EXPRESSING INTANGIBLE CULTURE THROUGH INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

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Thesis Design Brief Winter 2022

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Introduction

What does the rapid development of the modern world bring to humans? The first answer that comes up to most people's minds might be "a better and more convenient life". Our life quality indeed gets improved by advanced technology, and more people seemed to get fulfilled by goods, services, and entertainment that is available at their fingertips. However, if we take a step back to observe carefully what people are consuming, it becomes apparent that we are incredibly addicted to materialism; I am calling this tangible life. We can see a shift towards materialism, and the pursuit of happiness through immediate experience, in a wide range of places. In contrast, there are a range of cultural experiences that take place over time and with limited material expression; I call this intangible life. This literature review will focus on discussing the relationship and definition of tangibility and intangibility, the connection between architecture and intangible cultural heritage, and the possibility of highlighting intangibility through architectural expression.

Materialism-How does it make us miserable?

It's almost impossible to stay away from materialistic instincts. Consider this: we celebrate the rich and famous from a young age through movies, ads, billboards, media, and so on. We are taught that success in this society is being wealthy, well-known, attractive, and well-liked. This kind of programming and societal conditioning is precisely what prevents people from living happy and full lives (Monbiot). While people were living in the poor period, the people living in times and places with fewer material goods have little access to satisfy their tangible entertainment, but there are plenty of intangible resources available, such as sharing stories and poetry or engaging in friendships (Locke). The intangible value that these experiences bring to humans is uncountable, but these treasures are obscured by today's overwhelming tangibility (Locke). Our health and well-being are jeopardized by materialism. It has been demonstrated to drain our happiness, put our relationships in jeopardy, and make us less sociable, likable, and empathetic, while also making us nervous, sad, and selfish (Monbiot).

In advertising, TV shows, news, and other media, we are practically bombarded with materialism-inducing messages and unending celebrations and glorification of the affluent, gorgeous, and famous. We must counteract society's brainwashing and discover methods to overcome consumerism if we are to be really happy and content (Salzgeber).

The Connection Between Tangible and Intangible

The relationship between tangible and intangible has a long history. The words "idealism" and "idealist" are not limited to philosophy; they are also employed in a variety of daily settings. Optimists who think that, in the long run, justice will triumph are sometimes referred to as "idealists." This is not because such individuals are believed to be committed to a particular concept, but rather to their overall attitude on life; fact, they may be pitied, or even envied, for exhibiting a basic worldview and being philosophically illiterate (Guyer). A more recent article in 2007 by Michael Hall outlines a clear contour of these two vocabularies. It has been claimed that physical objects are much more real because our senses can access them objectively. We may assess them based on their weight, size, volume, quantity, and other factors. We simply, swiftly, naturally, and undeniably regard things as real since there is a quantity to them and we can measure them. They're dependable. They're there to be tested again and again. They're there to be measured by impartial individuals. In their discoveries and observations, the physical sciences have claimed control over this world (Hall).

The Needs Hierarchy developed by Abraham Maslow provides us with a framework for considering the link between tangible and intangible goods (Maslow). Maslow based his hierarchy on a thorough examination of the needs, drives, impulses, instincts, motivations, urges, and other concepts suggested by numerous psychologists and philosophers. It's a prepotency hierarchy. This implies that we start with the most basic and tangible "need" as the most strong and dominant, and when we meet it, it fades away and a new and higher need forms. Each demand has a bearing on the next one that arises (Hall). Understanding this, our most serious issues come when we, as people or as a society, place too much emphasis and importance on the bottom of the pyramid. and existence revolves on tangible values such as survival and/or safety (Hall). At the top of the Needs Hierarchy are intangible value, which is officially called the self-actualization needs. This is the need of discovering and becoming oneself, of continuing to grow and develop as a human being, of being everyone one can be. It is the need to materialize (actualize) what we see as possibilities and potentials inside. It is the need of actualizing the capacities for music, beauty, art, order, justice, excellence, perfection, honor, and wisdom that exist inside. This is the desire to express oneself completely and to construct one's own sense of self and reality. Furthermore, although we can identify the diseases that result from individuals living in ugliness or meaninglessness, these demands are essentially intangible. They are spiritual requirements, not bodily requirements. (Maslow)

Another thinker who explored the relationship between tangible and intangible aspects of life was Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher who believed that being human is a grounded experience entwined with interactions with the environment, rather than a detached, theoretical entity. Dasein is a German word that literally translates as "being-in-the-world." It highlights the concept that Being is inextricably linked to its surroundings, and that we cannot think of Being as a separate type of existence (Heidegger). We are not unintentional creatures, rather we are purposeful, future-facing beings whose actions are mediated by the objects that surround us. As a result, we can't conceive of our existence as apart from our experiences (Wendt). The author of Coming to Terms with Intangible Design believes that design theories that place a premium on tangible "intention" as the fundamental engine of advancement are flawed. While intention is vital, dynamics like multi-stability indicate that, despite designers' best efforts, usage is emergent. The synthesis is somewhere in the middle: design isn't just an expression of the designer's purpose, but it's also not just a build-test-refine process (Wendt). These ideas show that tangibility and intangibility are connected and interdependent.

Conveying Intangible Cultural Heritage in Architecture

Intangible cultural legacy may be thought of as the performance or expressive collection of a culture, whether it be a small or large group of people (cite). It may include customs, rituals, aesthetic expressions, and craftsmanship, as well as oral transmission of information and the involvement of a larger social network (Chatzigrigoriou 2021). No matter the specific element, intangible culture always has a historical context or background that is worth noting. Historical contexts are living, complicated entities that are always changing. As a result, understanding their complicated creation and transition processes is required (Chatzigrigoriou 2021). A historical urban fabric is made up of tangible aspects such as the built and natural structures, as well as intangible values such as culture content, cultural practices/activities, cultural expressions/representations within built environments, meanings represented by them, and values given to them (Karakul 2007). The term "cultural content" refers to the symbolic significance, aesthetic component, and cultural values that derive from or express cultural identities (Leblanc). Cultural expressions are described as manifestations of an individual's, group's, or society's inventiveness. Cultural activities were defined as having a distinct characteristic, use, or goal, and embodying or conveying cultural expressions. Intangible values are fundamentally defined in two ways in theoretical approaches: as a defining factor in culture's influence on the formation and transformation processes of environments, and as values and meanings formed and attributed by people as they read their environment, including the meanings of places and the values ascribed to built environments (Karakakul 2007).

Culture, as a tool and an object of analysis, is perceived not as a fixed set of natural characteristics but as a state of flux between matter and meaning, as a complex and varied series of documentation of various elements: natural, mythological, symbolic, imaginary, linguistic, and representational. Culture is an abstract concept that lacks both personality and distinctive physiognomy on its own. These two dimensions emerge when human presence and action infuse it with humanized shapes, functions, dreams, expectations, emotions, and meanings. Through this process, culture transforms space into place. A place's importance is conveyed in its architecture, which reflects the communities and people who built them. Buildings, in general, are indicators of cultural and social change (Chatzigrigoriou 2021). Historic locations are ideal settings for studying cultural heritage, which may be characterized as an entity with both intangible and physical qualities. In historic landscapes it is critical to comprehend and record both their intangible cultural legacy and their physical characteristics. The confluence of physical and intangible elements also reflects the origins of folk architecture unique to a historic region. A critical finding of the research mentioned in the article is that there is a two-way link between folk architecture and intangible cultural heritage that is always impacting the other and that these interrelationships are distinct and distinctive for diverse contexts. (Karakul 2007)

Poetry Through Architecture - An Example of Expressing Intangibility

Tai'an's Ceremony Hall: The Hometown Moon, China completed in 2021 by SYN Architects, expresses the elegance of poetry in a marvelous way (cite). There are two famous quotes from two different Chinese poems expressed vividly and successfully by the project. The building occupies more than 1,000 square meters consisting of the moon, the cavity, and the grey space. Inspired by the mountain stream by the base of the building, the designer uses architecture as a medium to reproduce the romantic idea of a moon born on the sea. Moon and love are closely interwoven symbols. Ancient Chinese poems chant about love in terms of windy flowers under the snowy moonlight. The Japanese novelist Natsume Sōseki even translated "I love you" as "the moon is so beautiful tonight". Love is that unique moon living in the depths of our eyes, making everything else pale in comparison. (Tai'an). Understanding this project allows us to explore the possibility of intangibility in the connection between poems and interior space.

In the long river of Chinese history, poetry is a significant medium that has encouraged and inspired people for thousands of years. The value and spirit of poetry is an intangible treasure that deserves monumental preservation. There has been much discussion throughout the years over the relationship between architecture and poetry. While one might argue that beautiful architecture does not always produce great poetry, it does have a strong feeling of place in the world of poetry and has inspired several great works by numerous great poets. Consider Coleridge's Kubla Khan, Wordsworth's Lines Composed on Westminster Bridge, whole Larkin poems, snippets from TS Eliot, a huge number of works by Thomas Hardy, and many more (Bee). Likewise, Joanna Fuhrman, a poet and professor considers a poem as a shape that may be entered totally, as a building comparable to a cathedral or a house of mirrors, strong enough to alter one's thoughts and feelings. She also believes that we are as much a product of language as we are of location, that our view of the world is shaped by the poetry we have read (Fuhrman).

Conclusion

Although tangibility is dominating our social behavior, intangibility is what that satisfies our soul when we are lost. The intangible experience and value to humans should not be neglected. Today, there is a lot of intangible cultural heritage that is fading from people's vision as we put more concentration on tangible, material values. However, recognizing the significance of our intangible heritage is critical and designers can work to create a preserve intangible experiences.

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Precedent Analysis

Michael Zhu | Fall 2021 | INTR 694

Convey/preserve/emphasize the Intangible experience thru architectural expression

- Intangible Cultural heritage
- Belief
- Poem
- Love
- Knowledge
- Traditions
- Ritual
- Historical Context

Tibet Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum

Site: Lhasa, Tibet, China

Year: 2018 **Size**: 6800 m²

Designer: Shenzhen Huahui Design

Program: Culture/Museum

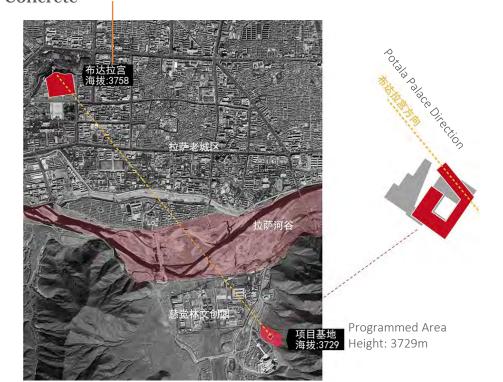
Concept: Heavenly Road. Tibet is considered to be a holy place close to the sky, with the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple being pilgrims' destinations. The basic design concept of Heavenly Road is consistent with the most unique natural and cultural genes

here.

