SHUI

cultural center

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LOCATION GUIZHOU



Shui Cultural Center

The Cultural Center is a gateway to ***Sandu County, the land of the Shui***, one of the ethnic minority groups in China. Despite being few in number, the Shui people have still retained their own language, together with their unique system of pictograms. The whole projects reminds to their traditions and long history and architects' aim was to translate Shui's ancient rituals into the design.

The design approach starts from a deep analysis of Shui symbols and of their unique pictograms, transposed into the building on many layers; architects opted for a more subtle approach, where the symbols are revealed through the building and re-invented in a more contemporary way. The building, through all its details, aims to tell a story, instead of reproducing these symbols in their original connotation.





Traditional Shui ceremonial costume with silver head piece

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LOCATION SANDU COUNTY

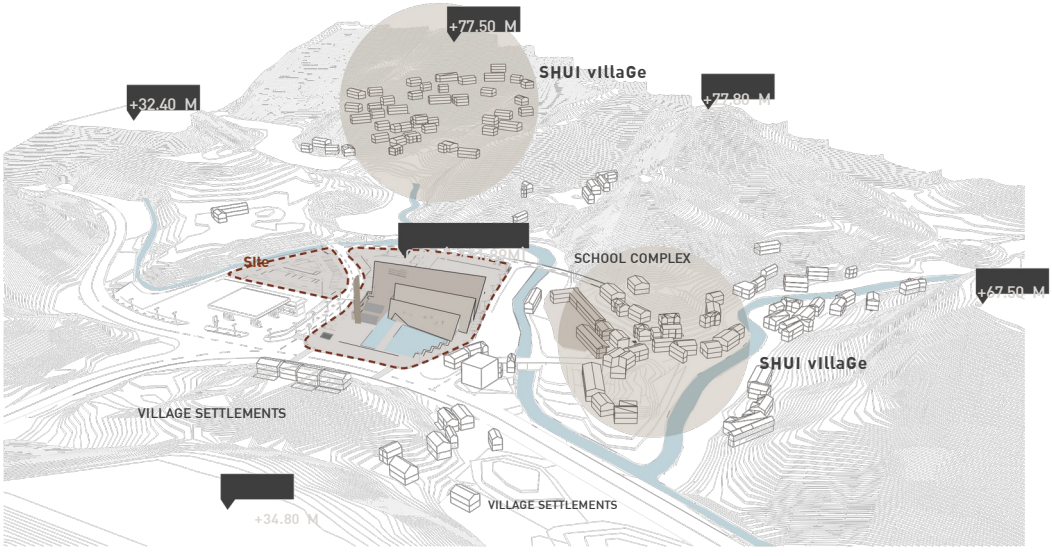




The Cultural Center opens a dialogue with the local ecosystem, a complex multidimensional one; as the first center dedicated to Shui ethnic minority in the area, the building's goal in sustainability has been developed after a careful consideration of the geographical system, ethnic culture and traditions, and the local economic development. Considering the complex terrain, diverse ethnic culture and backward economy, the design team aimed for a sustainable working framework focusing on the geographic environment, cultural inheritance and economic development.

In this project sustainability is strictly connected to culture, in order to create a public life sharing framework of multi-ethnic geo-community and inherit the genius loci of the local minority culture.

Traditional Shui Mountain Villages

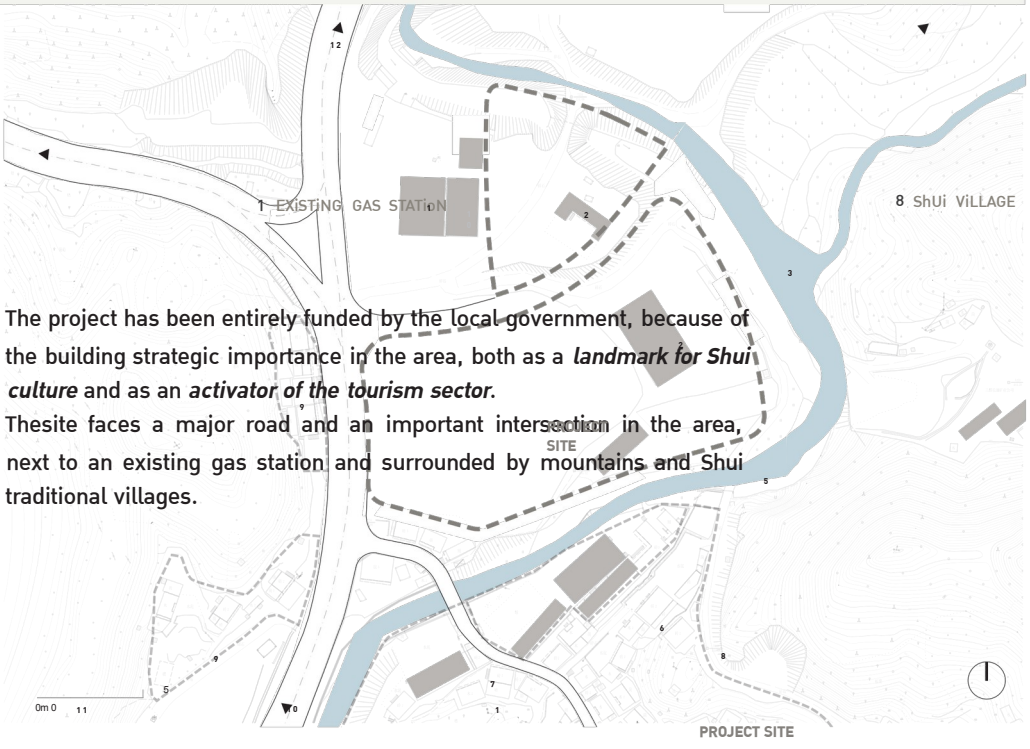


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SITE PLAN (BEFORE)

1 GAS STATioN
2 ShED
3 RiVER
4 MiNiNG CoMPANY
5 hoUSE
6 MiAoLoNG PRiMARY SChooL
7 ViLLAGE CoMMiTTEE
8 ShUi ViLLAGE
9 ViLLAGE SETTLEMENTS
10 To MAiN URBAN AREA
11 To hiGh-SPEED RAiLWAY
12 To FREEWAY
13 ShUi MoUNTAiN ViLLAGE





The project has been entirely funded by the local government, because of the building strategic importance in the area, both as a ***landmark for Shui culture*** and as an ***activator of the tourism sector***.
Thesite faces a major road and an important intersection in the area, next to an existing gas station and surrounded by mountains and Shui traditional villages.

