

**Personal Interview with YING Chaojun,
The co-responsible and design director of
ARCHITECTURE-STUDIO · CHINA**



Oficial Master of Cultural Management,
University of Barcelona

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“ Architecture as a landscape of city, should gracefully be the city’s image, instead of an aggressive odd. ”

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-- YING Chaojun

“ (...) We focus on the concept of architectural design itself, we don't praise highly architect stars.” As majored in architecture, it still can be seen that there is a sense of architect’s mission in **YING Chaojun**’s mind, who is one of the partner architects of **ARCHITECTURE-STUDIO · FRANCE**, the co-responsible and design director of **ARCHITECTURE-STUDIO · CHINA** at present.



This personal interview was covered by the student on Official Master of Cultural Management of the University of Barcelona, with a discussion directing to cultural management in detail of re-presentation of cultural identities reflected on contemporary architecture in China.

During the interview, YING Chaojun emphasized that, the modern architecture, particularly those projects in the field of public service, should play a role representing the city’s image and conveying a certain cultural characteristics. In order to return to architecture itself, his team do not praise architect stars, on the contrast, they respect each other and regard the comprehensiveness as their team’s working ethnic.

To deepen further, YING Chaojun metaphorically regarded architect as a screen director. That is to say, an architect has that responsibility to create a spacial plot. Specifically referring to museums, art galleries, etc., in the field of public projects. These architectural works should provoke visitor’s appreciation to the territorial and historical cultural atmosphere that raised by this architectural space.

About YING Chaojun

- **Birthdate**

1984

- **Educational Background**

architecture major, Dalian University of Technology, China

- **Work Experiences**

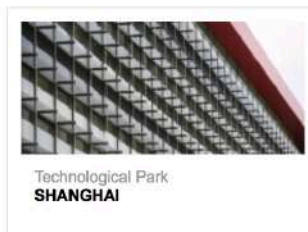
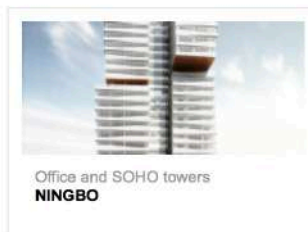
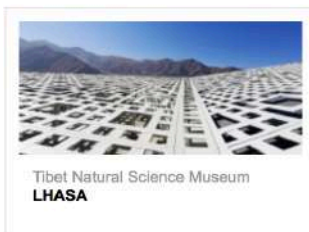
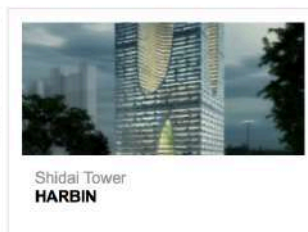
2007- : working on both Architecture-Studio · France¹ and Architecture-Studio · China.

- **Current Position**

one of the partner architects of Architecture-Studio · France.

the co-responsible and design director of Architecture-Studio · China.

- **Representative projects participated in**



About this interview

- **focused objective**
- To complete the discussion directing to cultural management in detail of cultural identities reflected on contemporary architecture in China.
- To deepen two characteristic cases in detail:
 - XIE ZHILIU AND CHEN PEIQIU ART GALLERY, Shanghai, China
 - TIBET NATURAL SCIENCE MUSEUM, Lhasa, China

◆ BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THESE TWO CASES



Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu Art Gallery, Shanghai, China.²

²http://www.architecture-studio.fr/en/projects/shpg30/xie_zhiliu_and_chen_peiqiu_art_gallery.html

The basic function of this gallery is to exhibit Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu's traditional Chinese landscape paintings. Besides the complement of this functional necessity, the architectural design of this gallery has two key features presented the spirit of Chinese aesthetics reflected by the imagination and spacial sensation of Chinese landscape painting:

1. Using a *line drawing* of traditional Chinese painting to set a tone of this architecture in an implicated form.
2. Demonstrating a serie of multiple ranges of hills in traditional Chinese painting and filament lines baed on traditional Chinese gardens to design its spacial framework.
3. Planting wickers at the bank to express the miss to Xie Zhiliu. For "Willow" and "stay" harmony "fold" on parting in the willow and retain in Chinese tradition.

Tibet Natural Science Museum, Lhasa, China.³



³ http://www.architecture-studio.fr/en/projects/lhs1/tibet_natural_science_museum.html

In general, the architectural design of Tibet Natural Science Museum express the concept of “ the first modern architecture in Tibet over the earth under the Nature”. Its basic function is to be a large-scale public centre. From the perspective of its cultural expression, there are three main considerations:

1. The whole architecture with color white symbolizes Tibet’s mascot Hada, which represents the warmest welcome guests from afar.
2. The exterior facade with a serie of the revolution of graphic pattern of traditional Tibetan symbols to emphasize Tibetan territorial religious culture.
3. The design of distinguished penetration of natural sun lights to experience the unique sunlights in Tibet, and show the admiration to the powerless Nature.