Potala Palace.

Material: Stone, Metal, Steel, Concrete

Height: 3758m







Concept Sketch: Heavenly Road

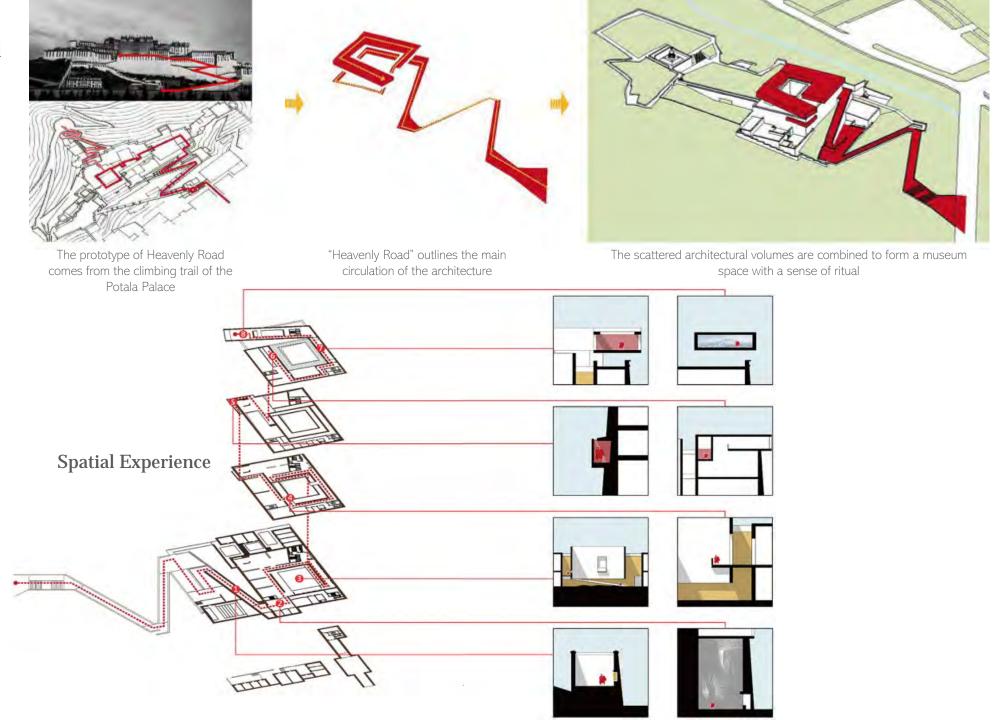
- 1. Main Entrance
- 2. Parking lot
- 3. Exterior theater
- 4. Prayer flags
- 5. Exhibition Park
- 6. Marni Ditch
- 7. Landscape green space



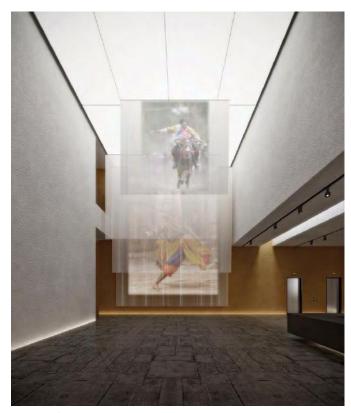
Entrance View South View



Generation of Heavenly Road



Interior

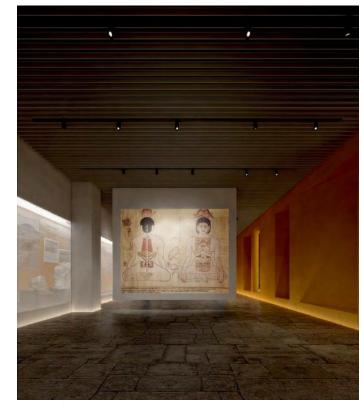


lobby & exhibition chamber



Courtyard & Ramp



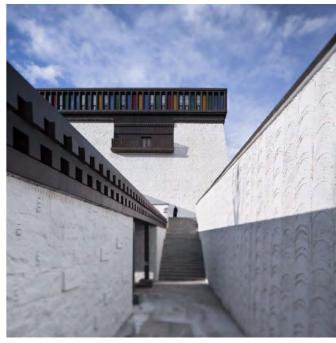


lobby & exhibition chamber

Detail View



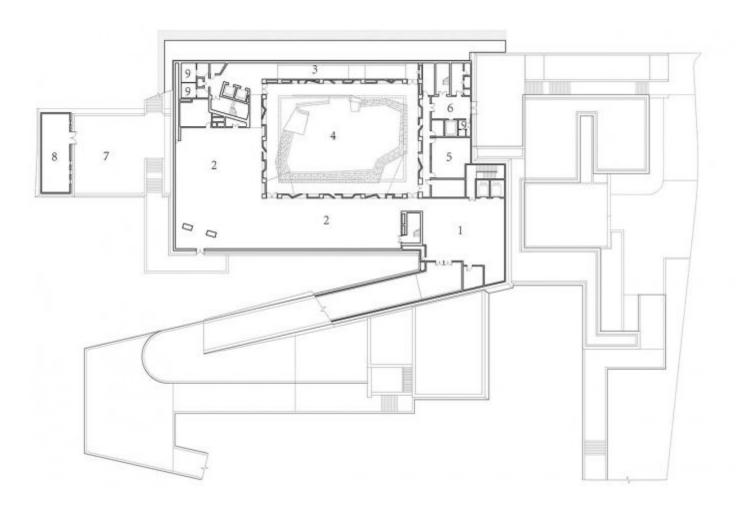


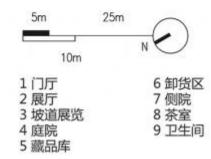




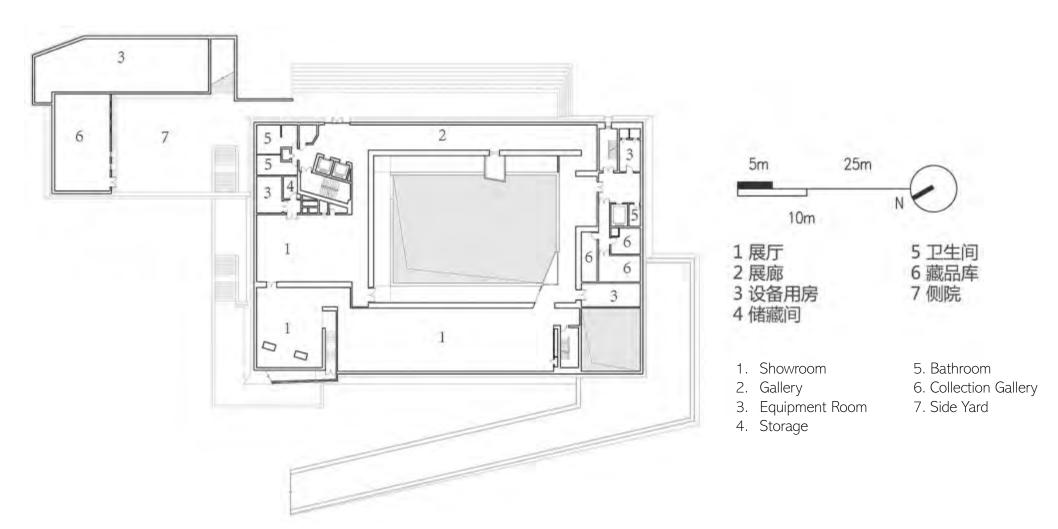


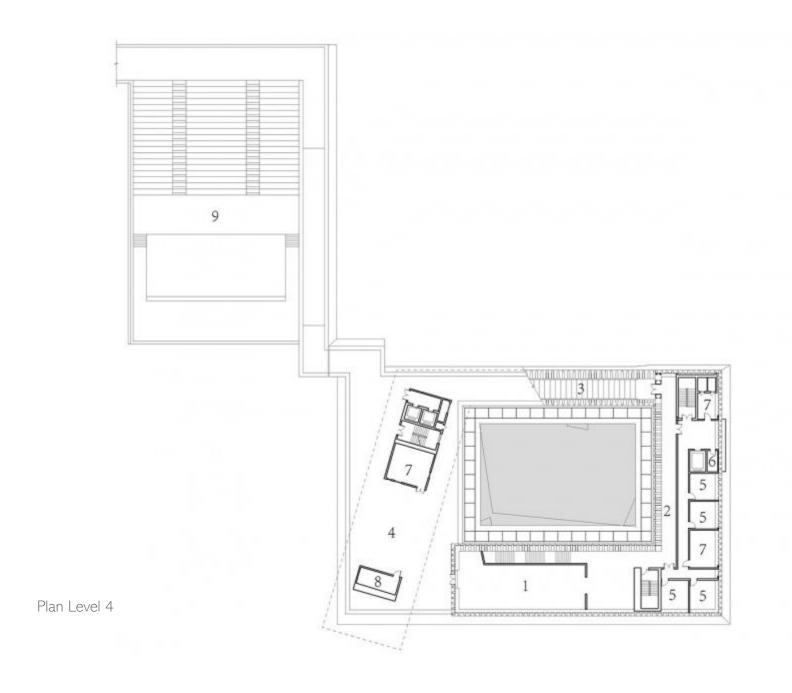






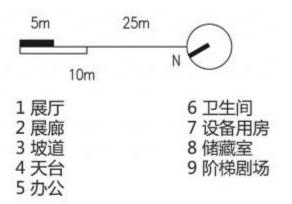
- 1. Entrance Hall
- 2. Showroom
- 3. Ramp Exhibition
- 4. Patio
- 5. Collection library
- 6. Unloading zone
- 7. Side Yard
- 8. Tea House
- 9. Bathroom