Before construction started

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SITE PLAN (AFTER)

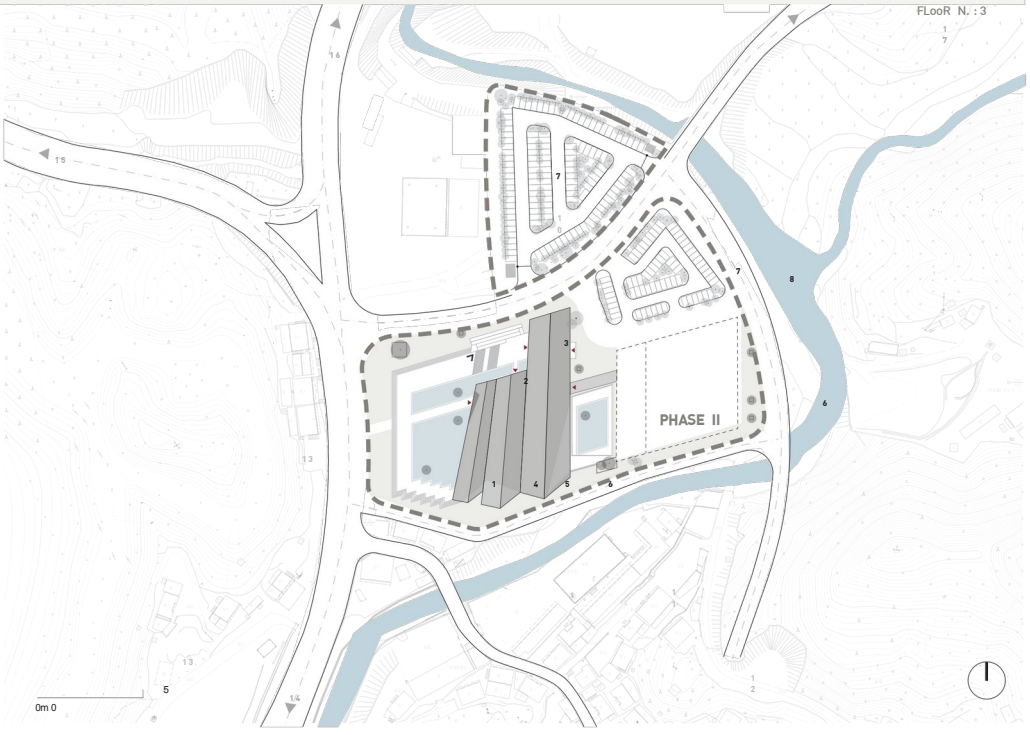
1 WATER SQUARE
2 BRoNzE DRUM ToWER
3 oUTDooR RAMP
4 STRiPE i
5 STRiPE ii
6 STRiPE iii
7 PARKiNG
8 RiVER
10 GAS STATioN
11 SChooL CoMPLEX
12 ShUi ViLLAGE
13 ViLLAGE SETTLEMENTS
14 To MAiN URBAN AREA
15 To hiGh-SPEED RAiLWAY
16 To FREEWAY
17 To ShUi MoUNTAiN ViLLAGE



North-West View

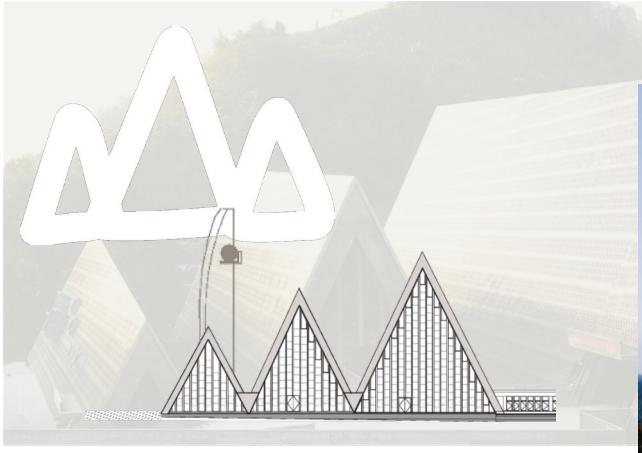
The bronze building and its tower aim to attract the attention of the passers-by; the project built a landmark for local tourism and culture, lifting its popularity and making positive contribution to regional tourism. The three-stripes building constitutes the first phase of the project; a second phase, including a multi-functional hall and restaurant, is under design process and its construction will be determined by government fundraising.

AREA SURFACE: 13,808 SqM
BUiLDiNG SURFACE: 4,223 SqM
MAX hEiGhT: 23 M
ToWER hEiGhT: 30M



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SHAN MEANS MOUNTAIN





The iconic building,s shape, ***three continuous triangles which symbolize the Shui character for 'mountain,,*** connects the project with the local Cong Feng landform, creating a strong visual sign easily recognizable by local people. This shape was born from a long consultation with local people, who aspired to make a 'temple of Shui,, as a unique occasion to see their culture celebrated on a regional level.

