

STEVEN HOLL'S CONTEMPORARY ART & ARCHITECTURE MUSEUM GROUND BREAKING: FEBRUARY 20, 2005

In Nanjing China construction is scheduled to begin on February 20th, 2005 for the China Practical Architecture Exhibition curated by Arata Isozaki. The entrance building by Steven Holl Architects is a Contemporary Art & Architecture Museum.

The new museum's site is at the gateway to the CIPEA exhibition area in the lush green landscape of the Pearl Spring near Nanjing. Works of twenty international architects under the curatorial direction of Arata Isozaki will be the first exhibition in the museum.

Steven Holl's design for the new museum will explore the Parallel Perspective of Chinese space. Perspective is the fundamental historic difference between Western and Chinese painting. After the 13th Century Western painting developed vanishing points in fixed perspective. Chinese painters, although aware of perspective, rejected the single-vanishing point method, instead producing landscapes with "parallel perspectives" in which the viewer travels within the painting. Shifting viewpoints, layers of space, expanses of mist and water, all characterize the deep alternating spatial mysteries of the composition of Chinese painting.

The landscape and materiality of the new museum was inspired by Steven Holl's experience of the Garden of the Keeper of Nets in Suzhou. Steven Holl says that the garden's "the new museum reflect's the Garden's zigzag movement through magnificent white plaster spaces, huge blackened wood doors followed by walled water pond courts, then again into sun-dappled rooms, is a masterpiece of spatial progression of 'the winding and the straight'."

Steven Holl states "The Nanjing Art & Architecture Museum is the first in China to be dedicated to contemporary architecture. With its translucent hovering sculpture gallery terminating in a tea room viewing platform, it will overlooking the Ming Dynasty capitol city of Nanjing. The courtyard base of the is charcoal concrete of forms lined in bamboo from the site. Energy consciousness, a theme of the entire exhibition, is carefully considered in the selection of materials and infrastructure design."

The museum is formed by a "field" of parallel perspective spaces and garden walls in black rammed earth over which a "figure" in translucent construction hovers. The straight passages on the ground level gradually turn into the winding passage of the "figure" above which ends at "in-position" viewing of the city of Nanjing in the distance.

The section of the "figure" with translucent walls and floor is an inversion of the section of the building below with translucent ceiling. This ceiling is made of solar collectors which permit 30 % light passage to the interior.

The 3000 sq. m. museum's flexible exhibition spaces are complimented by a Tea House and curator's residence facing the south light and re-circulated water of the pond.

The green sedum roof Geothermal cooling and heating recycled and low embodied energy materials are part of the green building aims of the project.

On Steven Holl Architects:

For more information on the work of Steven Holl Architects, please visit www.stevenholl.com

Press Contact

Frank Lentini - Susan Grant Lewin Associates
(++1) 212-947-4557 frank@susangranlewin.com