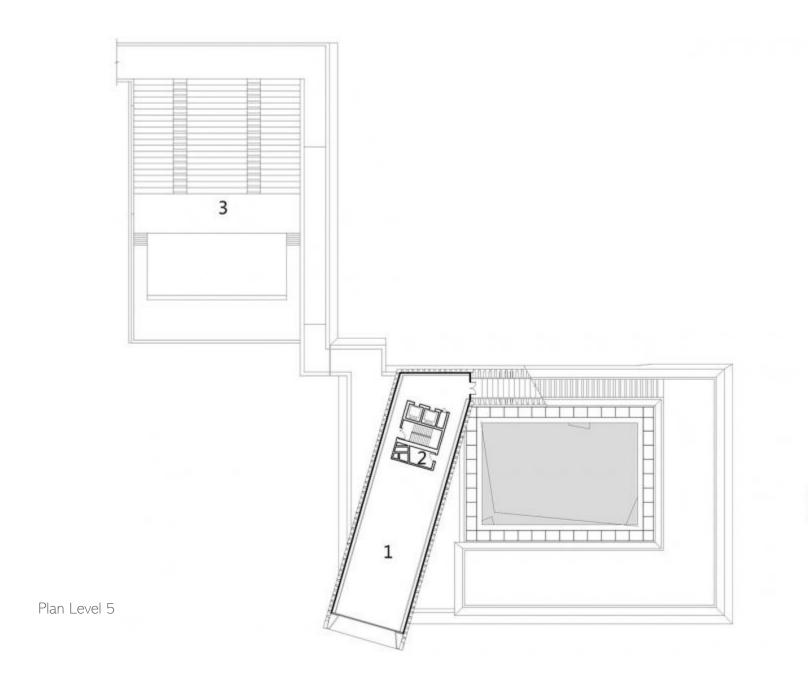




- 1. Showroom
- Gallery
 Ramp Exhibition
- 4. Rooftop
- 5. Office

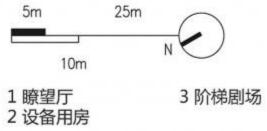
- 6. Bathroom
- 7. Equipment Room
- 8. Storage
- 9. Stair Theater



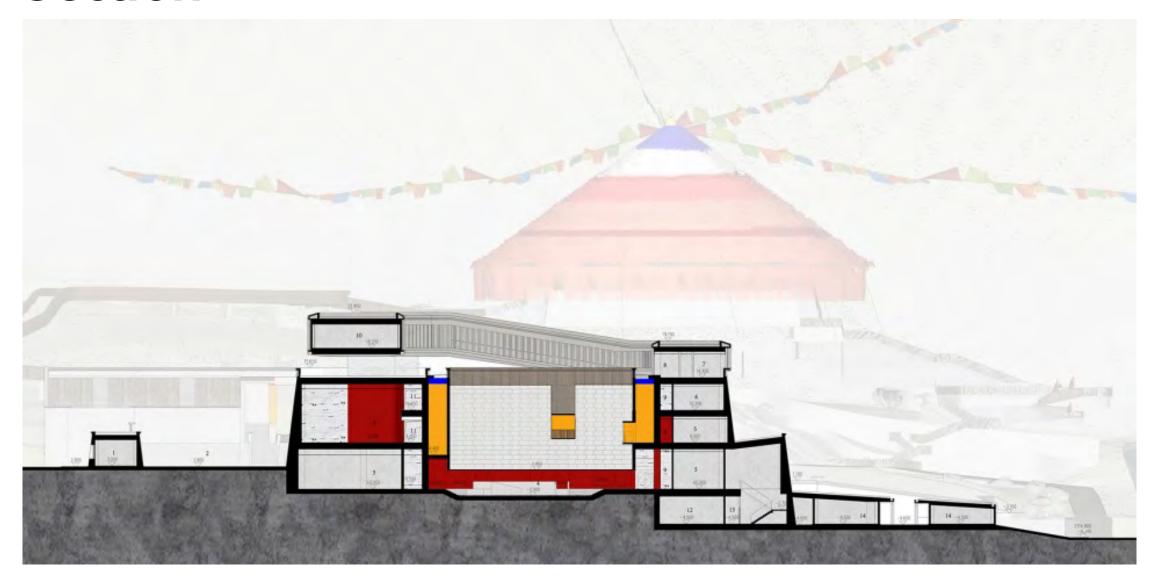


- Observatory
 Equipment Room

3. Stair Theater



Section



Granary Remold Design of Dapeng City

Site: Shenzhen, Canton, China

Year: 2019 **Size**: 960 m²

Designer: Yuanism Architects **Program**: Warehouse/Exhibition

Concept: As a key protection unit of ancient buildings, limited and slight intervention and reform have been carried out to the granary, meeting relevant requirements such as the Cultural Relics Protection Law. The design makes a systematic illustration and reconstruction of the streamline, spaces, light, courtyards, and so on with the combination of the features of the exhibition

Material: Wire Drawing Stainless Steel Metal Wire mesh Steel Cement

Coating





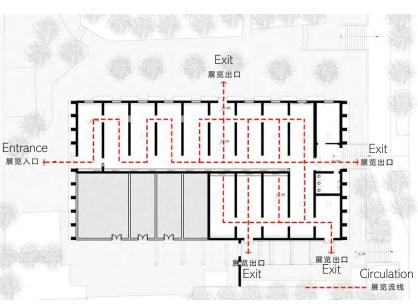
Aerial view of Dapeng City



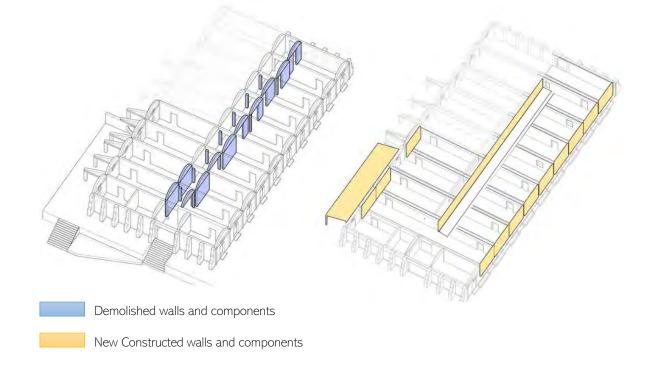
North Elevation



Interior view before renovation



Exhibition circulation





Aerial view of the granary

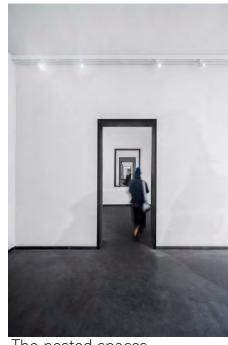
Interior



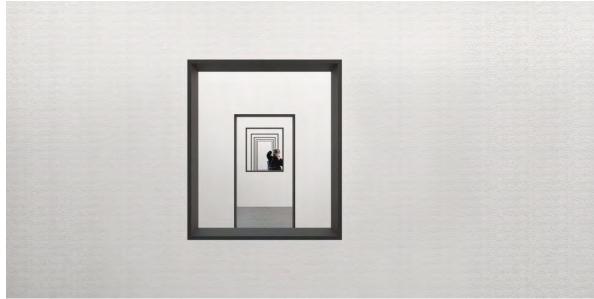
Exhibition hall. Artwork: Sign Language by Weiyi Hu



Exhibition Hall



The nested spaces



Rendering of the nested spaces

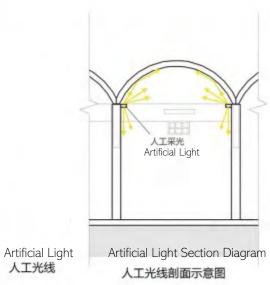


Artwork by Asma Kazmi

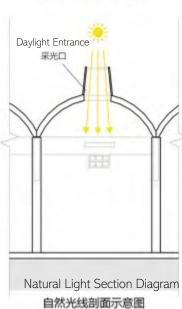
Lighting Analysis

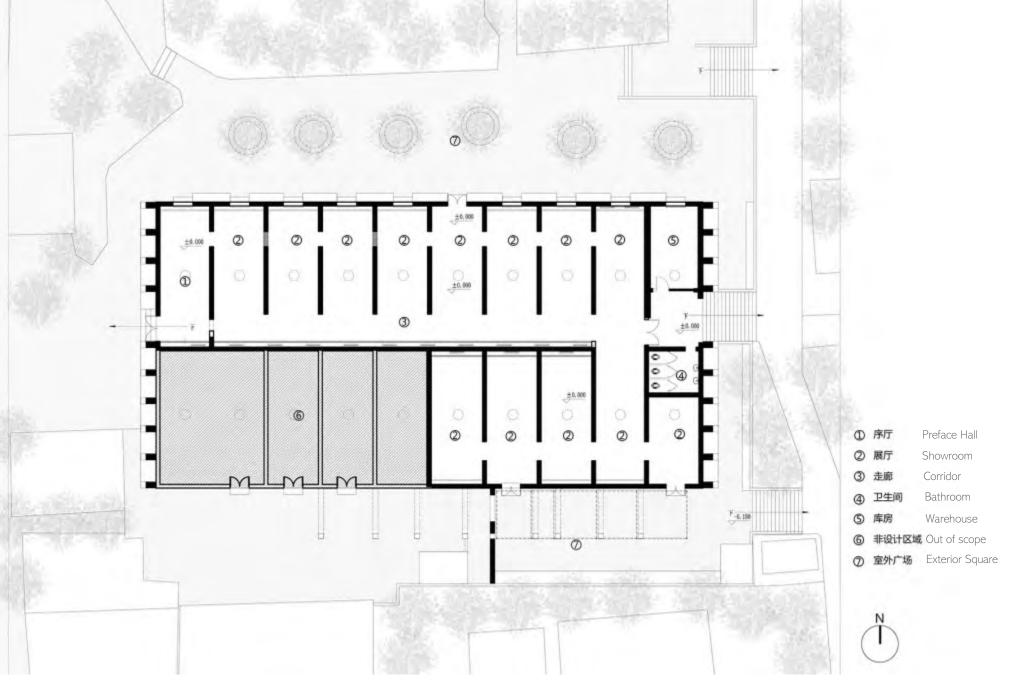






人工光线





Master Plan

Section Perspective



Tai'an's Ceremony Hall: The Hometown Moon

Site: Tai'an, Shandong, China

Year: 2021

Size: Interior: 856 m² Architecture: 1469 m² Landscape: 1866m²

Designer: SYN Architects

Program: Auditorium/Performance Building

Concept: The original concept for the Hometown Moon comes from the developer. During the Mid-Autumn Festival of 2019, a moon-shaped balloon with a diameter of 10 meters was lit up in Nianhua Bay, spreading magical colors and lights all around. Inspired by the scene, the Lushang Group hopes to light up a full moon at the Nine Women's Peak and write the next chapter in intellectual property for designed hometowns.

Material: Stone, Water ripple stainless steel, Mirror stainless steel, Metal,

Mirror, Glass, Ultra white glass

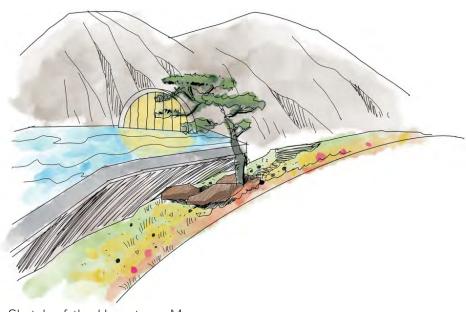






"The clouds and the moon remain the same, but mountains and rivers evolve throughout time."