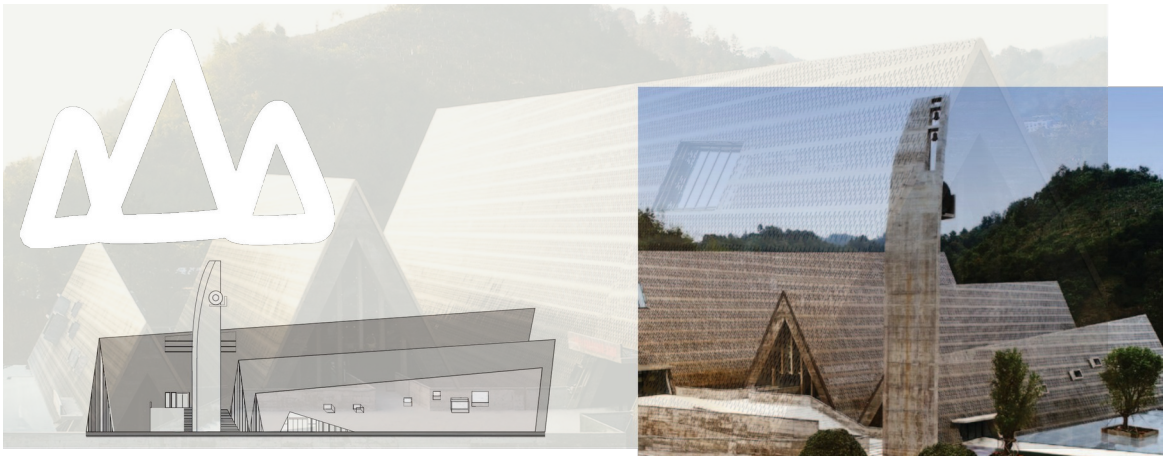
The building in relationship with the mountainous lanscape





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SHAN MEANS MOUNTAIN



The building aims to act on two levels: if on one hand it wants to rebuild Shui identity, on the other aims to be a multifunctional service platform which promotes the development of local tourism.

The building in relationship with the mountainous lanscape





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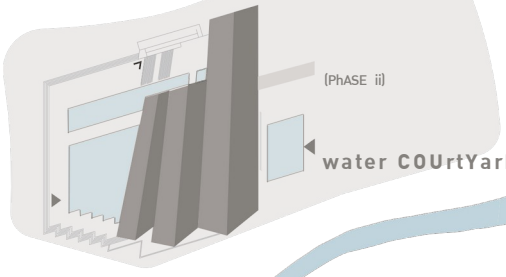
SHUI MEANS WATER



Water square facing the main entrance

Shui means water, which is why this element is so relevant for both the site and project. The site was created by a bend in the river, so it is surrounded by water on three sides. On the other side a water square welcomes the visitors guiding them to the entrance.

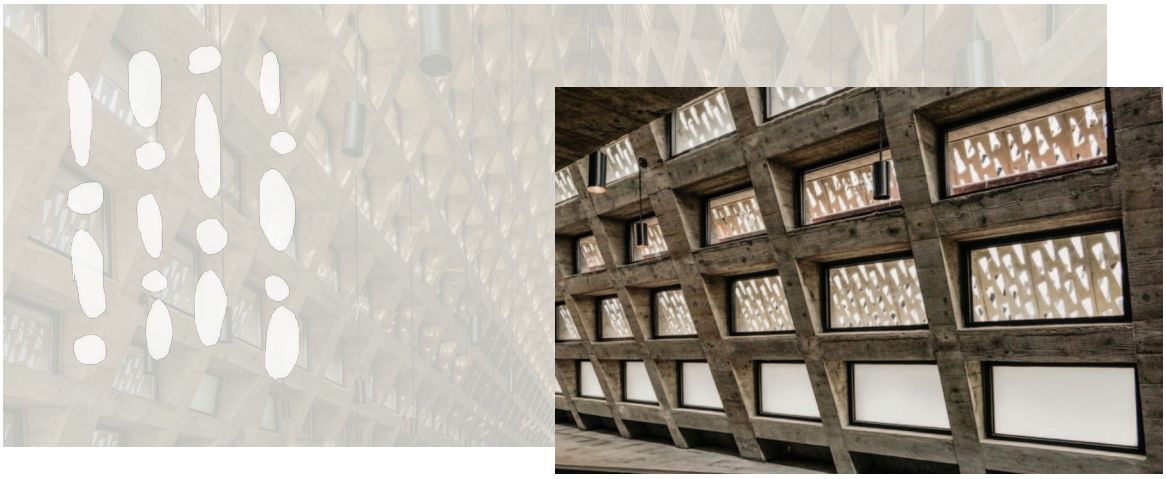
The rain water collection system conveys to the main entrance water square; during rainy season, when the raceway system overflows, the water will flow into the nearby river. In order to cool the interiors architects took advantage of the water square in front of the building and the upwind of the river, to adjust the microclimate.





