage park and rural settlement development were proposed in conjunction with the architectural design of the museum. The design of the park incorporates the existing fabric of rural settlements and engages residents by providing places for everyday activities and for generating employment opportunities.

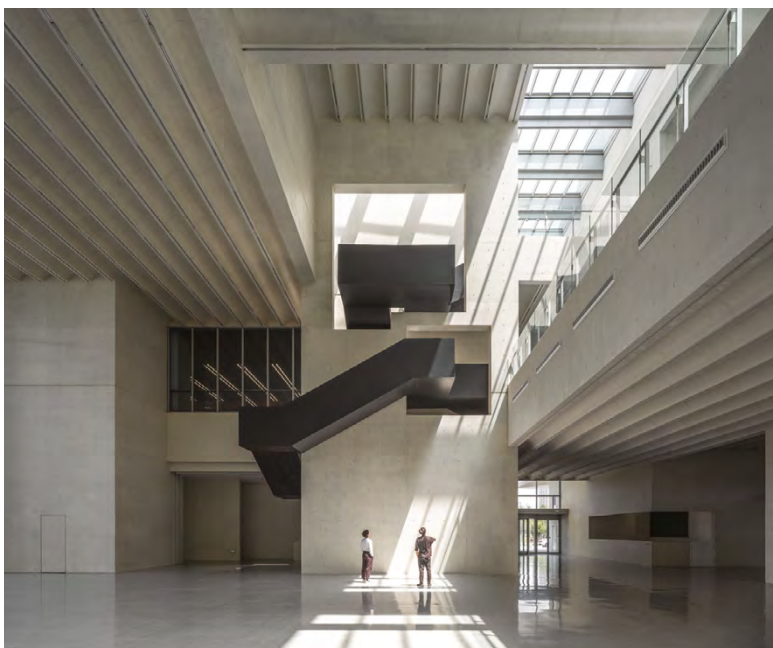
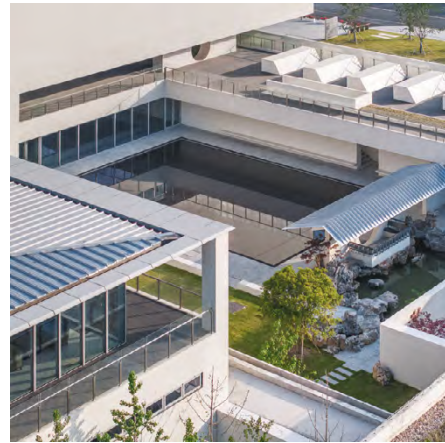


LI Li**Taicang Art Museum****Date: 2023****Location: Taicang, Jiangsu**

Taicang enjoys exceptional cultural heritage in China. It is home to the Lou Dong School, a significant movement in Chinese art history. To create a contemporary art museum that engages with Taicang's traditional cultural context, the architects adopted the spatial archetype of Jiangnan Gardens while reconfiguring the conventional dimensions.

Unlike the intentional seclusion of traditional Chinese gardens, Taicang Museum becomes an accessible, engaging, inspiring, and thought-provoking public space. Activity spaces surround the garden, forming a hierarchical spatial sequence. From the activity zone to the exhibition zone, the museum gradually morphs from a traditional garden with recognizable shapes to a geometric space of open and intersecting voids.

The spatial transition is unified by white concrete as the building material. The structure utilises double-layer ribbed slab beams, with equipment and pipelines placed within the cavity between the two floors, showcasing the texture of white concrete as well as the contrast between mass and voids.



LI Li**Whooper Swan Science Museum****Date: 2019****Location: Rongcheng, Shandong**

Whooper Swan Science Museum is situated on the banks of the Rongcheng Swan Lake, the largest winter habitat for swans in Asia. The site is part of a piece of flat wetland with black pines to the east. The architect has deliberately situated the building behind these pines with an open view towards Swan Lake to the south. He has elevated the building in order to impose minimal physical and visual intrusions to the land, the swans' habitat. The elevated space becomes an artificial-natural place for the swans and the visitors to wander around and interact. Due to years of conservation policies to enhance the swans' habitat, swans appear in this area to have become comfortable with people. The open space under the building maintains the precious swan-human trust and interactions.