A moon that never sets



Sketch of the Hometown Moon



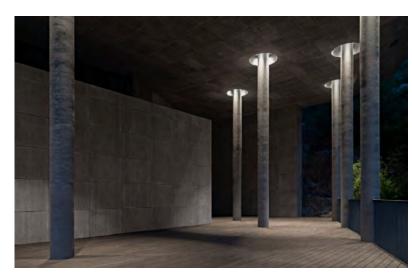
The "moon" is located on a viewing terrace overlooking the Hometown Cloud on the side of a mountain stream



The entrance to the path leading to the Hometown Moon



Entrance to the building



Entry Terrace and Column Forest



Café Viewing Terrace

Interior



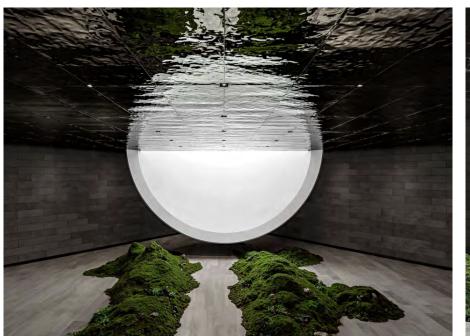
The moon emerges from the mountain



A space with strong sense of ceremony



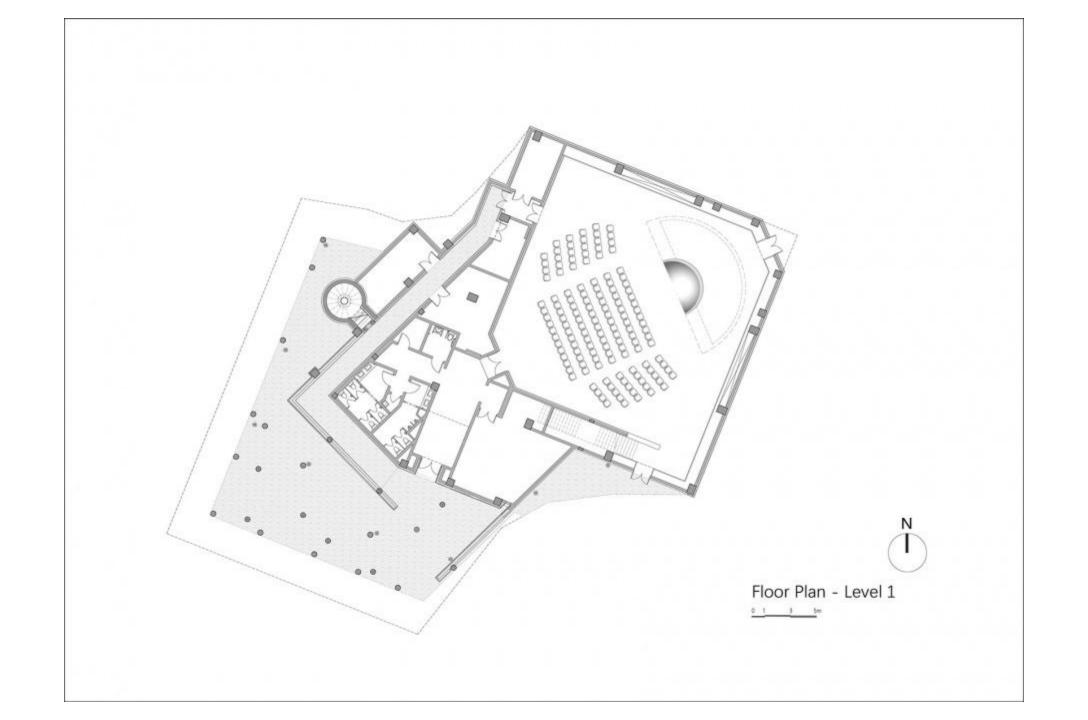


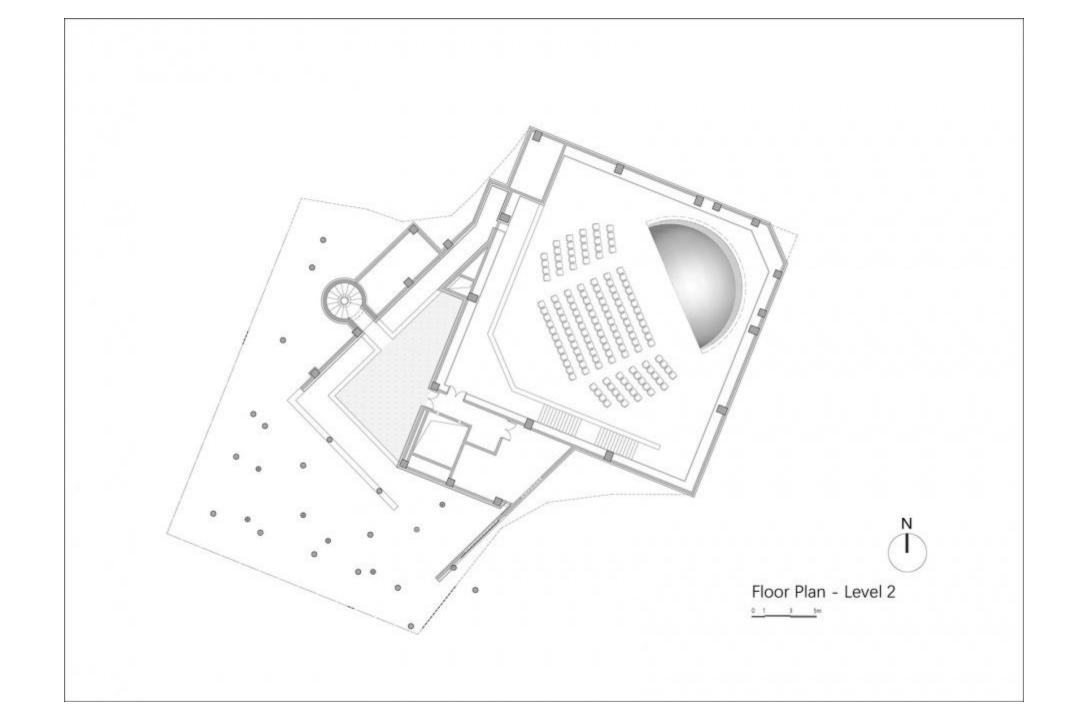


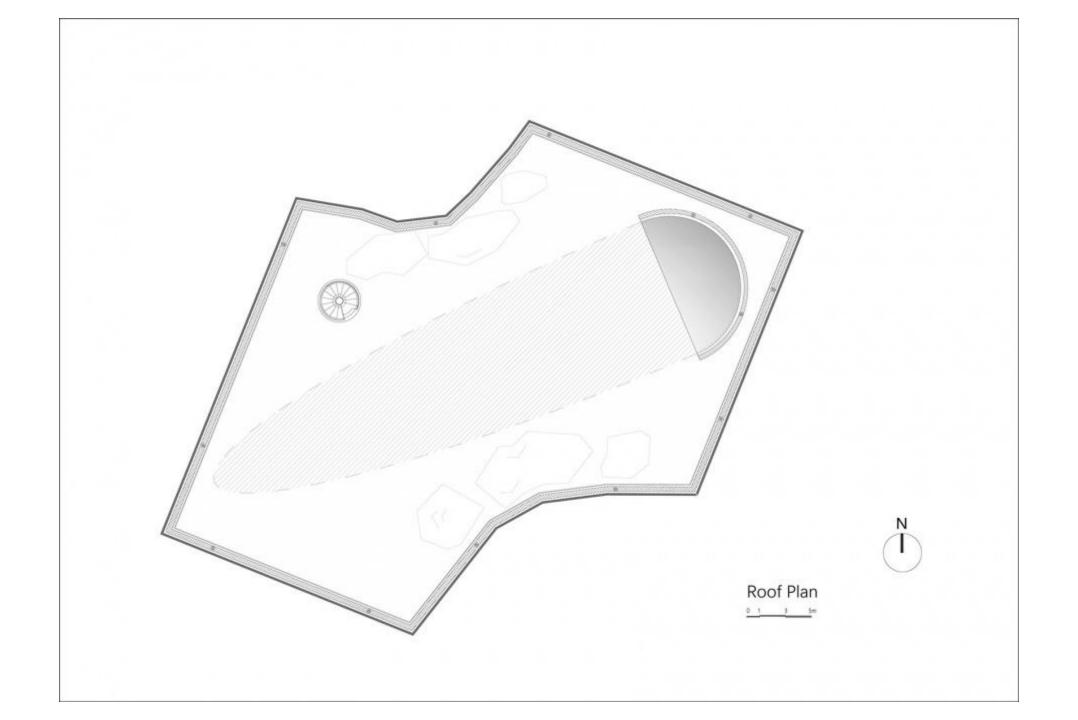


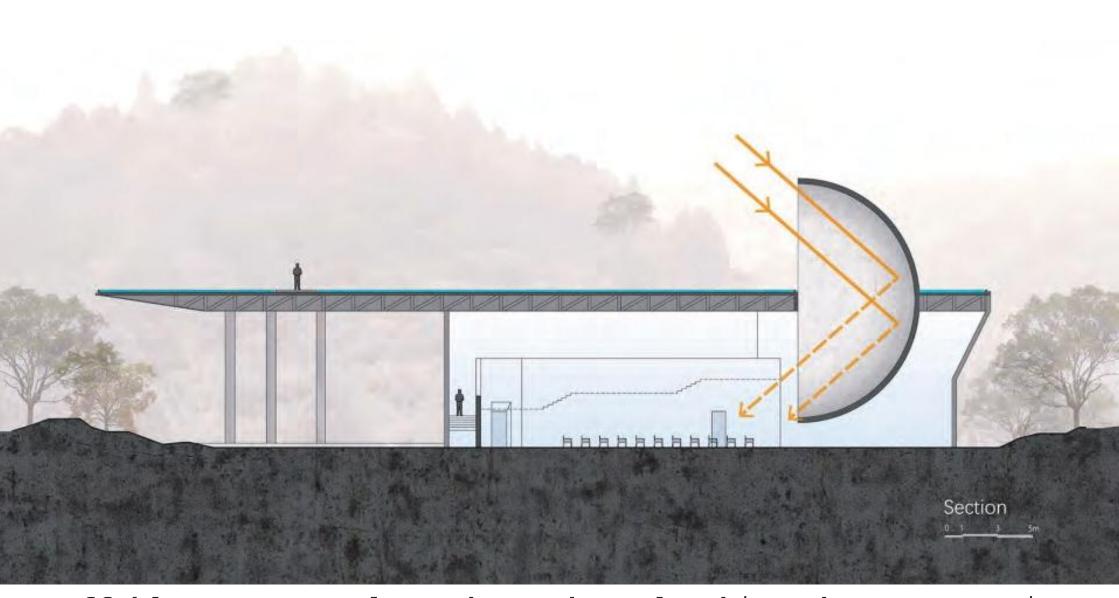
The curved wall of the *moon* forms a natural echo cavity

