

Columbia University
GSAPP
Spring 2014
Advanced Studio VI

Critics:

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with Zoe Florence

Future of the Museum in China: Constructing Culture: Alternative Forms

Beijing, China



OCT Design Museum, Shenzhen, China Architect: Studio Pei-Zhu

“In fact, only the museum gives the observer the opportunity to differentiate between old and new, past and present. For museums are the repositories of historical memory where also images and things are kept and shown that have meanwhile gone out of fashion, that have become old and outdated. In this respect only the museum can serve as the site of systematic historical comparison that enables us to see with our own eyes what is different, new, and contemporary.”¹

Boris Groys

¹ Boris Groys quoted from his book *Art Power*(Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008)

“...the task for China is to develop a new model of the museum that can do away with the illusion of historicization as a way of displacing its internal crisis. Cultural atonement and revolutionary consciousness are hardly different when it comes to the specific mechanics of history making. The more important task is to develop a new system of cultural preservation, one with room for winners and losers, for those who make a momentary splash only to disappear completely and for others who are forgotten by history only to be rediscovered. Such a system would allow countless temporaries to come together into a dynamic contemporary, moving ever onward.”²

Pi Li, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing

Museum Boom:

Concurrent with China’s rapid urbanization (see below), and as part of its soft power initiative, is a museum building boom which is producing an average of approximately 100 new museums a year across the country.³ In 2011, an astonishing 395 museums were built across China.⁴ These often iconic structures help define newly planned government and civic centers, CBD’s and cultural centers, symbolizing the importance of culture in the identity of a new China. With this proliferation of new museums, are there trends that can be identified that might mark a shift in how the museum project is defined? Are there new roles – socially, culturally, politically - that the museum is playing? And what new architectural forms and spatial organizations are being invented to accommodate these new ambitions? The aim of the studio is to conceptualize what the museum of the future might be, in China, and around the world.

“Museums have become one of the last remaining sites for openly accessible and democratic urban experience, where individuals may seek to understand their history, their environment, their cultural opportunities, and themselves.”⁵

Charles Saumarez-Smith

The Museum in Contemporary China:

With a relatively short history of museum culture (just over 100 years – see below for history), and one that has experienced drastic fluctuations in popularity and acceptance, how can the role of the museum in contemporary China be defined? Is it defined as part of a historical continuum of past museum culture? Or is it a radical break from this tumultuous past? Are museums in China today more products of a globalized consumer culture or are they inventions reflecting local conditions, traditions and desires? Or both? The studio will address these questions and consider how the context in China might challenge conventional roles of the museum.

² Pi Li quote from *Artforum*, Summer 2010.

³ <http://www.cnngo.com/shanghai/visit/china-museum-number-climbs-077115>

⁴ according to Chen Jianming, a vice chairman of the Chinese Society of Museums

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/24/arts/design/china-focuses-on-museums-and-more>

⁵ Charles Saumarez-Smith quoted in Andrew McClellan’s, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008): p. 255.

*"I think there is a new, maybe even oblivious, confidence in the burgeoning cultural territories like Asia, whose potential we should really theorize, as opposed to exporting our own hand-wringing. Across Asia, there is currently incredible museum activity. But as soon as you introduce European or American curators into the discussion, they all say the museum is in crisis. So in terms of globalization, what's so interesting right now is perhaps the very fact that the discourse is not globalized: Part of the world can be pessimistic and stuck, and another part can be optimistic, perhaps even silly at times, but still thrusting forward in an interesting way. I think we have to be very careful not to export our anxieties or export our impasses."*⁶

Rem Koolhaas

In recent years, the Chinese government has undertaken ambitious plans to increase the number of museums throughout China to equal international levels. This push also aligns with China's soft power initiatives. According to China News Service, there are 3,020 museums in China,⁷ or one museum for every 441,000 people. Only cities like Beijing and Shanghai were comparable to developed countries which had one museum for every 100,000 to 200,000 people.⁸ Guo Xiaoling, director of Capital Museum, asserts that China would need at least 43,000 museums in the future to catch up with the world standard.⁹ Though no small feat, the Chinese government has been investing mightily. Between 2008 and 2011, the Chinese government invested around RMB 8 billion (\$1.3 billion USD) on museums and memorial halls.¹⁰ This investment was not only for new structures and renovation of existing ones but also for support in operations, which enabled many museums to offer free admission. More than 1,800 Chinese museums do not charge admission,¹¹ representing about 60 percent of the total.