RELATED REFERENCE

- Exhibition of Architecture-studio·China:
MISSION TRANS-MISSIONS 2017 / 05 / 09 - 2017 / 06 / 24,
Shanghai
<http://www.architecture-studio.fr/en/events/exhibitions/>
- XIE Zhiliu. *Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy Identification*. Shanghai. 2007.
- ARCHITECTURE-STUDIO · CHINA. *la ville écologique, contributions pour une architecture durable*. AntePrima/MARK China. 2012.
- ARCHITECTURE-STUDIO · CHINA. *50 projects 50 ideas*. Tianjin. 2014.

Lead-in

Q1. Do you value much conveying your architectural design concept to the public? Or we can say, you think highly of the interactive dialogs between you and the public?

Y : *“Surely, I value much conveying my architectural design concept to the public. And its true, that I think highly of the interactive dialogs between the public and I. Also as you have told, The essence of this kind of interactive dialogs could also be regarded as one of my principal appeals to the architectural design.”*

→ **Guide of question 1&2**

According to the pressed news, during the last years, the interviewee has been organizing and participating a series of public affairs as temporary expositions, conferences, book publishing about his and his team's architectural conception. As well, personally he also is the member of various popular sharing sessions in the field of architecture.

For this reason, it has reason to think about that YING Chaojun may value much the dialogs between himself and the public to convey his architectural concepts.

Q2. The essence of this kind of interactive dialogs could also be regarded as one of your principal appeals to the architectural design?

-->Guide of question 3

Q3. How could you and your team contribute to completing this “ silent dialog ” among architectures itself and visitors? Could you take Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu Art Gallery as an example?

Continuing the second question, in order to provoke visitors' emotion estimated by the architecture itself and its surrounding natural and cultural environment, the architect is supposed to transforming from the vocal conversation between himself and the visitors to a “silent conversation” between the architecture itself and the visitors. In this sense, the instance of Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu Art Gallery is a quite representative case to discuss.

In the case of Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu Art Gallery

-->Guide of question 4

As an immersive artistic conception of Chinese landscape painting provoked, Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu Art Gallery uses a kind of *line drawing* mode to present the architecture itself in a general sense. Nevertheless, in traditional Chinese landscape painting, there are certain symbolic factors of landscape with metonymies to express the painters' noble personalities and best wishes.

Q4. When designing the gallery had your team determined a certain or vital cultural elements to set the tone of this gallery? Like using a line drawing?

Y : “Frankly, as an architect, I think the architecture itself has its own life, it’s living! The architectural materials and the space, even also including the shape of its figuration, natural lights and natural landscape, all of these can be seen as an interactive dialogs with visitors, it’s not only a symbol !

From a beginning of the design of architecture, our architects focus on its function and necessities first not still yet arrive the phase of its cultural-concept design. Because above all, it is architecture, it need to be utilized and be adaptable to its territory. Then, based on the basic appeal, we will do further investigation and creative design. This further investigation is also links to the territorial environment and its surrounding environment. (The above opinions) is from our architects’ consideration. We don’t treat architecture as a dead body, neither we’d like to make conversation with visitors from individual symbols, or we want to dig out some culture to express some informations. They are both exist. The architecture itself is a kind of status of multi-dimension!

When Referring to the Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu Art Gallery, we think about more its relation between the Chinese traditional landscape painting and the dialog, connection and the reaction of Chinese traditional culture. For this reason, the architecture there conveys its cultural attribute naturally.

Y : We use the plain style in traditional Chinese landscape painting. The Chinese landscape painting and the presentation of multiple ranges of hills is its architectural theme. There are five skylines, meanwhile these five skylines have its functional necessities as five different exhibition halls. Then about filament lines, based on these filament lines, we'd hope that visitors could through one and one another door openings finally arrive at the bank of lake to feel this multiple ranges of filament lines.

At that time, I went to the city Suzhou to visit Suzhou Museum and also visited many traditional Chinese gardens in Suzhou. That is because, in Chinese traditional landscape painting, there are an account of spacial levels, which are closely connected to the gardens (the spacial level of traditional Chinese gardens). You have to experience the fundamental spacial and framing sensation that traditional Chinese gardens have created and provoked. Then what we should do is to make a revolution to change it into a modern architecture. We hope that visitors could feel a sense of Chinese spacial sensation when they are wandering.”