The reflection over a water-like surface of corrugated steel makes the moon full again







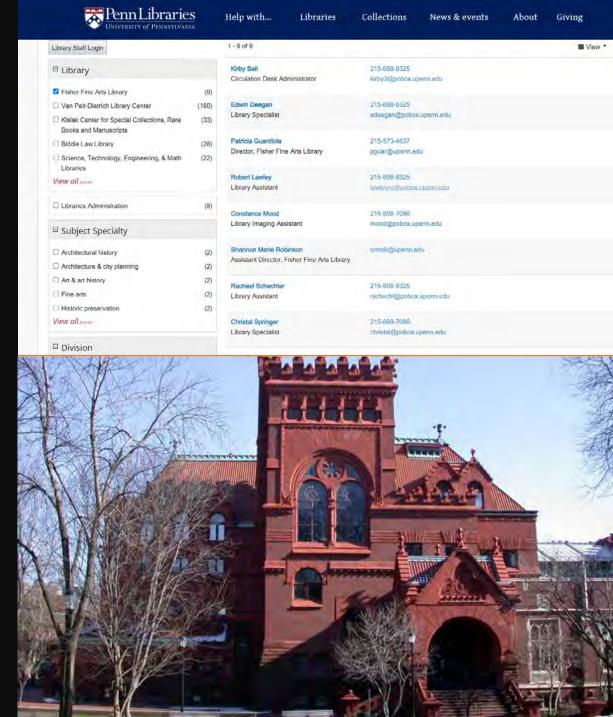


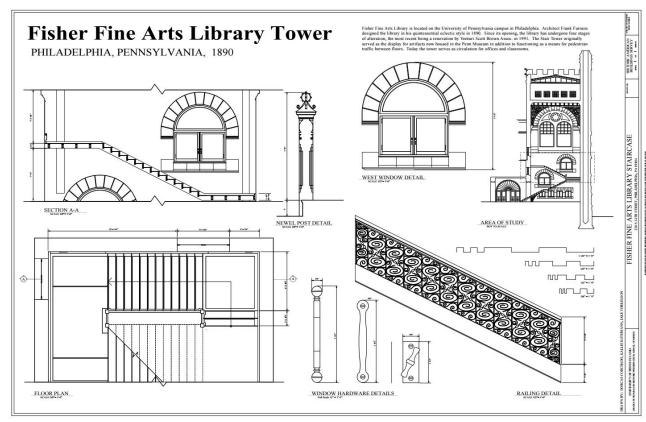
Ineffable space, a place where the only thing that matters is the experience of being there.



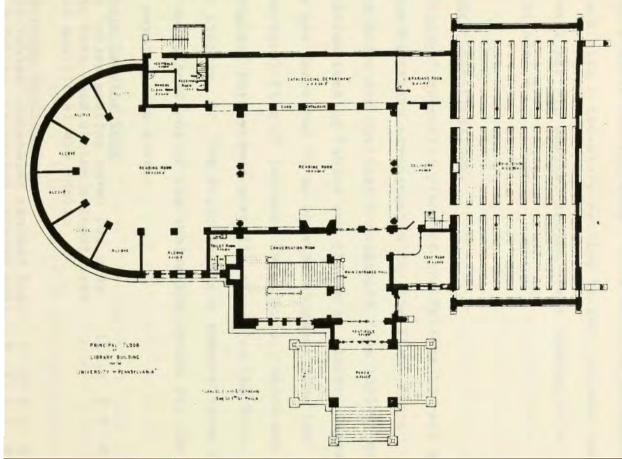
Background

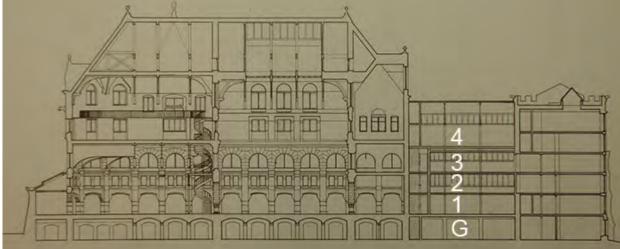
- Primary library of the University of Pennsylvania from 1891 to 1962.
- Frank Furness
- Building Code:170
- Gross Area (sq. ft.):96,972
- Year Built:1890
- Addition Year: 1916 1931 1988 1991
- Staff numbers: 9
- Supports study, teaching and research in contemporary and historical aspects of art, architecture, city and regional planning, historic preservation, landscape architecture, studio art, and urban design.





The Stair Tower originally served as the display for artifacts now housed in the Penn Museum in addition to functioning as a means for pedestrian traffic between floors. Today the tower serves as circulation for offices and classrooms.





Common Press

Common Press is the letterpress and book arts studio at the University of Pennsylvania. With printing presses dating from the 1850's to the 1960's and a collection of wood and metal type available for use, the facility provides an environment to learn about the history of the book, to creatively experiment with hands-on analog technologies, to explore the origins of digital typography, and to use the constraints of the letterpress print shop to spark new ways of thinking about their research in any field.

Seating

Up to 20, depending on the project



Carrel

- The benefit of using a carrel is that one can maintain a core collection of materials in one place, charged to their carrel. These materials are not to leave the building and are subject to recalls.
- Seating:137



- It holds approximately three thousand rare books as well as drawings and historic maps. Collection materials may be requested using a Special Collections Research Account.
- Seating:10

Fisher Fine Arts Library Reading Room

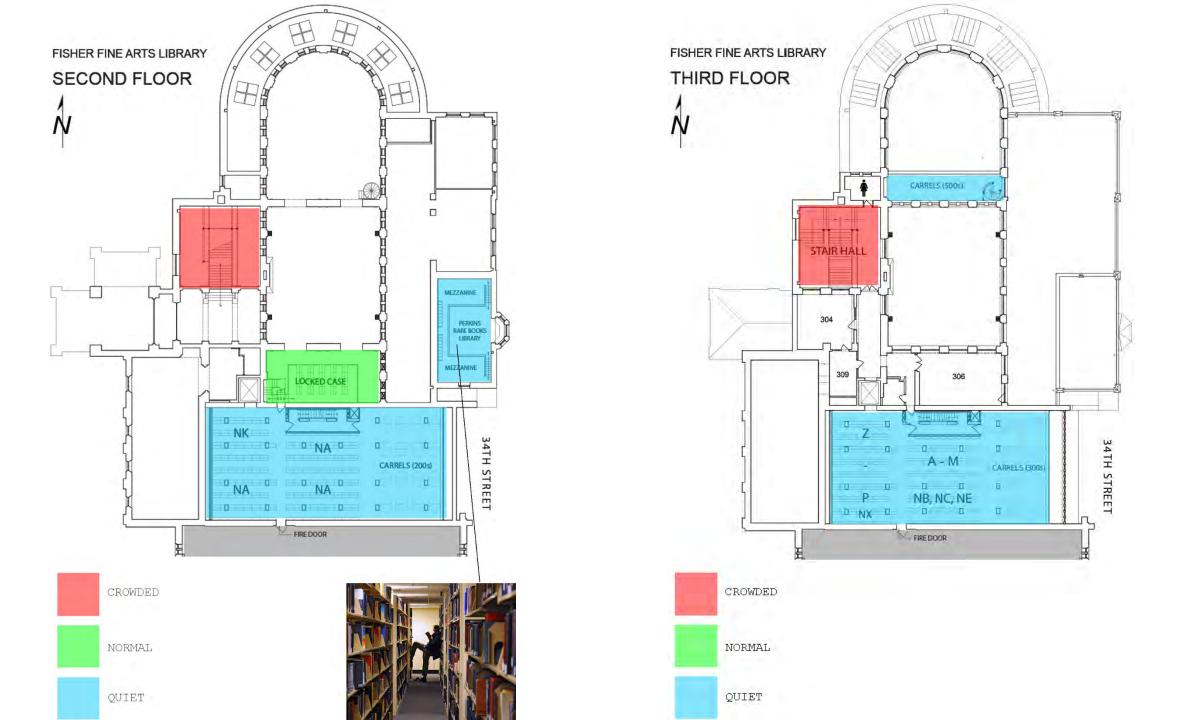
- The Class of 1964 Reading Room and the Seng Tee Lee Reading Room are quiet study spaces. There is no talking on cell phones in the reading room areas, carrels, stairwells, or stacks.
- Seating:160

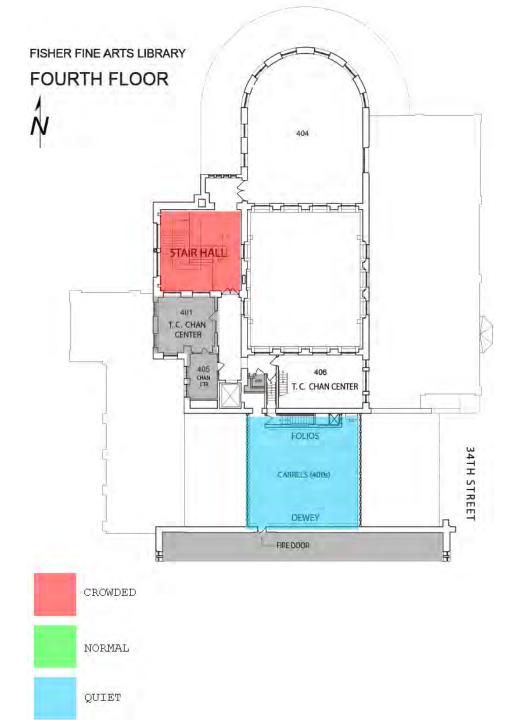












Summary

- Area size: Exhibition>Reading>Presentation>Staff Workspace.
- Immersive studying experience, divide quiet and noisy zone.
- Different types of seating and various layout arrangements for different amounts of visitors.
- Reading and Exhibition areas are the main and the largest public area, and the activities that happen here should be usually quiet and easy. Noisy and active events should avoid or prohibit.
- 3D Printer, screen projector, and computer are necessary equipment.
- Safety issue: Common Press and Material library might cause fire issue, but it is away from public area.
- Almost all the areas don't allow food and drinks except beverages in covered containers.
- Acoustic becomes an important element to consider, especially when dealing with crowded zone to quiet zone.

Poetry Introduction







On the other side of the window screen, twilight fainted as the sun set,

Inside the gilded chamber where the emperor no longer came to visits her tears fell.