Even structural considerations and construction methods were based on efficiency, allowing for completion around the six-month window every year in the swans' migration cycle. The structure of the main layer of the building adopts a wooden modular system with hexagonal modules inspired by the shape of swans' feet. Modules were made off site and assembled on site.

The architect adopted the traditional Chinese building system, "Jin Xiang Dou Di Cao," nesting the interior space within a ring of outdoor space under the same roof. The covered outdoor space allows the visitors to immerse themselves in nature and creates a soft boundary between the building and nature.

Two overlapping systems, an equilateral grid and a hexagonal grid, compose the interior space. The hexagonal grid defines partitions for a small enclosed space; the larger equilateral grid flows freely above the open exhibition area. Both structures are exposed above the partial walls, presenting spatial continuity and consistency to visitors.



The structure of the open space underneath the building is composed of grouped steel columns, with a diameter of six centimetres, aligned along the centre lines of the hexagonal modules above. Based on load-bearing requirements, some steel columns are hollow while others are solid; some are vertical while others are slightly tilted. Such an arrangement leads to a visual impression of the reed vegetation in the local swan habitat. During construction, the primary load-bearing columns were secured first, followed by the installation of secondary columns.





LI Xiangbei

Founder of XBA Northward Design Agency, director of Shenzhen Huazhu Engineering Design Co., Ltd., Consultant chief architect of China Municipal Engineering Northwest Design and Research Institute Co., LTD., Master tutor at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute

Above the Cliff - X Scenes of Architecture

Architecture is a place where memories and stories of the city can be told. The phrase “Above the Cliff” comes from British writer Somerset Maugham’s 1920s collection of stories “On the Chinese Screen”, in which “above the cliff” defines the unique temperament of Chongqing. In the architect’s view, “above the cliff” refers not only to the physical “on” of form, space and techniques, but also to the metaphysical “on” of literature and philosophy. Based on this, the building forms X kinds of scenes based on different places, which can either be a symbolic emotional expression, like Hongya Cave, or a “de- symbolized” and pure spatial construction, like Yuelai Smart Island. In this unintentional state, the building shows the meaning of its own existence.

LI Xiangbei

Hongyadong

Date: 2004/2006

Location: Chongqing

Among the complex factors of the site, there is no doubt that the 48.5m vertical drop and the steep cliff mean that the building complex only appears to be built near the cliff, and the “hanging building on the cliff” has become its basic spatial image and visual symbol.

The design of Hongyadong is difficult to explain in a short text. In Chongqing, China, the Yuzhong peninsula faces the great river near the end of the north bank, where there is an accumulation of ancient traces marking more than two thousand years of inhabitation, has so many stories and historic features: the river gorge fort, HongYa Closed Gate, the Paper Salt wharf, the town of temple, light red GuTing, Dongchuan academy, the Ming dynasty city wall, the Xinhai inscription, “three horizontal eight longitudinal..”

Chongqing’s past prosperity and its challenges are all revealed in the grand architectural narrative of Hongyadong.

This 200-metre long building, 50 metres high, actually represents an ideal that Chongqing people have cherished in their difficult environment for many years. From the very beginning, Hongyadong’s design was intended to express a visual feast, a visual feast presenting Chongqing’s past, and a never-ending drama.





Hongyadong's construction is based on a metaphysical level, the historical past, and is more perceptual: it attempts to reflect the characteristics of the people who came here to visit and we are proud of the characteristics of the city. Building, according to Thom Mayne, should aim to touch something, and HongYa cave should touch many things, and thus move us. The diaojiao buildings used to be an iconic image of the silk road city of Chongqing and survival, and have become a cultural symbol of this huge city.

The shock of Hongyadong is actually created on an urban scale. Without such an urban background full of tall buildings, Hongyadong would be a different kind of landscape.