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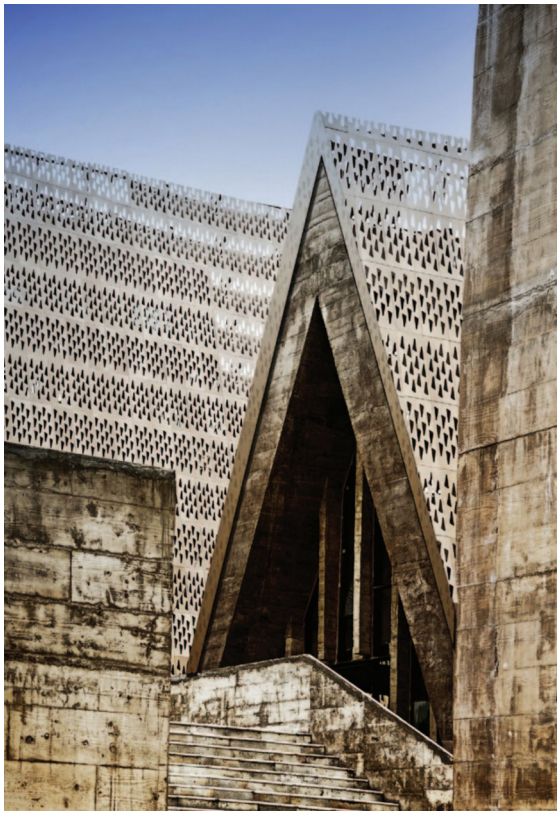
YU MEANS RAIN



The facade pattern brings inside a misty atmosphere

The use of perforated bronze steel plates to cover the building, makes the plates lighter - a thin skin which creates a contrast with the heavy concrete structure - breaking the sunlight to create a dramatic effect once inside. It does not only have an esthetic value, by ***recalling the Shui character for rain***, but the high perforation rate also helps to prevent technological defects on the overall surface texture and to save on materials.

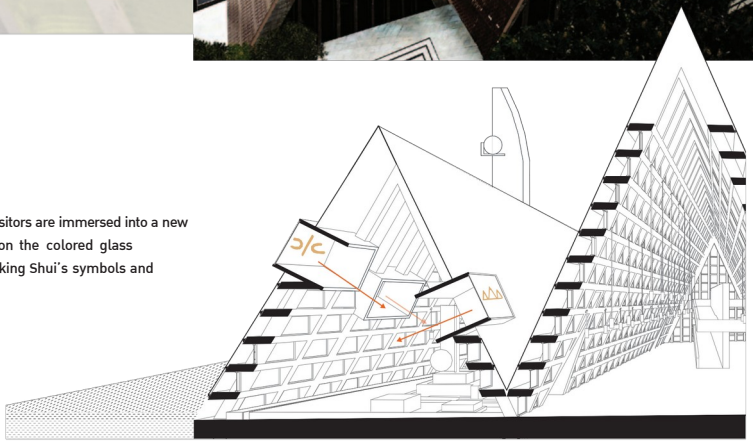




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SHUI PICTOGRAMS





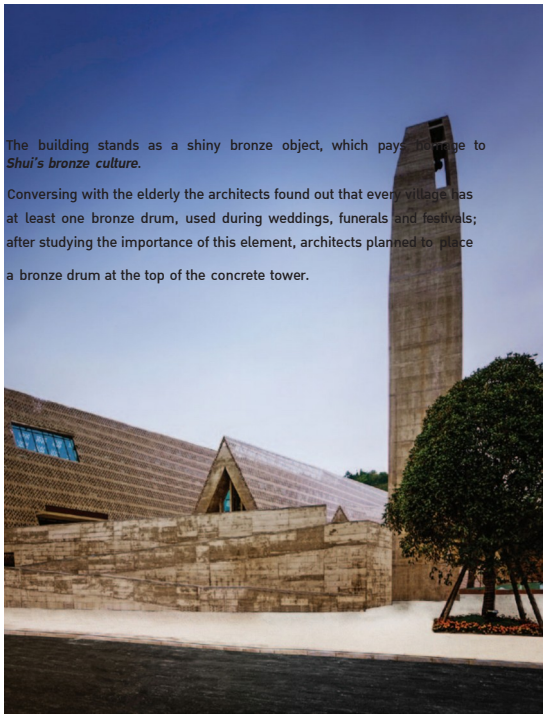
In the first stripe, the so called ritual hall, visitors are immersed into a new scenario, where Shui characters, printed on the colored glass windows, are reflected in the interiors, evoking Shui's symbols and rituals.

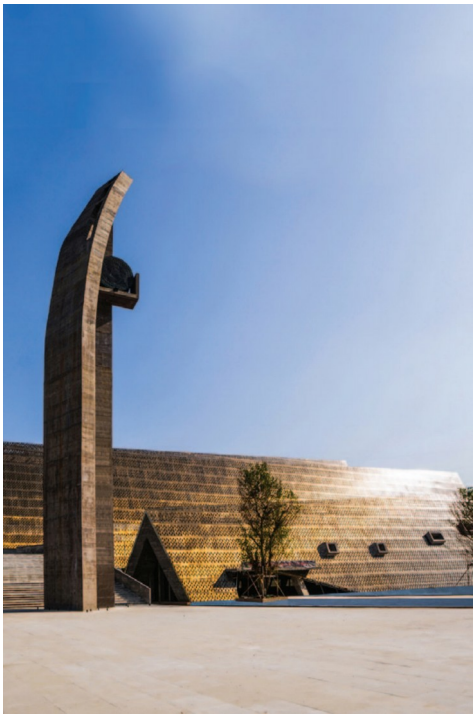


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BRONZE CULTURE







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SHUI ALTAR



The altar is a typical ritualistic element in Shui culture and has a very important historical connotation in this area.

Architects aimed to recreate an holy atmoshpere once inside, able to submerge visitors into Shui's ancestral world, evoking those symbols and rituals related to this unique ethnic minority.