As China strives towards equaling or surpassing its global counterparts in museums per capita, an opportunity exists to reconsider the museum project. As is often found in the history of the museum, new types and forms were developed during times of expansion and increased public popularity. China is certainly experiencing both a boom in new museums and in popularity. It is a critical moment to assess the museum, and its potential role in contemporary China. With all of the obvious benefits of more museums made available to the public, building them hastily has its consequences. Like much of the new "good-intentioned" civic construction in China, the asserted effort to prioritize quantity results in many museums being conceived and constructed without collection, mission, or curatorial leadership, creating empty, though at times iconic, shells, relying solely on an easily consumable visual image or blatant symbolism. Is it more important right now for every city to possess iconic museums then to have a clear idea on their roles and missions? Perhaps. What is clear from this is that the role of architecture is paramount in defining, or at least projecting, the importance the museum plays in embodying a civic ambition.

"Here the ideal is a socially engaged museum, embodying civic values in an impressive building that combines symbolism and accessibility. The

⁶ Rem Koolhaas in interview with Tim Griffin, *Artforum*, Summer 2010.

⁷ <http://travel.cnn.com/shanghai/visit/china-museum-number-climbs-077115>

⁸ <http://www.elginism.com/20060520/a-new-era-of-great-museums/>

⁹ Quoted from Charade Woo's essay "A Place for Contemporary Art" (Columbia University: 2012)

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/22/content_15360433.htm

*history of museum architecture is one of attempts to accommodate both viewpoints and the pressures that tip the balance one way or the other.*¹²

Andrew McClellan

Art Capital:

Paralleling the museum boom in China is the astonishing rise of its art market that has fueled the proliferation of new commercial art galleries, art districts, art villages, auction houses and private museums in many of the major cities. According to the Ministry of Culture, China's art market in 2011 reached 210.8 billion yuan (\$33.2 billion), 30 percent of the global art market share.¹³ Purchases by Chinese collectors accounted for approximately a fifth of Christie's global sales in 2011. And, according to Sotheby, mainland buyers lifted its sales in Asia to nearly \$960 million in 2011, up 47% from 2010. Market growth also catapulted three of China's own auction houses into the world's top five behind Christie's and Sotheby's.¹⁴

The expansion and growth of the art market in China has clearly shifted global art market trends. We are seeing global galleries like Pace opening in Beijing and Larry Gagosian and White Cube opening up in Hong Kong to name a few. Both Christies and Sotheby's are investing heavily in Asia markets to expand their global reach and market control. However, due to current political and economic policies, foreign auction houses are prohibited in operating independently in Mainland China. Therefore they also set up facilities in Hong Kong to tap into the Mainland market. In the future, however, foreign auction houses could gain approval to operate in special designated 'free ports' that have special tax exemptions and more liberal policies. One such 'free port' is being planned for Beijing at the international airport (see below). Clearly the ascent of the art market has positioned China at a global nexus. This coupled with the ambitious plans to construct an average of 100 museums a year guarantees that China will have a critical role in shaping the world's future cultural landscape.

Project:

¹² McClellan, Andrew. *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008): p. 56.

¹³ From an article by Liao Danlin in Global Times, July 5, 2012.

¹⁴ <http://www.jingdaily.com/auction-news-christies-looks-to-beijing-as-poly-looks-to-new-york/9265/>

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Nature Inspired Design

Beijing, China

1. Cave and Nest

The earliest habitable typologies of mankind came from natural inspiration. The change from living in natural caves to living in built nests marks the leap of human architectural progression from passive to active. The cave and the nest are the two most primitive spatial typologies, which have been retained and developed along with the growth of human civilization.



Ex: cave



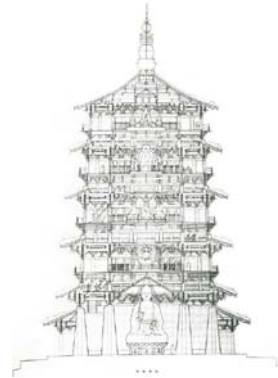
Ex: nest

Historically, Eastern architectural construction methods, such as what is found in China and Japan, are inspired by the nest. This is especially seen in their wooden structural systems, where the construction is an aggregation of many small pieces. This is contrasted with Western architecture, which is influenced by the cave into a solid system of construction with a monolithic appearance. The wooden structure system of Eastern architecture makes the building light, clear, non geometric, inaccurate, and temporary. While Western architecture is heavy, solid, geometric, accurate, and permanent. This contrast can also be seen in traditional artwork, Eastern painting is based on less concise movements, and abstract philosophies, where as Western painting is based on more realistic portrayals and figurative philosophies.

In Contemporary architecture the cave and nest are still present, whether intentionally or un-intentionally designed. This can be found in aggregative or monolithic archetypes. This is a reflection of its original nature and intent, rather than pure aesthetics.



Ex: Portchester castle, England



Ex: Tower, China

2. Course objective

Cave and nest are most primitive architectural typologies, which are inspired by nature. How can such natural typologies bring inspiration to today's architectural creation? This is what the course aims to explore through three diverse architectural scenarios.