HongYa hole does not just confirm the diaojiao construction approach of persistence, tenacity and the struggle for life: in a sense, it also reflects the traditional irony, in a similar way, of Hollywood and post-modern architecture, by the structuring of space with a special symbolism, metaphorical and exaggerated, put people in a state of once as if life.





LI Xiangbei

Xiahao Lane · Chongqing

Date: 2022/2023

Location: Chongqing

XiaHao Ancient Street, as the last old street, in the true sense, in the main urban area of Chongqing, which attracts wide attention, has witnessed the growth of the city and is known as a remnant of Old Chongqing on the south bank of the Yangtze River.

In terms of design, we position ourselves as translators of architecture. Through careful interpretation and choosing of places, buildings, styles and planning, we seek and explore historical culture. The design follows the characteristics of the site itself, Retaining the old street's "three horizontal and three vertical" overall pattern maximizes the preservation of the unique natural style in which the old buildings in the South bank of Chongqing developed, realizes the restoration and regeneration of the old street, and retains precious historical memory and architectural heritage.



Old buildings grow naturally in the mountains. Different historical periods, different building methods and different terrains each create variety and unique building styles. The design takes the original building as its starting point to show its adaptability to nature, flexibility and potential to change, enabling humans' resources to return naturally to their own place.

By repairing a few inches of time, a city context can be built. Perhaps XiaHao Ancient Street can provide a useful reference and direction for exploring the building of historical and cultural housing in the future. Through restoration, the historic district can be renovated, cultural and creative elements can be injected, fully displaying Chongqing's unique landscape and humanistic features, stimulating and spreading cultural confidence and making cultural relics truly "activated".



LI Xiangbei

Smart Island · Chongqing

Date: 2022/2022

Location: Chongqing

Located in the high part of the city, Smart Island is surrounded by green shade. The undulating mountains and flowing rivers form the scenery it overlooks, and the continuous city background is a panorama. The focus of the design began by gazing at the reality of the city and looking forward to the future. The building engages with the site. We echo and connect the relationship between the city and the construction with concrete materials, abstract language and a variety of spatial forms.

According to the design logic of landscape architecture, Smart Island forms a cohesive relationship of functional space with a minimalist constituent language.

Based on a simple contemporary design method, the building presents physical tension through the fair-faced concrete construction method.

At the same time, through the intervention of landscape, the boundary between the architecture and the landscape is blurred, in order to realize the harmonious coexistence of architecture, landscape and environment.

Users can touch the future that they can anticipate in the green and undulating architectural space.





LIU Jiakun

Principal Architect, Jiakun Architects in Chengdu Sichuan, China

With a focus on social reality and a respect for local context and vernacular craftsmanship, Jiakun Liu aims to solve contemporary architectural issues with a sense of realism – an approach inspired by folk wisdom – for each project. His vision remains open to China’s multiple traditions. Having faith in the compatibility of tradition and modernity, Liu devotes himself to translating the traditional Chinese cultural ethos into contemporary architectural language, which represents a perfect quality of intertextuality between individual and collective memories. His exploration of an appropriate technical approach in architecture is purely a logical continuation of his professional work on how to serve people in need. Many of these projects throw light on the reciprocal relation between Chinese people’s public life and urban cultural space.

Liu’s projects were exhibited at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, the 56th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia and many other international exhibitions. Meanwhile, Liu designed the first international Pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery (London) for its acclaimed Pavilion Commission programme in 2018 in Beijing. He has been longlisted for many domestic and international architectural awards – the Honor Prize of the 7th ARCASIA, Chinese Architecture & Art Prize 2003, Far East Award in Architecture and Architectural Design Award from the Architectural Society of China, the WAN Civic Award, German Design Award, 2022 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage, and others. He has been invited to lecture at Cite de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine, MIT, Royal Academy of Arts, Palais de Chaillot in Paris and many major institutions in China.