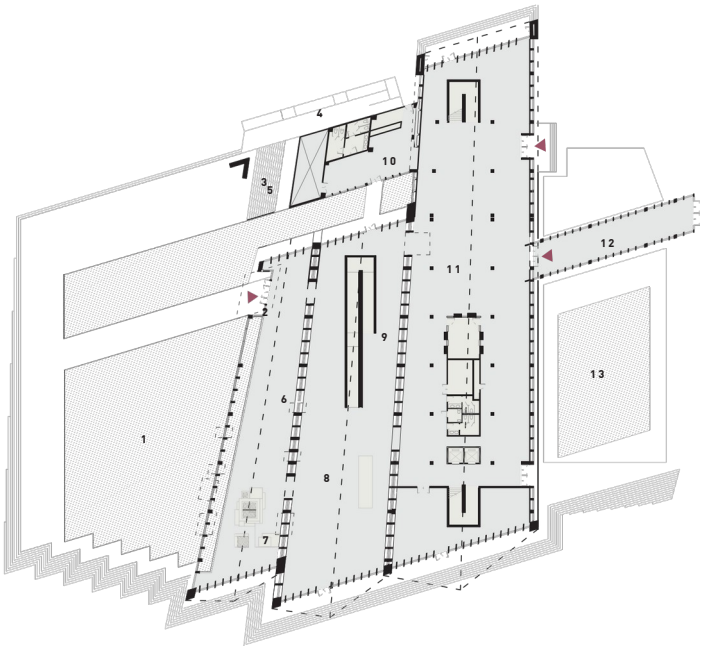




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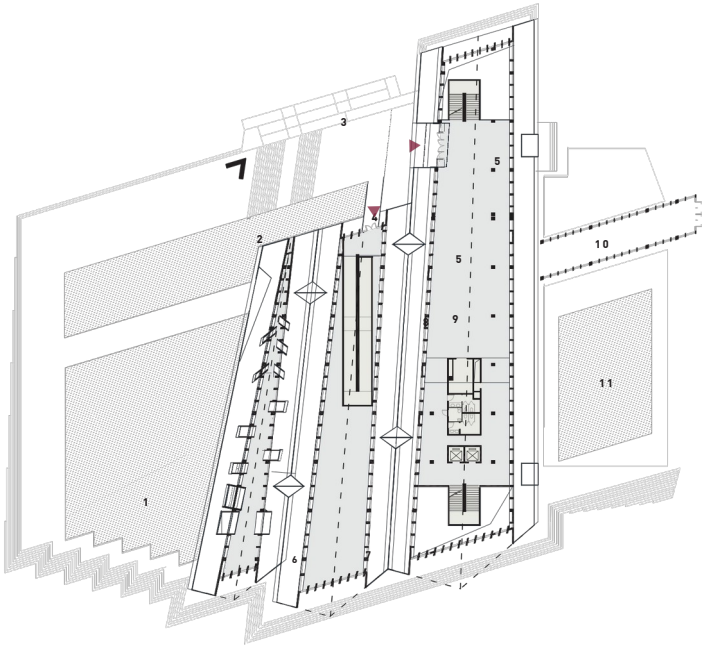
F1

1 WATER SQUARE
2 MAIN ENTRANCE
3 BRONZE DRUM TOWER
4 OUTDOOR RAMP
5 OUTDOOR STAIRCASE TO F2
6 **STRIPE I:** RITUAL HALL
7 ALTAR
8 **STRIPE II:** RECEPTION &EXHIBITION HALL
9 INDOOR RAMP
10 CAFETERIA
11 **STRIPE III:** TOURIST SERVICE HALL
12 TO PHASE II
13 WATER COURT



F2

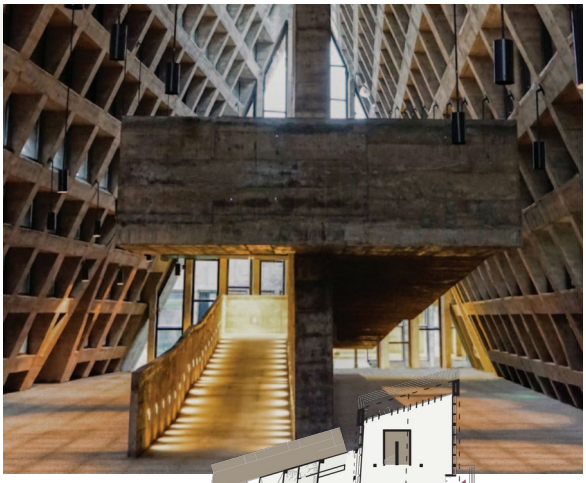
1 WATER SQUARE
2 BRONZE DRUM TOWER
3 OUTDOOR RAMP
4 OUTDOOR STAIRCASE TO F2
5 F2 ENTRANCE
6 **STRIPE I:** RITUAL HALL
7 **STRIPE II:** RECEPTION & EXHIBITION HALL
8 INDOOR RAMP
9 **STRIPE III:** TOURIST SERVICE HALL
10 TO PHASE II
11 WATER COURT





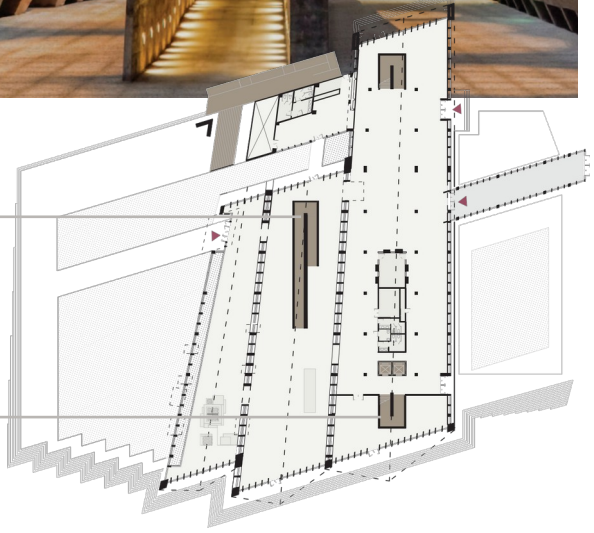
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All the spaces have been designed to be fully accessible; the three floors are connected by elevators and a system of concrete ramps. Far from being accessory elements for the circulation of all users, the ramps occupy a primary role in this project. The theme of 'ascension' acquires great importance in Shui rites and ceremonies; architects decided to use the element of the ramp to transpose this theme into the architecture.