3. Course description

The first few weeks consist of research involving contemporary examples of cave and nest. Each example will be analyzed for their success and failures of light, sound, air, material, etc. Followed by physical studies to demonstrate key characteristics of cave and nest from your research. From this research, you choose from four projects with different site conditions: urban, traditional, and natural. Each site has its own unique program reflecting contemporary architecture in China. The expected outcome of this studio is to develop a design proposal that is inspired by nature; Through a process of research, drawings, and physical studies (overall massing studies and partial models to express light, material, and details), meanwhile dealing with various contextual conditions in China.



Ex: Exhibition of Models from Peter Zumthor

4. Design deliverables

1)Case study

Listing typical architectures of cave and nest from modern architecture(2-3 for each), analyzing the success or failure in terms of light, air, sound, material... Using model (partial section) to demonstrate key characters of cave and nest from your understanding.

2)Architecture of cave and nest

Below are four projects from different areas in China, you can choose either one from them, to do site analysis, conceptual design, detail design, design representation, please see attached program for more details.

3)Models and drawings

- 1 Site plan
- 2 Overall section
- 3 Overall massing model
- 4 Partial model to express light, material, details

5. Schedule: (Preliminary)

Jan 22	Studio Introduction
Jan 24	Pin-up 1: Case study, analysis of some successful architecture
Jan29	Pin-up 2: Case study, process of the model making or sketches
Jan 31	Visit 1:
Feb 10	Pin-up 3: case study final
Feb 12	Pin-up 4 – site analysis + building concepts
Feb 14	Visit 2:
Feb24	Pin-up 5 - building concepts Museum
Feb 26	Visit 3:
March 8	Kinne Trip
March14	Midterm review – conceptual building proposals
March 16-23	Spring Break
March 24	Pin-up 6
March 31	Pin-up 7
April 7	3/4 Review
April 14	Pin-up 8
May 5	Final Review