LIU Jiakun

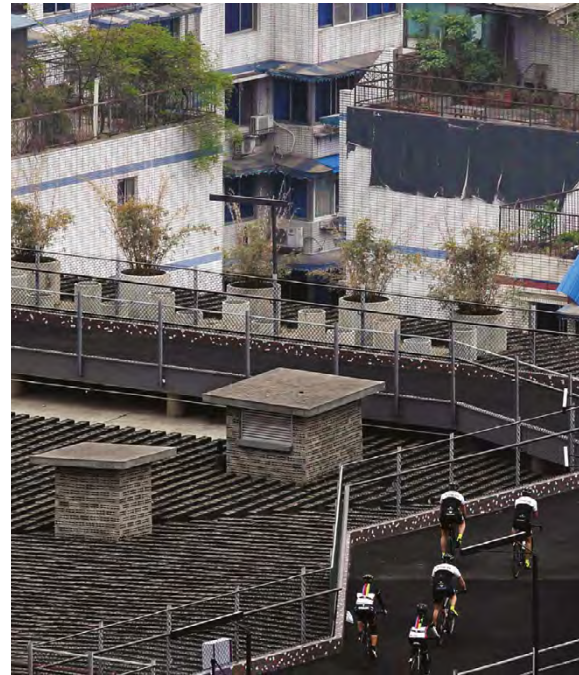
West Village

Date: 2015

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan

West Village adopts an atypical design when compared to other commercial complexes in that its centrifugal layout encircles the entire block to maximise the inner area for outdoor activities and green space. It encompasses diverse activities of public life in a “green basin”. Smaller bamboo courtyards exist within bigger ones. They are open to the public and visitors are welcome to walk through freely. The spatial design carries on the ever-popular traditional lifestyle among locals in terms of enjoying leisure under the shade of bamboo in order to refresh their former collective memories. Its functional structure allows a miscellaneous form of expression to utilise the customisable spaces at will, while the large scale of the courtyard maintains and displays a vernacular façade that encourages the creativity of the general public. An elevated runway follows the silhouette of the courtyard all the way up to the rooftop and then back to the ground. This constant change of altitude activates a dynamic flow of energy within this architectural project and offers runners and cyclists an unusual experience.





The team at RIBA has developed and realised this exhibition with the support of:

Guest Curator: LI Hua, Professor of Southeast University, China
 Exhibition design: HBA London office- William Bles, Lesley Zhang
 Graphic design: Drew Huang
 Exhibition fabrication and build: The Hub
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About RIBA China

Over the past few years, RIBA has further reaffirmed its global footprint by opening two international offices, one of which is in Shanghai, China. Within a short period of three and a half years, RIBA, together with the Chinese architecture industry, has held a diverse and impressive range of activities to promote global exchanges by RIBA in China in the form of lectures, exhibitions and competitions. Our aim has been to integrate China's exceptional architecture on an international scale, to fuse contemporary Chinese architecture with the global architectural knowledge system and to showcase Chinese architects' achievements and their importance in promoting global architectural excellence. Based on the strategic values of inclusivity, ethics, environmental responsibility, and collaboration, the RIBA China Office and Chapter offer a diverse and international perspective and a platform for the interpretation of Chinese architects' work.

RIBA China will provide opportunities for enriching mutual understanding and a foundation for cooperation between RIBA architects in China and the UK.

- 🌐 RIBA China website: www.riba.org.cn
- 👤 RIBA China WeChat account: RIBACHINA
- 👤 RIBA China Weibo: RIBA
- ✉️ RIBA China Email: Umi.Lyu@riba.org; RIBAIInternational@riba.org

Building Contemporary China

Joint events:

28 September

RIBA Collection Tour

Lecture on 'Andrea Palladio and Palladianism'

29 September

RIBA Building/Library Tour

London Culture Salon

Exhibition Opening Ceremony UK - China Gala Dinner

2 October

2023 RIBA and Cambridge UK-China Design

Conference and Academic Week

Low Carbon and Sustainable Development

Regional Culture and Urban Renewal

