

THE PROJECT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION OF QINGTENG STUDY'S SURROUNDING AREA

PROJECT STATEMENT

Xu Wei Art Museum is the main venue for the “500th Anniversary of Xu Wei’s Birth and the Opening Ceremony of Xu Wei’s Hometown”. Qingteng Square connects the Art Museum with Qingteng Study, paving the way for the frontcourt atmosphere, and meanwhile serves as the Visitor Center to perform crowd aggregation and dispersal functions.

The design focuses on conveying landscape culture and regional culture, expressing different meanings in orderly spaces, and creating the cultural characteristics of the Art Museum. And more specifically, the landscape design adopts modern techniques to interpret the imagery of ink-wash landscape paintings, creates activity spaces at the Square, and reorganizes the circulation route to connect exhibition and activity spaces indoors and outdoors, thereby producing a pleasing touring and resting experience with high accessibility.

Shaoxing city was home to famous gardens in the past, which have been forgotten over the long history. Fortunately, the Qingteng Study (the former residence of Xu Wei), though with a small spatial scale, offers a glimpse into local ancient literati's distinct perception of nature and the world and their broad state of mind beyond time and space.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

○ BACKGROUND

The project of the comprehensive conservation of Qingteng Study's surrounding area is a very important part of our design practice in Shaoxing Ancient City, and also a key action in the urban renewal plan of "Seeing Qingteng Again". As the main venue for the "500th Anniversary of Xu Wei's Birth and the Opening Ceremony of Xu Wei's Hometown", this area was officially put into use in May 2021.

The project is located in the old urban area of Shaoxing. The site is on the north of the former residence of Xu Wei — known as Qingteng Study, with Kaiyuan Lane and Houguan Lane in between. The project also includes the former site of a machinery factory. The surrounding buildings are mostly traditional houses that embody the profound historical and cultural context of this area.

○ DESIGN STRATEGY

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○ DESIGN ANALYSIS

The Qingteng Square covers a total area of 2,500 sqm. It connects the Art Museum on the north side with the Qingteng Study on the south side, paves the way for the frontcourt atmosphere, and meanwhile serves the function for crowd aggregation and dispersal. In order to unify the styles of the Art Museum, the Square and the old town, the project designs two pitched slopes on the east and west sides respectively. The east side is relatively higher, which subtly hides the building volume of the Visitor Center under the landscaped pitched roof by taking advantage of a partially sunken space. The west side is slightly raised to set a waterscape, which echoes with the landscape on the East Square. The Square is paved with dark stones, and terraced seating and cascading water are set on the slope. The special scale-pattern of the pavement in the waterscape area makes the cascading water feature appear smoother and more dynamic. Meanwhile, an original Xu Wei Statue, the visual focus of the Square and the front scene of the Art Museum, stands on the waterscape.

With the changes of light and shadows, the steps and waterscape reproduce the skeletons of traditional sloped roofs, which echo with the surrounding small-scale traditional houses. Cascading water, dry fountains and landscape steps offer spaces for the citizens to enjoy performances, entertainment activities and socializing, and meanwhile meet the demands for large space to hold art exhibitions. In terms of planting design, Chinese tallow trees are selected as the main species. Its vigorous posture and changeable leaf colors highlight the rich historical cultural deposits of the site and also embellish the scene.

Xu Wei Art Museum is located at the former site of an old machinery workshop. Its architectural design draws inspiration from the combination of the large spaces at the workshop, and adopts the construction logic of "five longitudinal entries, three horizontal folds, and double-pitched roofs with different side lengths". At the site, the sunlight casts nto the cracks on the roof and falls onto the structural remains, from which the visitors can get in touch with the traces of the old times. The courtyard is set at the third entry of the museum, which provides visitors with varying visual experiences at every step and directs more natural light into the interior space. Meanwhile, it also increases indoor permeability, continues the style of the site, and maintains a connection with the old machinery workshop.

The design of the courtyard, taking Sanqing Painting - a painting by Xu Wei that portrays plum blossom, bamboo and stones, as the prototype, creates an ink-wash painting-like landscape scene with water and stones. The design of the courtyard also echoes with that in the Qingteng Study. The Art Museum is not only a place for cultural publicity and public activities, but also a model of the fusion of ancient and contemporary culture.

To the east and north sides of the Art Museum are the preserved old walls of the former old machinery workshop. The mottled old walls preserve the historical traces and tell the story of the past, whilst creating a contrast with the new Art Museum, hence revealing a montage-featured image. Vines are planted on the walls and a Chinese tallow tree is placed in the corner. The stark contrast between the old walls and the energetic growing vines tells the lapse of time, and reflects the fusion of the old and new.

The garden of Shiye Pavilion on the east side features a verdant lawn and blooming red plum blossoms. When walking into the garden and looking around, visitors will find out that the blossoms have been a part of the scene. After crossing the moon gate, the water-side pavilion and the long corridor, large arbors come into view, all of which create a fresh, elegant garden space along with the flourishing red plum blossoms and flowing water. The tranquil pathway flanked by bamboo, the mottled tree shadows, the elegant landscape ornaments, as well as the pomegranate trees, generate a serene atmosphere. Strolling in the courtyard, visitors are able to experience varying views as moving around and feel like roaming in a painting with different scenes in four seasons.

○ CONCLUSION

The project emphasizes the connection between the past and future, and the fusion of traditions and innovation. It provides a solution for integrating contemporary public art spaces into the cultural context of the ancient city, to connect with and influence the life of the citizens. Through creating simple, powerful and aesthetic landscapes, it has injected new vitality into an old city.