Project 1: Art Performing Center of Dali

1. Project Name

Art Performing Center of Dali

2. Site Location

Dali, Yunnan Province , China

3. Site Planning Requirements

Total area: 10,000 sqm,

Total site area: 11,359 sqm,

Public space: 2,300 sqm,

Height restriction of the building is ≤ 18 meters

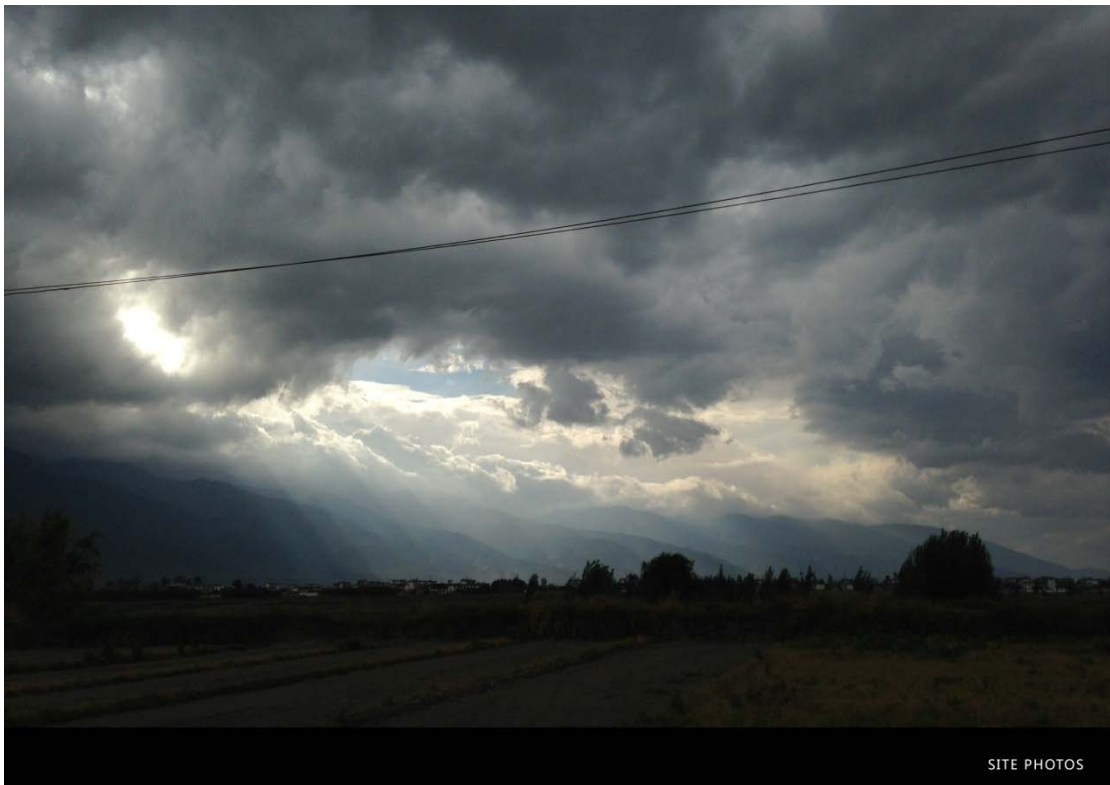
4. Description

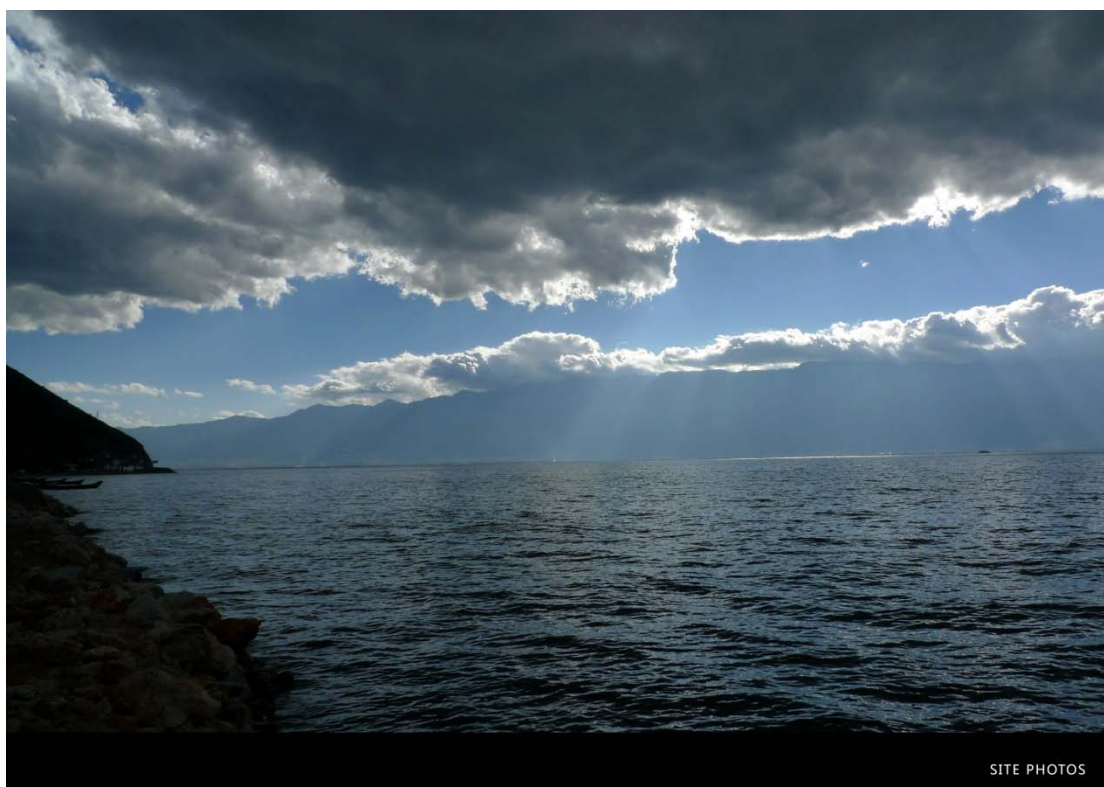
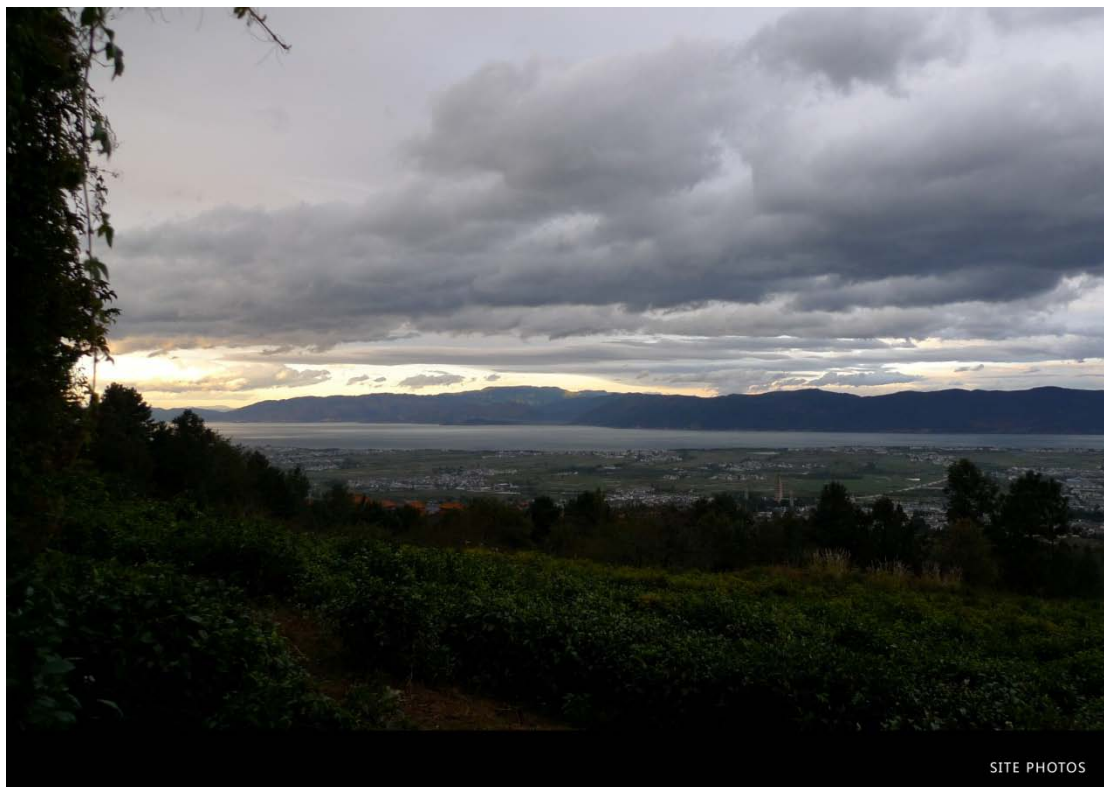
Located on the outskirts of the Old City area of Dali, the site is a mid-point between the Cangshan Mountain and Erhai Lake. Entrance should be situated on the East side of site since this will become a public park space and is possible for landscape design. The climate of Dali is temperate all year round with rains in the spring and summer seasons, thus lots of exterior space is encouraged. Situated near an old city but still located between two major natural features (mountain and lake), the site becomes a very important influence on the design. Climatic, cultural, and natural influences should be taken into consideration during the design approach.