In a desolate court full of loneliness spring was coming to an end,

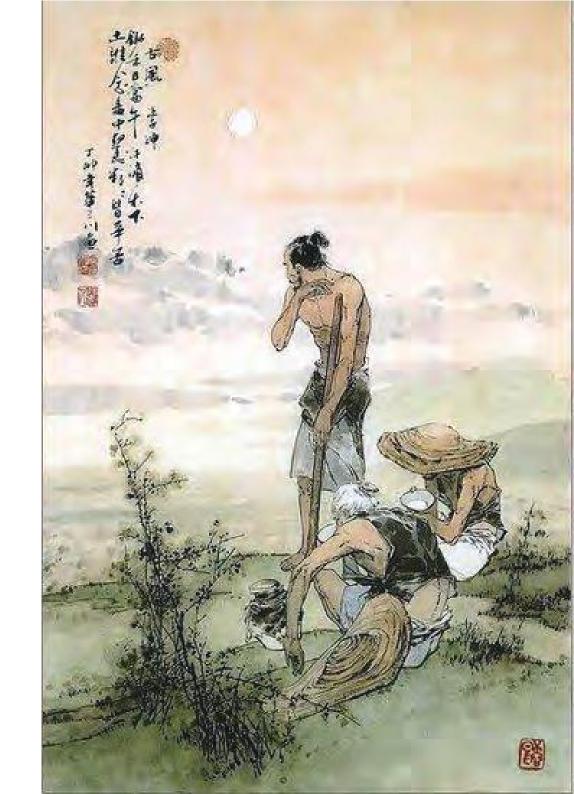
Behind gates tightly shut flowers from pear trees drifted to the ground everywhere.

Visulization by: Justin Lee

POETRY ORIGIN

Purity
Simplicity





POETRY FEATURE

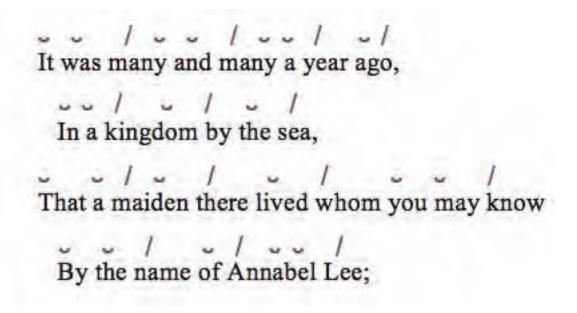
Concise

Vivid

Harmonious Rhythm

Beauty of Structural Form

Consistency



积雨辋川庄作

王维

积雨空林烟火迟,蒸藜炊黍饷东菑。 漠漠水田/飞白鹭,阴阴/夏木/特黄鹂。 山中/习静/观朝槿,松下/清斋/折露葵。 野老/与人/争席罢,海鸥/何事/更相疑。

PICTOGRAM

Evolve Symmetry



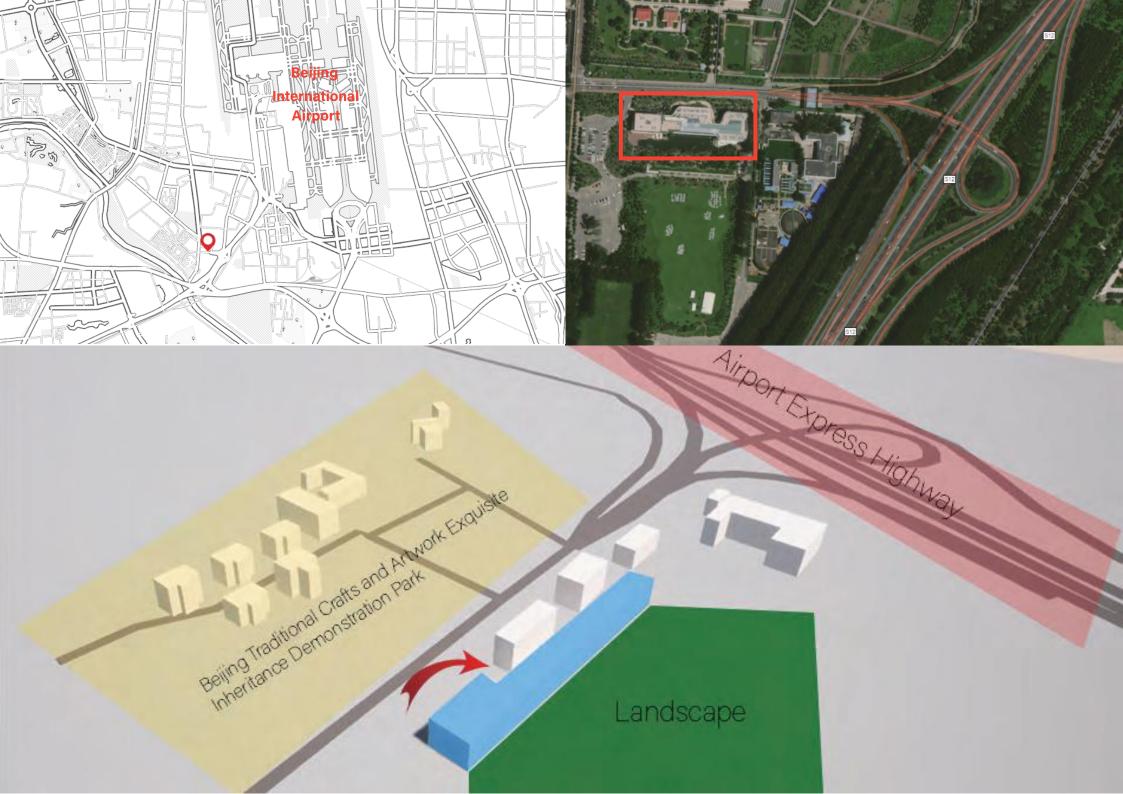
Site Information

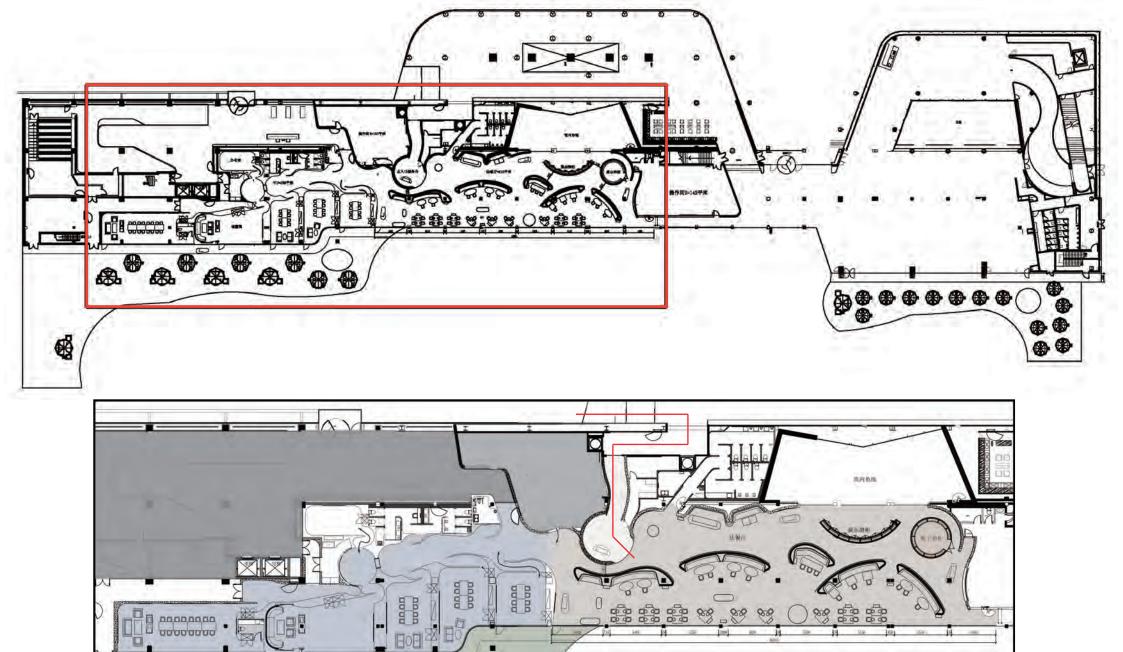
LUOHONG ART MUSEUM, BLACK SWAN SHOP

Location: Beijing, China **Scope area:** 12880 sf









	Size (sq/ft)
Exhibition	4000
Café	1000
reading	3000
Presentation	1500
Bathroom	200
Office	1500
Circulation	1680