Through skillful design interventions, the Qingteng Study is again presented to the public.

THE TRACE OF TIME TELLING THE STORY OF HISTORY AND NEW LIFE



△ Aerial view

ADOPTING MODERN TECHNIQUES TO INTERPRET THE IMAGERY OF INK-WASH LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS



△ Aerial View



△ Master Plan

- 01. Dry fountain square
- 02. Seats on the steps
- 03. Grass-covered steps
- 04. Viewing platform
- 05. "Cascade" under digital control
- 06. Sunken square
- 07. Entrance waterscape
- 08. Main entrance
- 09. Sunken courtyard
- 10. Landscaped atrium
- 11. Activity courtyard on 2F
- 12. Secondary entrance
- 13. North square
- 14. Bamboo forest
- 15. Entrance & exit of underground garage

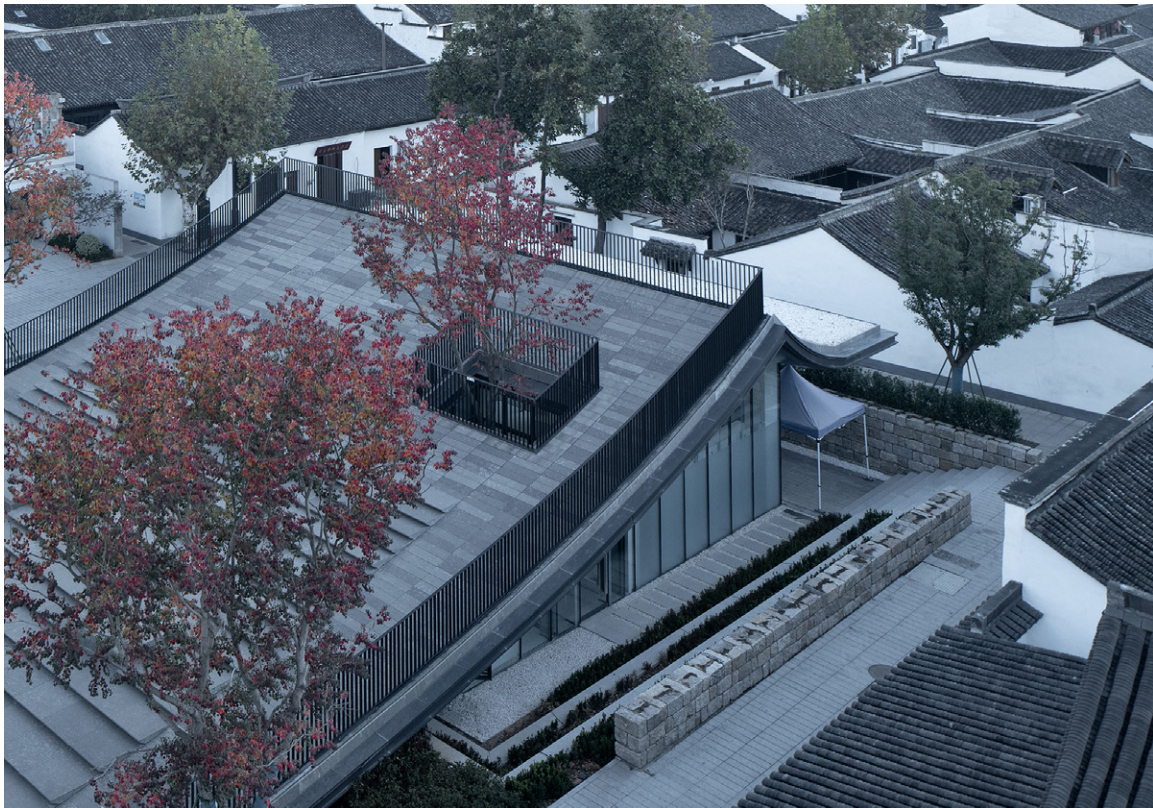
REBIRTH OF THE ANCIENT CITY WITH WAVES OF LAUGHTER OVER THE SLOPING ROOF



△ The resonance between Xu Wei Art Museum and waterscape on the Qingteng Square



△ Qingteng Square at night



△ Visitor Center hidden under trees



△ An urban theatre stage on a gently rising slope

AN INK-WASH PAINTING-LIKE LANDSCAPE SCENE WITH WATER AND STONES



△ Qingteng Square in use after its completion

THE RED LEAVES CONVEYING CULTURAL CONTEXT, THE STATUS WATCHING THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE



△ Xu Wei Statue erecting on the southwest side of the Art Museum



△ Visitors lining up outside the Xu Wei Art Museum



△ The stepped slope on the east side of the Square



△ Water Feature on the Qingteng Square

THE WATER REFLECTING THE AUTUMN SCENERY, ECHOING THE HISTORICAL RELICS



△ Stairs for rest on the east side of the Square



△ The pitched slope and viewing platform on the west side of the Square



△ The pitched slope on the east side of the Square

THE FLOURISHING RED PLUM BLOSSOMS AND FLOWING WATER



△ Shiye Pavilion courtyard in Spring



△ Water-side pavilion in the Shiye Pavilion



△ Plants and water-side pavilion set each other



△ Shiye Pavilion courtyard in Autumn



△ Water-side pavilion in the Shiye Pavilion

THE TRANQUIL PATHWAY FLANKED BY BAMBOO DIRECTING TO THE DEEP COURTYARD



△ Waterscape in the Shiye Pavilion



△ Path flanked with bamboo trees in the Shiye Pavilion courtyard



△ Tables and chairs for rest in the Shiye Pavilion courtyard