5. Proposed Functions:

Theater	Area(sqm)	Description
Theater	1,000 seats	This theater is more black box open ended design, rather than traditional
Actors village	2,000	Dressing rooms, warm up areas, lounges, and other facilities
Tea houses	400	Small rooms to drink tea and watch performances from
Cafe	500	Cafe to be used for people visiting the theater or during
Lobby	900	Ticketing, coat check, waiting area, and bathrooms
Amphitheater	1,500	Outdoor performance space and public plaza area
Entry plaza	800	







Project 2: Shijingshan District Cultural Center

1. Project Name

Shijingshan district cultural center

2. Site Location

Shijingshan district, Beijing, China

3. Site Planning Requirements

Total area: 15,864 sqm,

Total construction usable area: 8,811 sqm,

Public space: 7,053 sqm,

FAR ≤ 3.0 ,

Building density $\leq 40\%$,

Height restriction of the building is ≤ 60 meters,

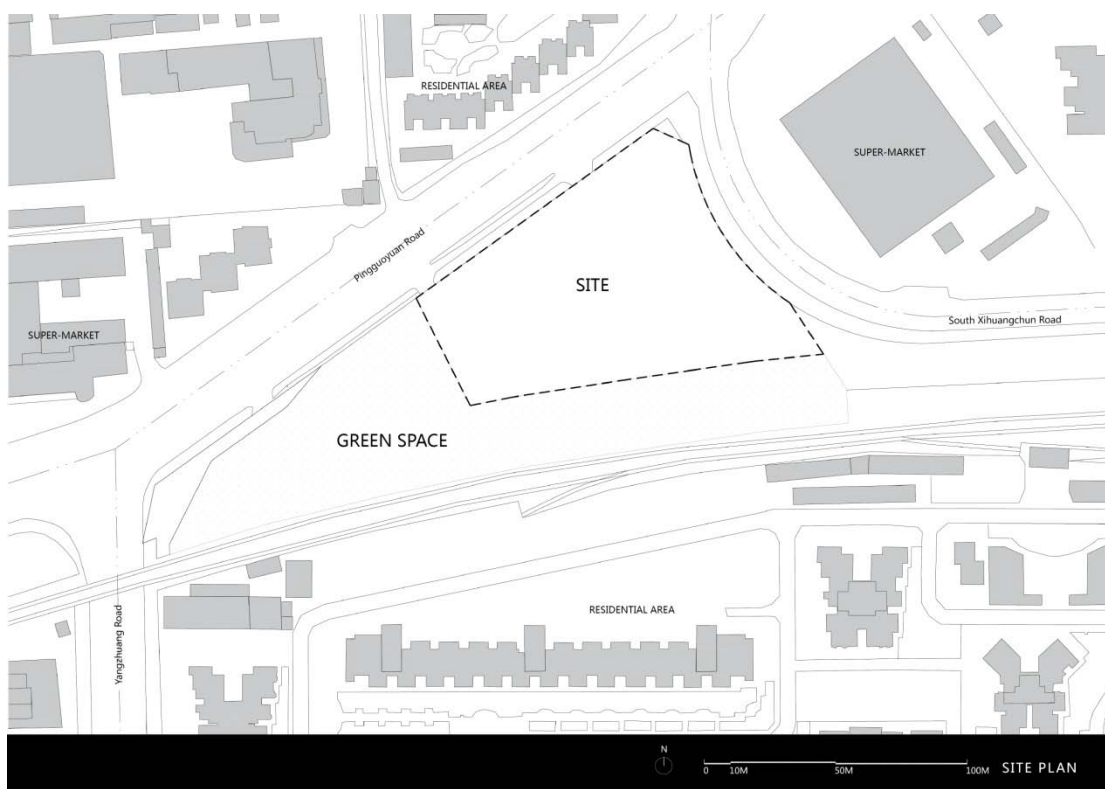
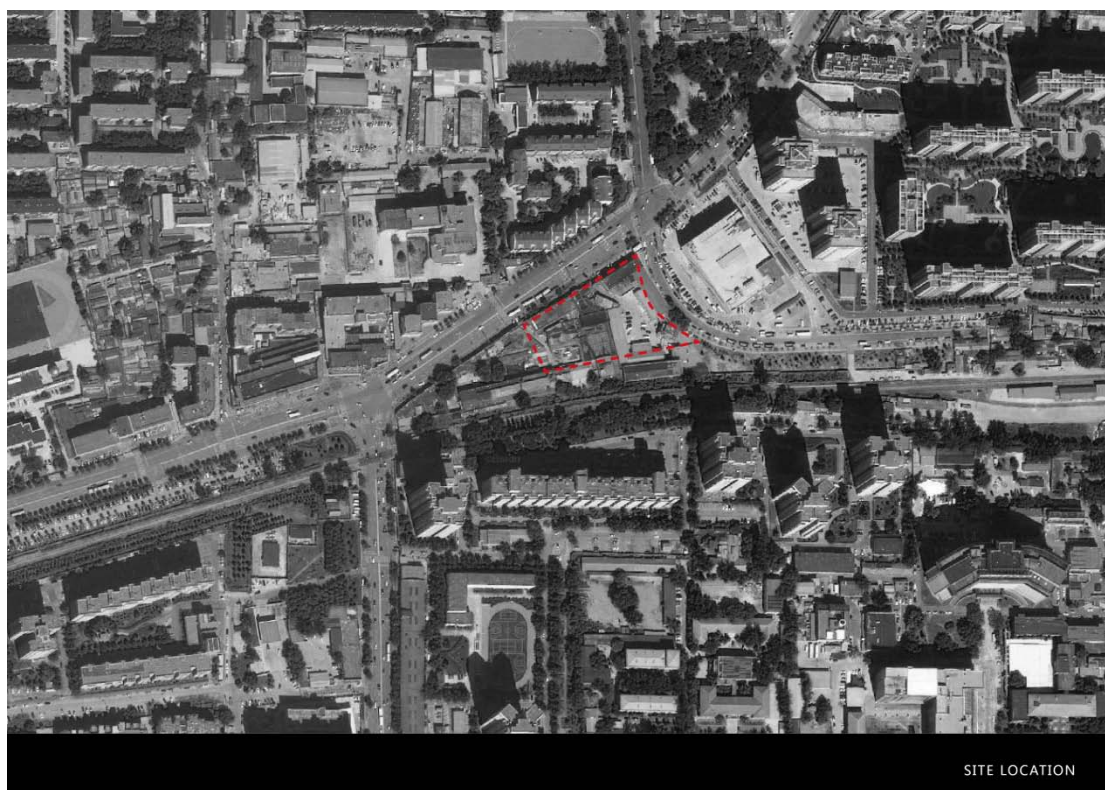
Greening rate $\geq 25\%$

4. Description

Located in a western district of Beijing, the site is an urban context, yet close enough to the mountains and river on the west. The fast development of the capital city of Beijing, is the context of this site location, yet not being in the center of the city so thus it is situated geographically and culturally in between the urban and nature. Beijing's climate Ranges between cold winters and hot summers. The Culture center should incorporate this balance between city and nature, and cold and hot climates with in the design approach.