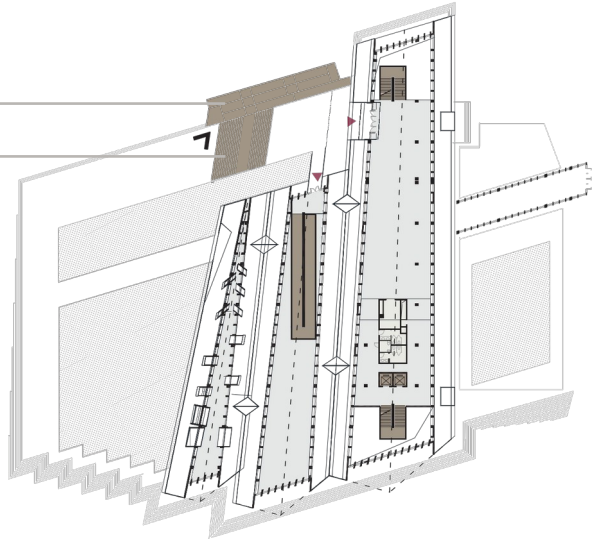
The ***indoor ramp*** becomes the characterizing element of the second stripe; in a space deliberately left empty to host temporary exhibitions and different kind of events, the central ramp becomes the focus and the protagonist of the space.

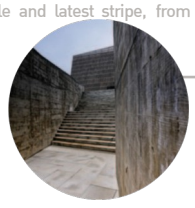






The ***outdoor ramp*** creates a strong visual connection between the building stripes and the tower, allowing to accede the second floor of both the middle and latest stripe, from an elevated square.





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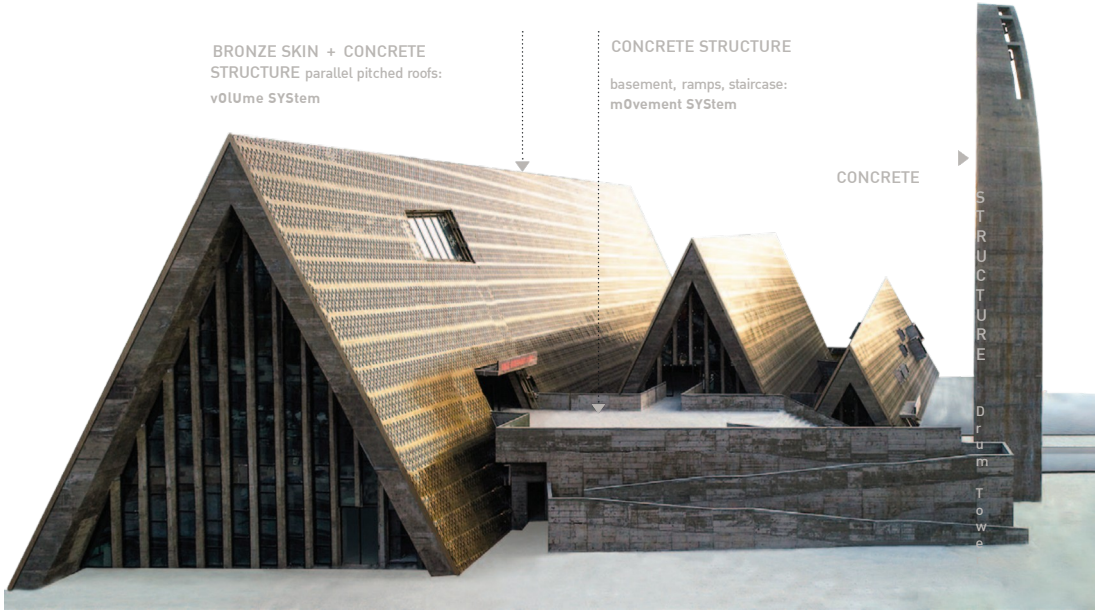
The concrete is marked strongly by a wooden pattern, given by the pine quarterdecks. Pine wood is one of the most common materials in the Sandu area and the contemporary concrete structure echoes the local traditional wooden architecture. Due to the lack of resources and local expertise in concrete architecture, the architects established a whole concrete production process-based matrix, reducing the difficulty in construction for large areas of fair-faced concrete.





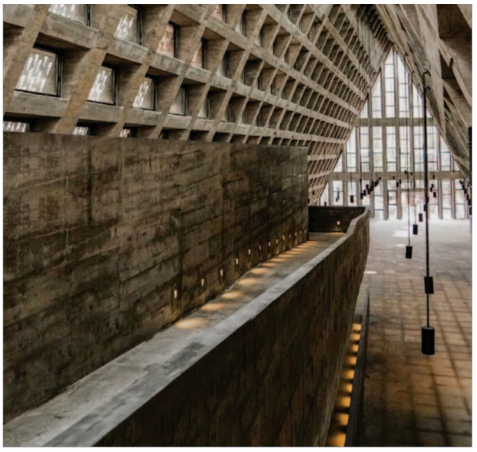


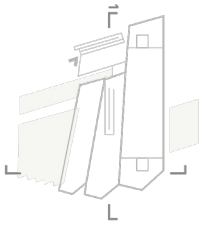


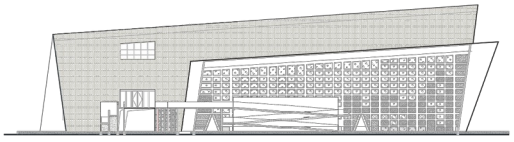


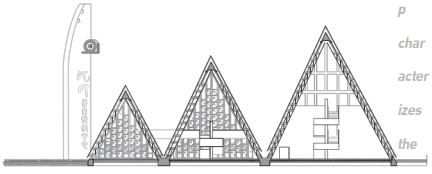
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Every layer of this project tells the story of Shui nationality, shaping a unique ethnic monument through cultural radiation. The buildings becomes a platform for urban public life, providing a commemorative landmark for the area and visiting and consulting services for the visitors. While on one end this building is a celebration of Shui culture, on the other hand architects carefully studied how to approach the references to this particular ethnic minority culture; the final goal was to realize an inclusive cultural center, where the celebration of Shui culture could not be a reason to exclude other minorities, becoming a space able to welcome the events of diverse nationalities.