Total 12880



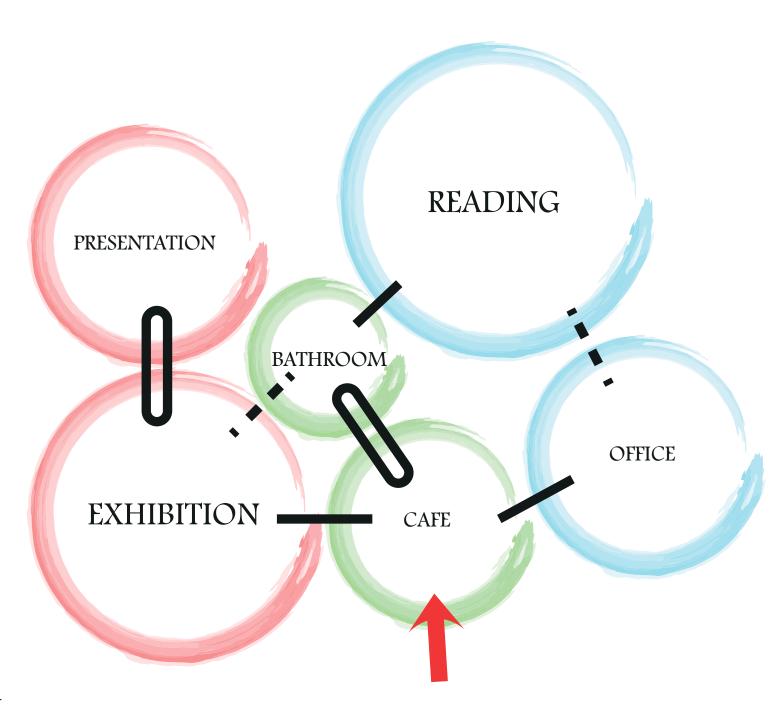


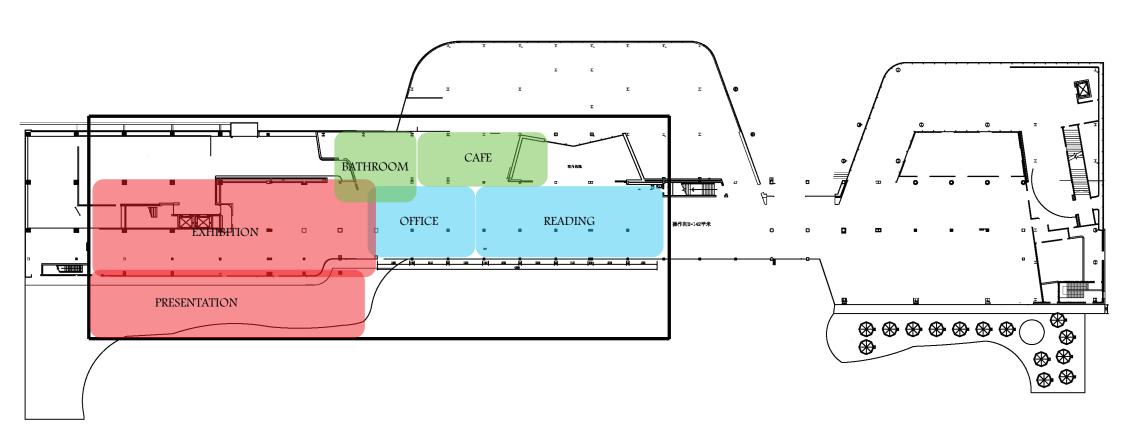


STRONG ADJACENCY

WEAK ADJACENCY

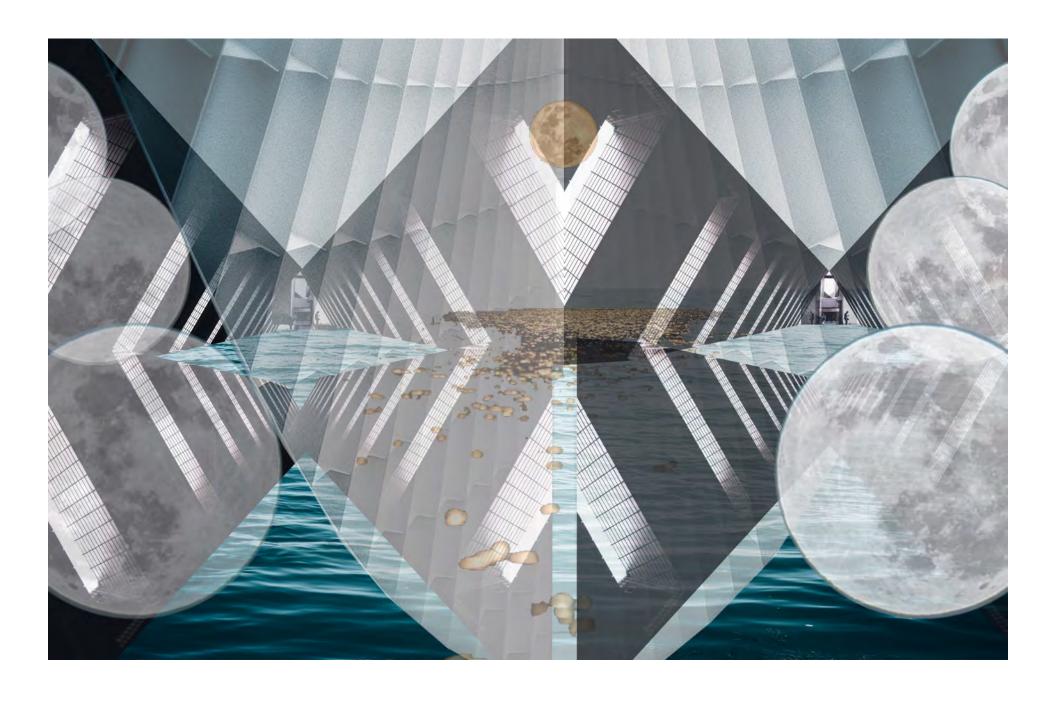
■ ■ ■ INDIRECT ADJACENCY



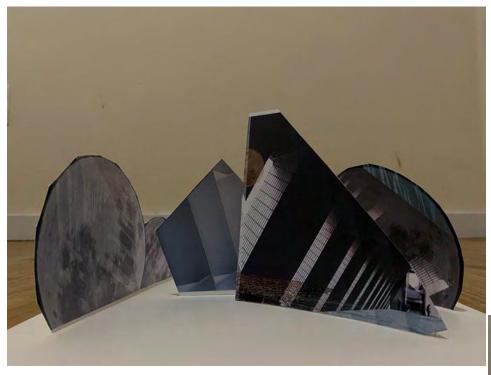


Conceptual Development

Collage

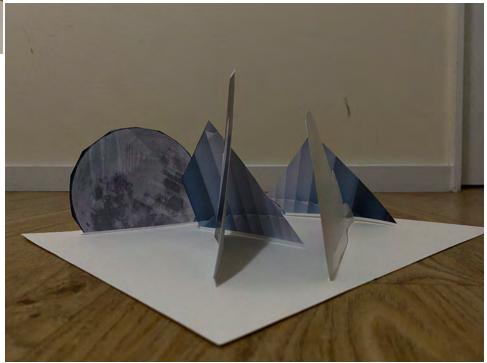


Spatial Experience

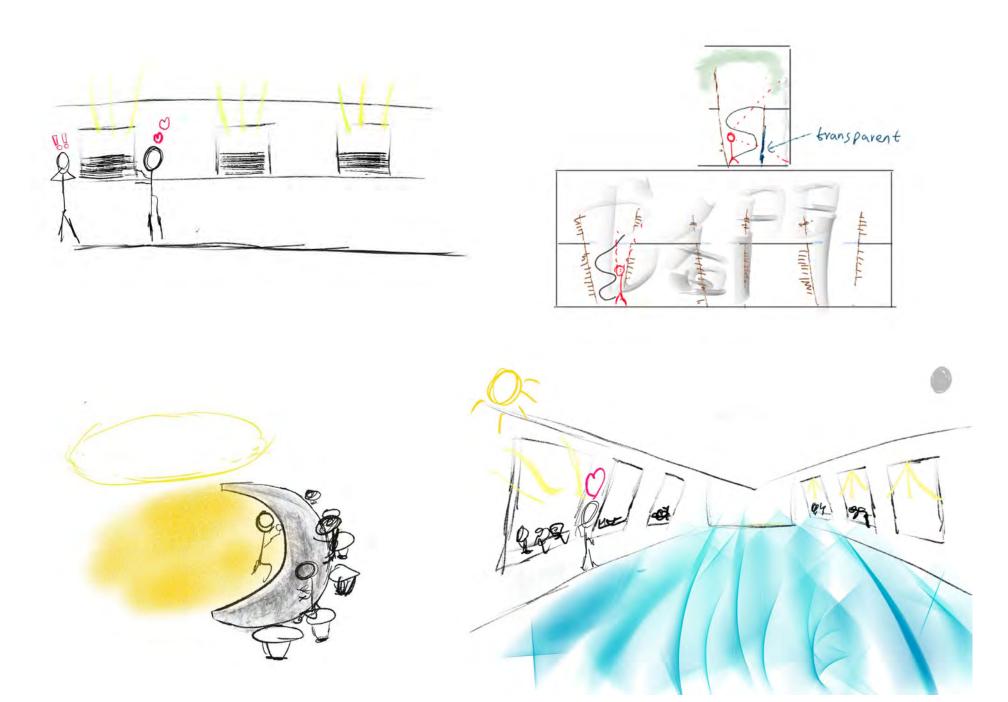


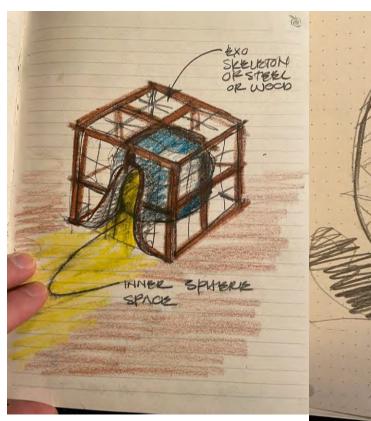
View

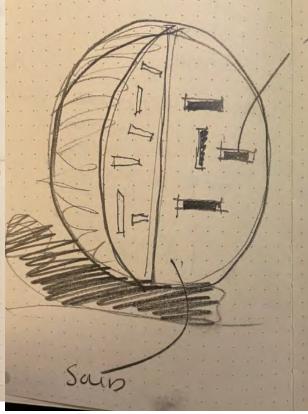
Vibe

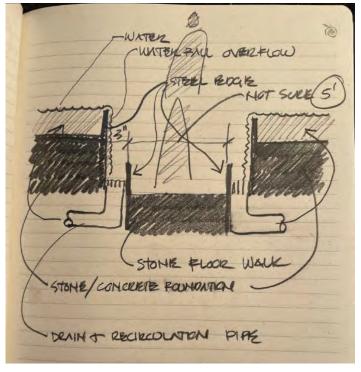


Sketches









Schematic Design

1st Floor Plan



Section Drawing

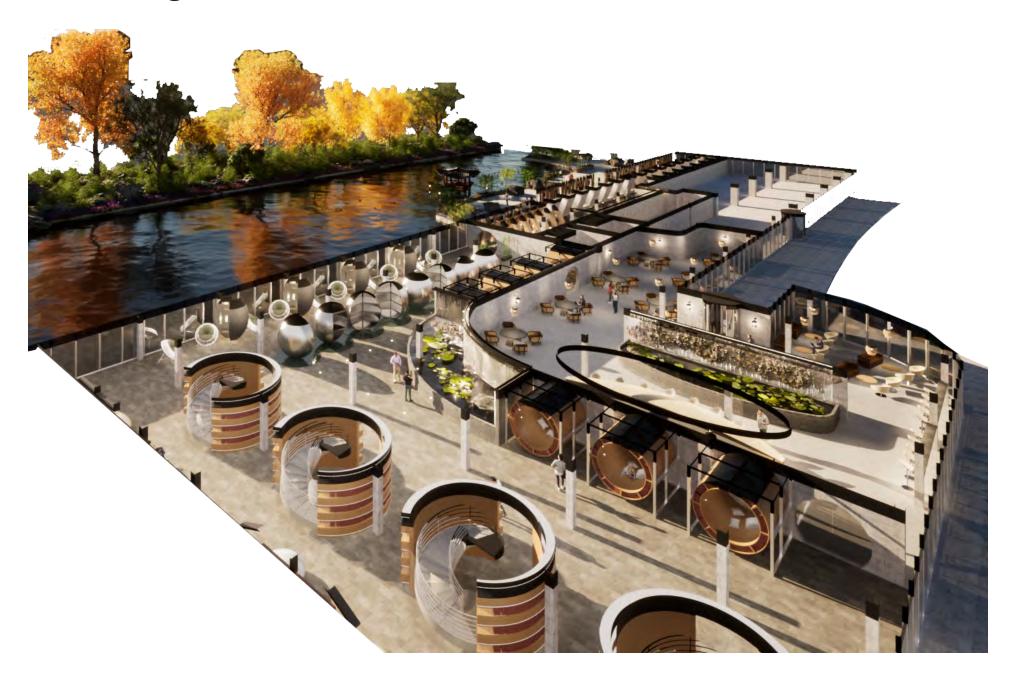


Elevation





Axon Diagram



Bar

兰陵美酒郁金香,



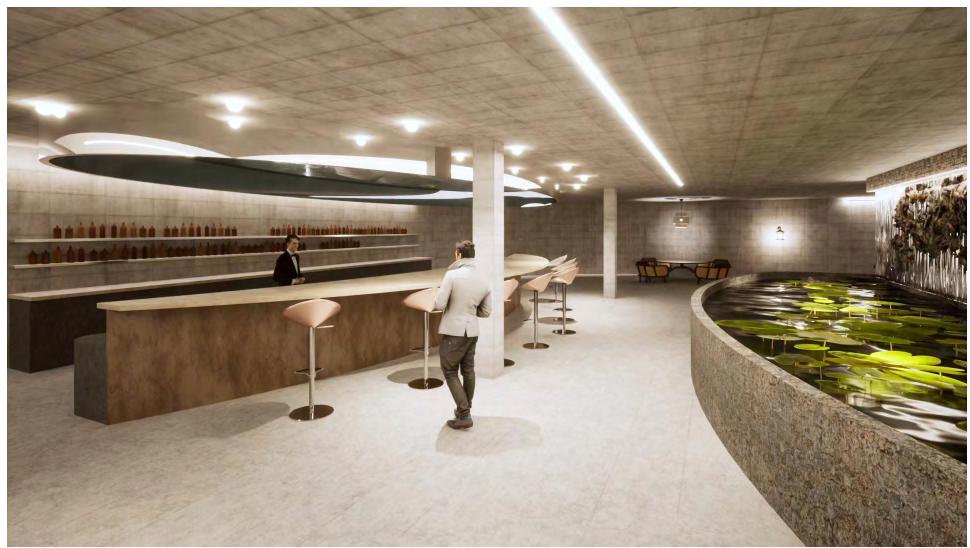
Lanling's mellow wine is scented with tulip fine,

玉碗盛来琥珀光。



Filled and tossed in the jade bowl like opals shine.

但使主人能醉客,



If only the host made me so drunk as not to know,

不知何处是他乡。



I am in a strange land or the hometown of mine.

Library

银光圆弧美无华,



Moon-like rays, arch-round space, bring you artless beauty.

东南西北步生莲。



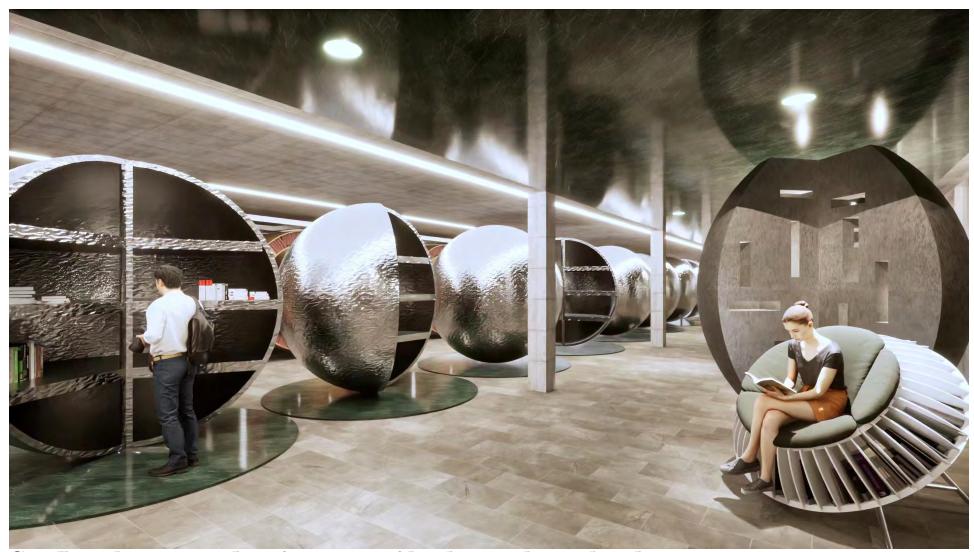