5. Proposed Functions:

Culture Center	Area(sqm)	Description
Community Training Center	8,000	Art studios, Music Studio, Dance training center, and other class
Media Center	2,000	Display rooms, Archiving, and Storage
Museum	6,000	Large exhibition hall, galleries, storage, and management offices
Fitness Center	7,000	Basketball court, swimming pool, fitness center, class rooms, and
Cinema	3,000	300 seat cinema, four 250 seat cinema, four 170 seat cinema,
Commercial	2,000	Book store, gift shop, and cafe



Project 3: Xingyi International Conference Center

1. Project Name

Xingyi International Conference Center and Hotel

2. Site Location

Xingyi, Guizhou, China

3. Site Planning Requirements

Total area:

Conference center: 20,000 sqm

Hotel: 25,000 sqm (five-star standard)

4. Description

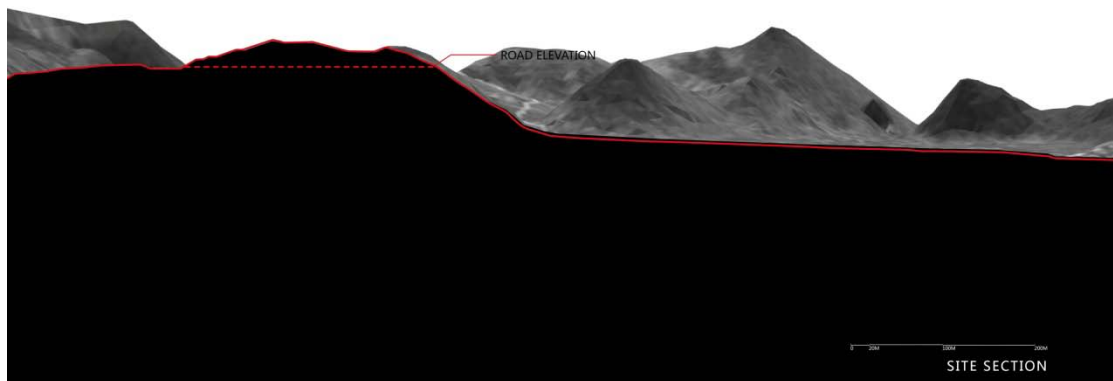
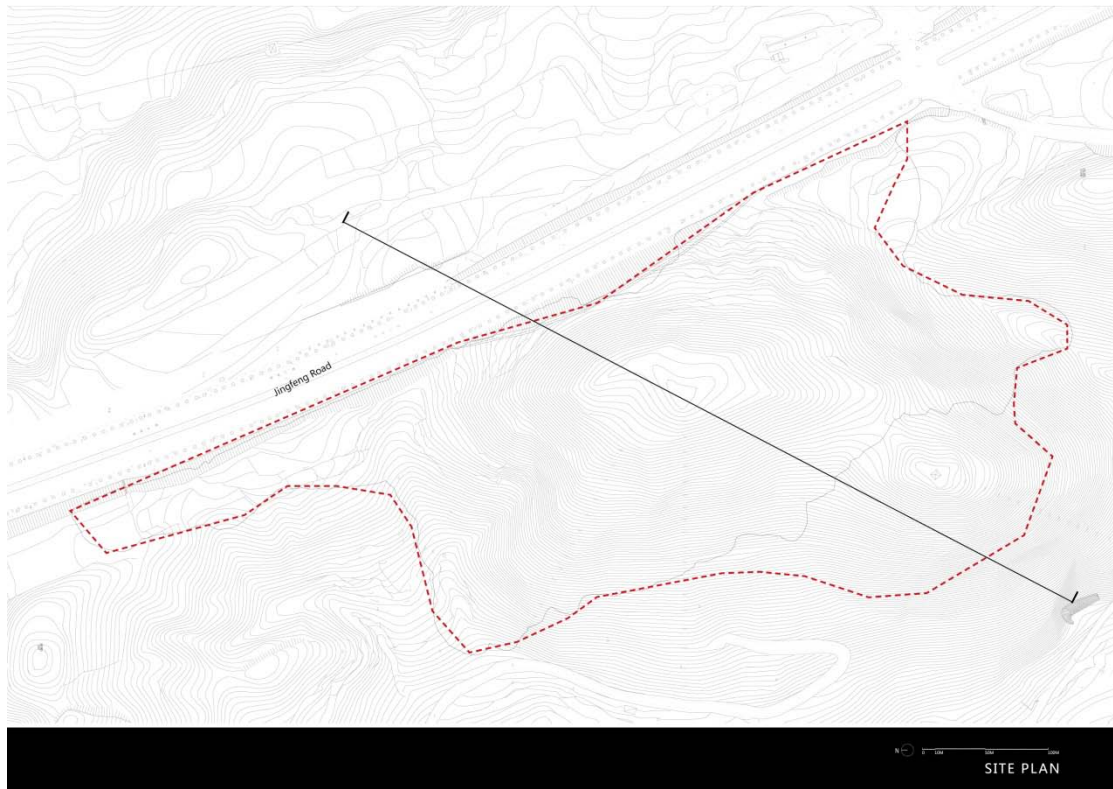
The site location is between the small city of Xingyi and a famous mountainous tourist spot, with the biggest Karst landform in the world. The site is in a natural setting, perched on top of a hill surrounded by the unique landscape. The climate in Xingyi is mild, subtropical and humid climate. The Conference center should take into consideration this beauty of the natural landscape and being the only building in such a site.