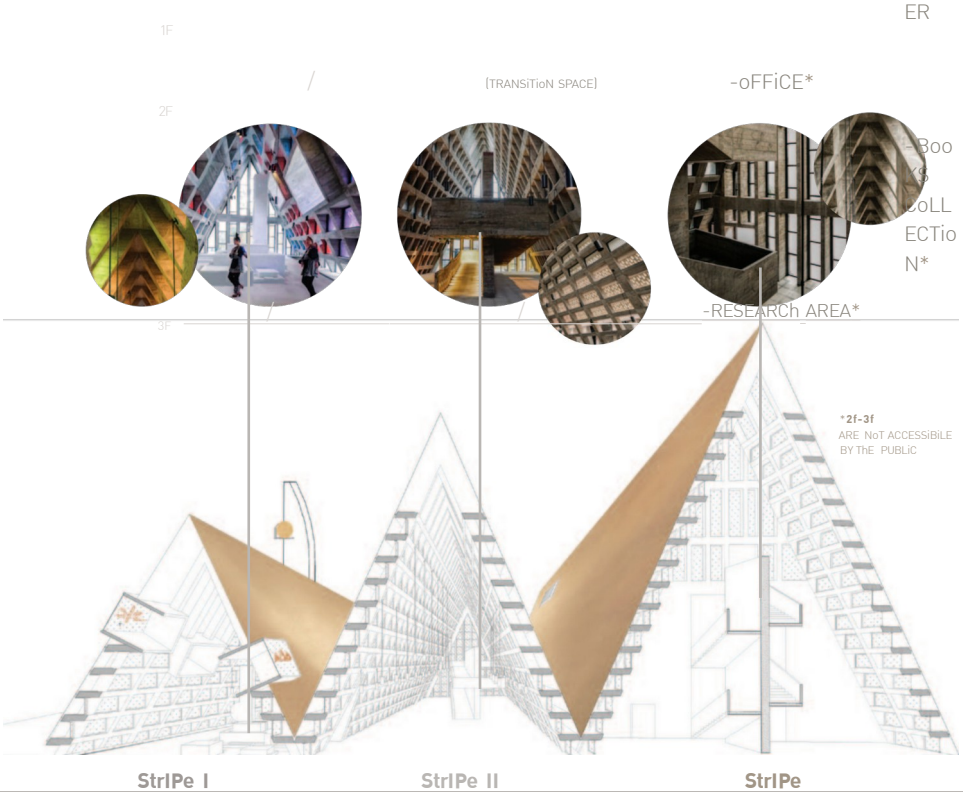
The indoor ramp characterizes the second strip

2



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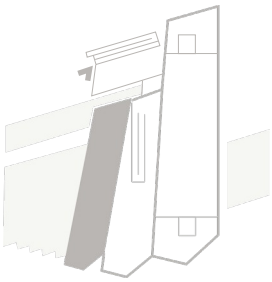
	STRIPE I RiTUAL hALL	STRIPE II RECEPTioN & EXhiBiTioN hALL	STRIPE III ToURiST SERViCE hALL
ATMoSPhERE			
SERViCES			
PUBLiC ACCESS			
PoPULAR hoURS	NooN-EVENiNG SPECIAL EVENTS	MoRNiNG-AFTERNooN dAiLy + SPECIAL EVENTS	MoRNiNG-AFTERNooN dAiLy
PRoGRAM	-WELCoME SPACE -CEREMoNY -EVENTS	-RECEPTioN -EXhiBiTioN	-ViSiToR CENTER -CAFETERiA -ToiLETS -BUSiNESS CENTER



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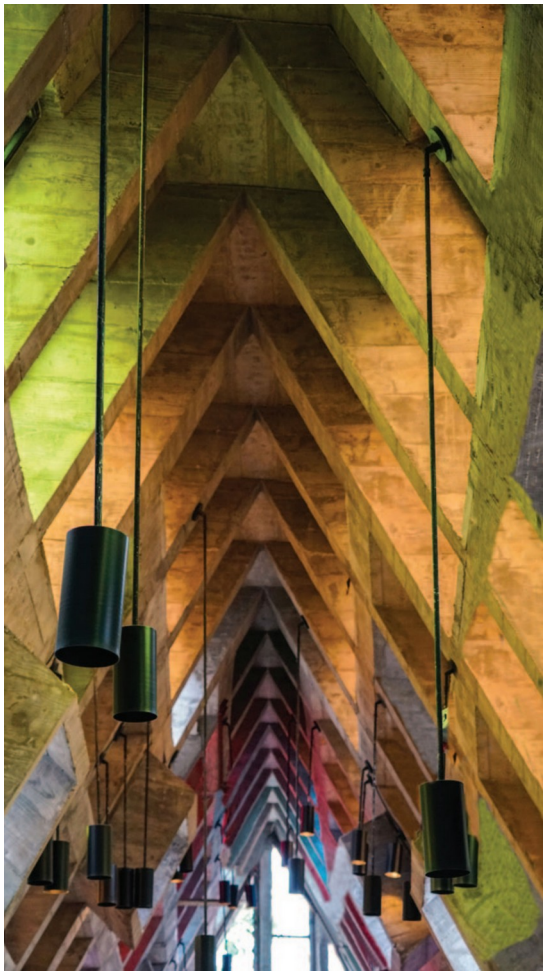
STRIPE I BATIK-INSPRED

The first is the ritual hall, which with its sharp edges, strong colors and narrow space aims to create a strong first impression on visitors, who immediately step into a different dimension. The very dense coloured atmosphere reminds of Shui's typial batik (fabrics) pattern and colours: Song Shuixian, a local artisan, introduced to the architects the ancient art of 'horse tail' embroidery fabrics, which take years to be completed and are part of the traditional wedding trousseau; the characteristic patterns inspired architects to design how the light infiltrates the first hall, creating a colorful atmosphere.