- **In the case of Tibet Natural Science Museum**

Q5. In the case of Tibet Natural Science Museum, which is focused more on the presentation of details as the decoration of facade design by combining several cultural and religious factors. So under which consideration did you and your team design it?

→Guide of question 5

Compared with the case of Xie Zhiliu and Chen Peiqiu Art Gallery, Tibet Natural Science Museum attractively presents its cultural elements in detail as selecting Chinese knots and mandala pattern for the facade design.

Q6. From the perspective of its function, “natural science” and “religion and culture” is a combination with quite conceptual difference, So how did you and your team balanced them?

→Guide of question 6

In a narrow sense, “natural science” orients a scientific modern future, on the contrast, “religion and culture” focus es more on the customs and historical past. Hereby, it’s possible that exits a conceptual difficulty to express appropriate architectural concept.

Y : “In the field of cultural conception, in a general sense, the whole building is like a white Hada, this is also the reason why this building uses wholly the color white. We hope this symbolized white Hada can give an impression as welcoming guests from afar. The complement of this kind of architecture shouldn’t not only serve for the local people, but also for the whole Chinese, even for the whole world.

Then, considering the concrete exterior structure, we hope to bring in much more natural sun lights. Because the natural sun lights in Tibet is extremely special! Because it is the nearest place far from the sky as its sea level. The light sensation of sun lights and ultraviolet light is totally different.

Actually, It’s quite unique as the first modern building in Tibet. So we’d like to lead as much sun lights as possible. Nevertheless, it cannot introduce too much lights in an architecture, so we have to use some shelter to protect it. In this way, we designed a facade.

Maybe, Tibet Natural Science Museum itself conveys a certain symbol. The Symbol of its facade is derived from Tibet local totems with our abstracted and simplified design. (in this sense) Tibet Natural Science Museum has its linguistic symbol. However, at the same time, the interior space, sun lights, including the distinguished necessities of lights also has it own values, and even the final effects of a complement of interactive dialogs.



After the investigation of Tibet culture, we found that there are many lucky knots in Tibet. Out of this wish, we expected that this architecture can also bring luckiness. In consequence, we chose this element to design a series of evolution of graphic pattern. This different evolution reflected on the graphic pattern depends on the necessity of different transmissivity of lights. This is our responsibility of the requirement on both functional necessity and cultural expression. The utilization of architectural function is same importante as the cultural expression. This is the point that I want to emphasize, the architecture is not only a figurative thing, instead, it's a quite comprehensive work.

Moreover, its main conceptual design is, a comparatively long(horizontally) architecture. Its altitude is not quite high. So our general architectural concept is to be modest. Its surrounding environment is nestled by thousands mountains. Tibet arouses a general sensation that the natural environment in Tibet is powerless. All buildings (in Tibet) are mainly comparatively low, the highest building in Tibet is the Potala Palace. Thus, in the whole Lhasa and Tibet, the architecture there gives you a feeling that the natural environment conquests the vital position.

Tibet Natural Science Museum as the first modern architecture in Tibet, it cannot be higher than the Potala Palace because of its religious influence. So that, this museum cannot be too high. From this point, we set the basic tone of this architecture as, under the nature and over the earth being close to people, this is the first point, from the aspect of architectural dimension and the general size.



And then, although this museum is called natural science museum, it's more like a comprehensive museum. "Tibet Natural Science Museum", the geographic term "Tibet" has already contained very identical cultural symbols, which indicates that you should express Tibet itself. Then, the understanding and definition of "Tibet Natural Science Museum" is more about the penetration of its natural sun lights. We mainly hope that visitors can feel more natural spaces in this architecture, including the surrounding natural landscape. In spite of that, it has comparatively lower necessity of its exhibitions. Simply, it need an enough public space. In this sense, this museum, this space conveys more territorial culture and expression, which can finally communicate with the near Tibet's natural environment. Since the exhibition presented in this museum have already demonstrated Tibet's natural landscape. We actually hope to create a continuously interactive experiences among exhibition salas and the main hall: we designed an accurate spacial visiting guide. In the main hall, you can see the shadow of Tibet totem under the sun lights. And at that moment you are personally immersive in Tibet particularly. "

L: so it not a natural science museum in a narrow sense?

Y : "no, as an architect, we devote more expectation to this building. We hope this architecture can be a cultural representative in the history of modern architecture in Tibet."

Q7. “during the revolution on the process of cultural civilization, how do you opinion the paper played by the architecture itself in China?”

Y : “ first of all, whichever museum, gallery or architecture, it should present a city’s (territorial) characteristics. From the perspective of general figure, it should convey a certain cultural character. At the same time, it should fulfill the functional necessity which appeals to the humanity. Furthermore, it should guide people to have a new lifestyle. ”