Walking around this place, Lotuses appearing behind your feet step by step.

淡妆浓抹总相宜,



Both simple design and bright decoration are suitable.

满屋书香万里游。



Smelling the surrounding fragrance of books, you have already travelled away thousands of miles!

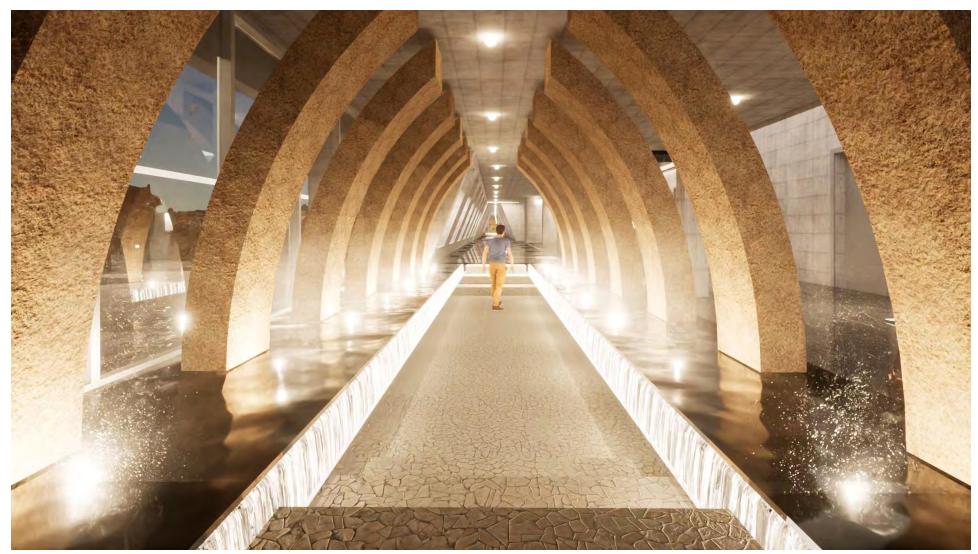
Museum of Love

书山有路勤为径,



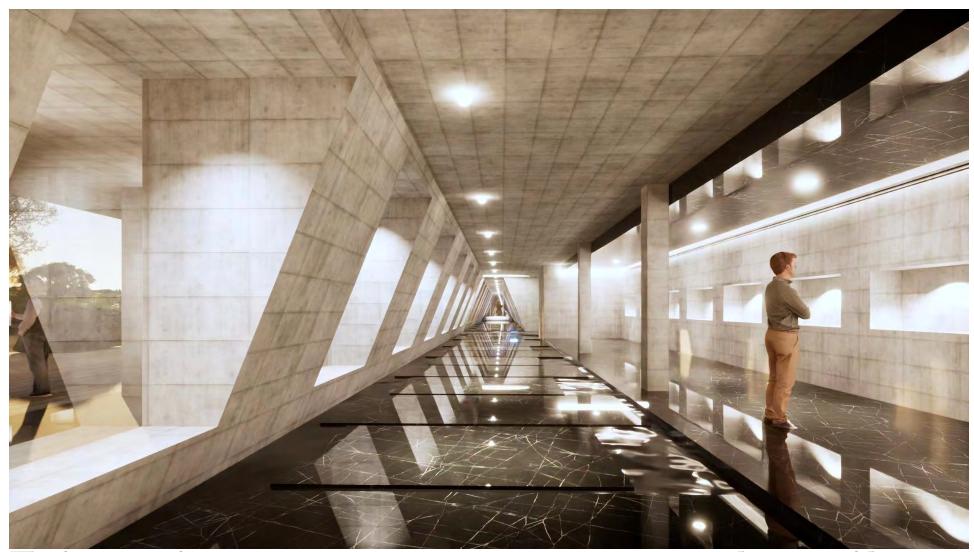
Up the mountain of books, there is a path of diligence,

情深似海枕伴诗。



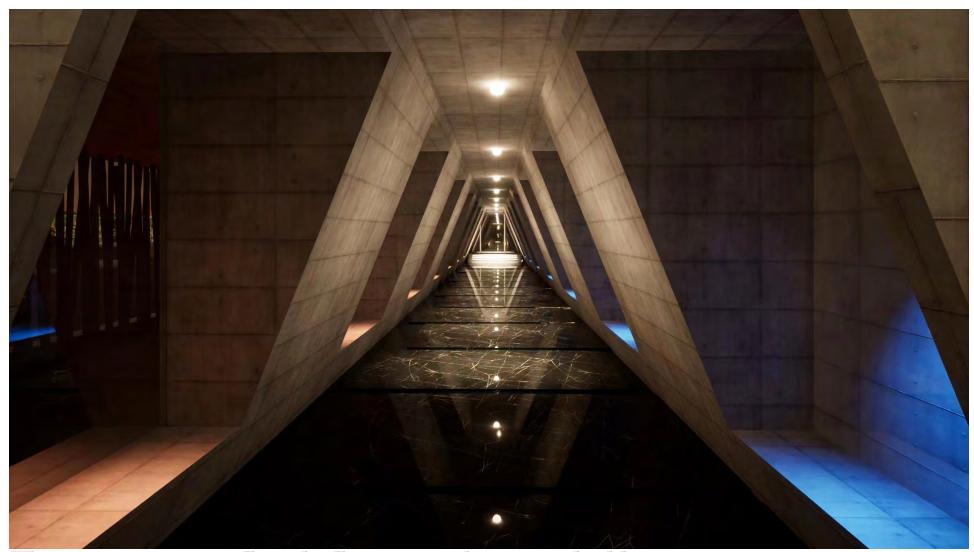
Poems behind the pillow accompany you to avoid the misery of deep affection.

酒香寻觅知音在,



The fragrance of wine awaiting you to pour out your inner voice towards your confidant.

道是有晴却无晴。



The strong emotion will gradually turn to calmness and coldness.

Zen Garden

花开竹雅水波澜,



Flowers in blossom, bamboos stand straight, water spreads ripples back and forth.

绿翠盈盈鲤中游。



When you see these luxuriant crowds of green bamboos and freely swimming fishes,

何须多虑人间事?



will you worry about trifles in your life anymore?

终归小满万事全!



Eventually you know Grain Buds (slight satisfactions) is better than absolute perfection.