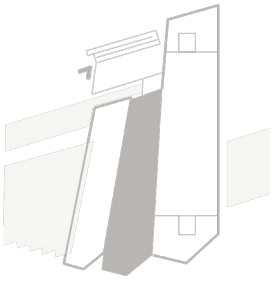




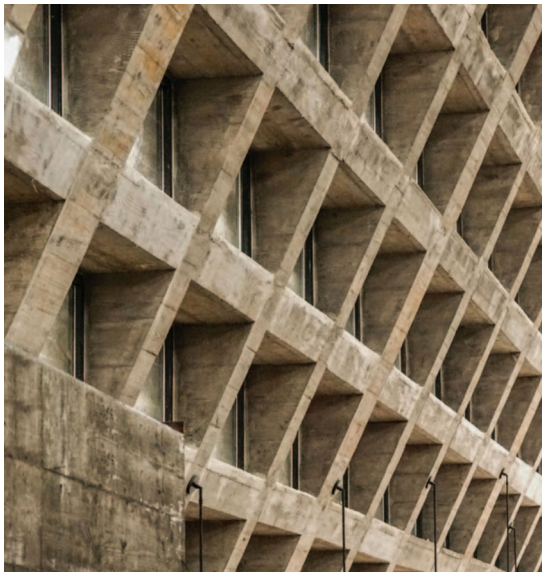
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STRIPE II MISTY ATMOSPHERE

The second stripe still keeps the sharp roof but welcomes visitors with less dramatic tones and serves as cultural exhibition and reception hall. This stripe, even with less dramatic tones, also aims to create a misty and immersive atmosphere, with its strong architectural impact.



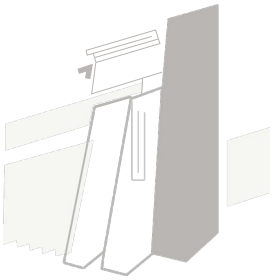




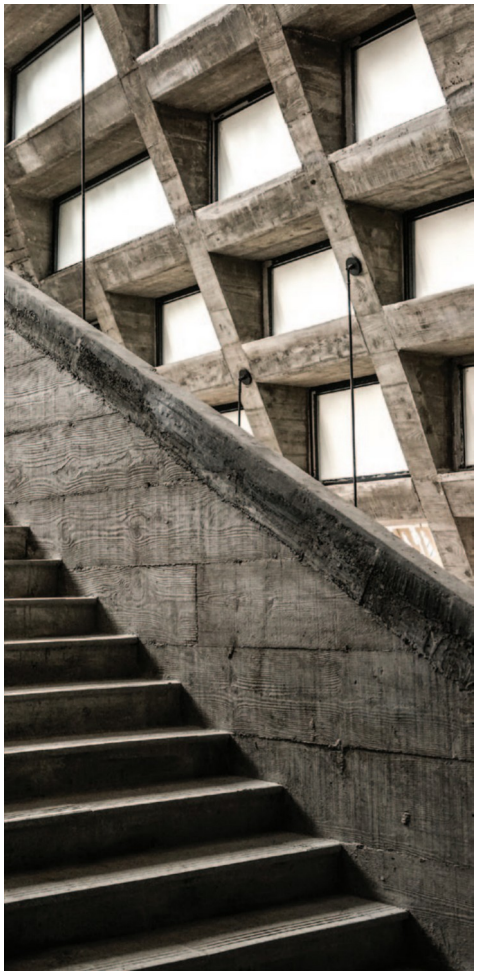


West-line Studio

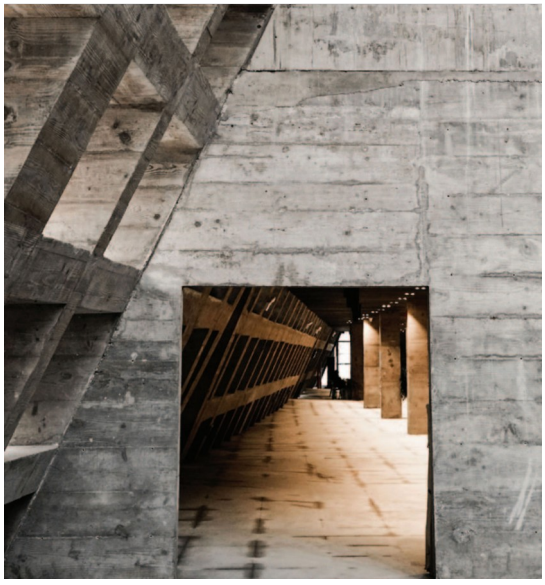
STRIPE III SERVICE FUNCTION



The third stripe still plays with the architectural shape and lighting environment to complete the visitors' ritual journey.
This stripe has three floors; at the ground level we lose the pitch roof to find a more conventional space that includes all the main functions: visitor and service center, restrooms, business center and an upstairs office area. On the third floor is displayed a small collection of Shui's books.







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