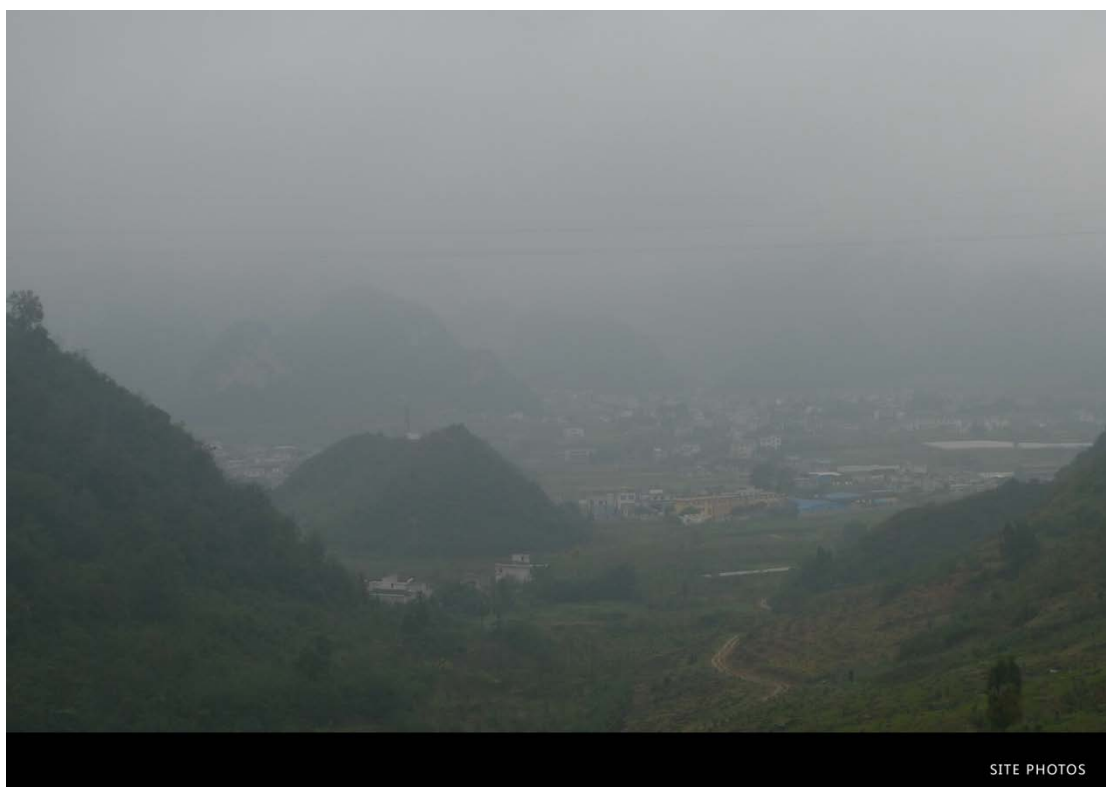
5. Proposed Functions:

Conference Center	Area(sqm)	Number
Conference hall for 1,000 people	1,500	1
Mid-size meeting room for 80-120 people	200	8
Small-size meeting room for 20-50 people	100	16
Ballroom	500	4
Exhibition hall	100	12
Luxury club	300	1
Theater	1,500	1
Multifunction hall	1,000	1
Restaurant(one Asian, one Western)	500	2
Business center	150	1
Information center	100	1
Cafe	300	1
VIP reception	300	1
Lobby	300	1

Hotel	Area(sqm)	Description
Lobby	1,000	Lounge and check-in areas
Rooms	20,000	Suite, Double, and single rooms
Spa	1,000	
2 Restaurants	1,000 each	
Recreation Facilities	1,000	Gym, pool, and lounge









SITE PHOTOS



SITE PHOTOS

Project 4: Lhasa Cultural Experience Hotel

1. Project Name

Lhasa cultural experience hotel

2. Site Location

Lhasa, Tibet, China

3. Site Planning Requirements

Total Area: 10,000 sqm;

Site area: 8,173 sqm;

FAR: 1.3;

Greening rate: 45%;

Height restriction of the building along the street is ≤ 10 meters, inner space is ≤ 12 meters;

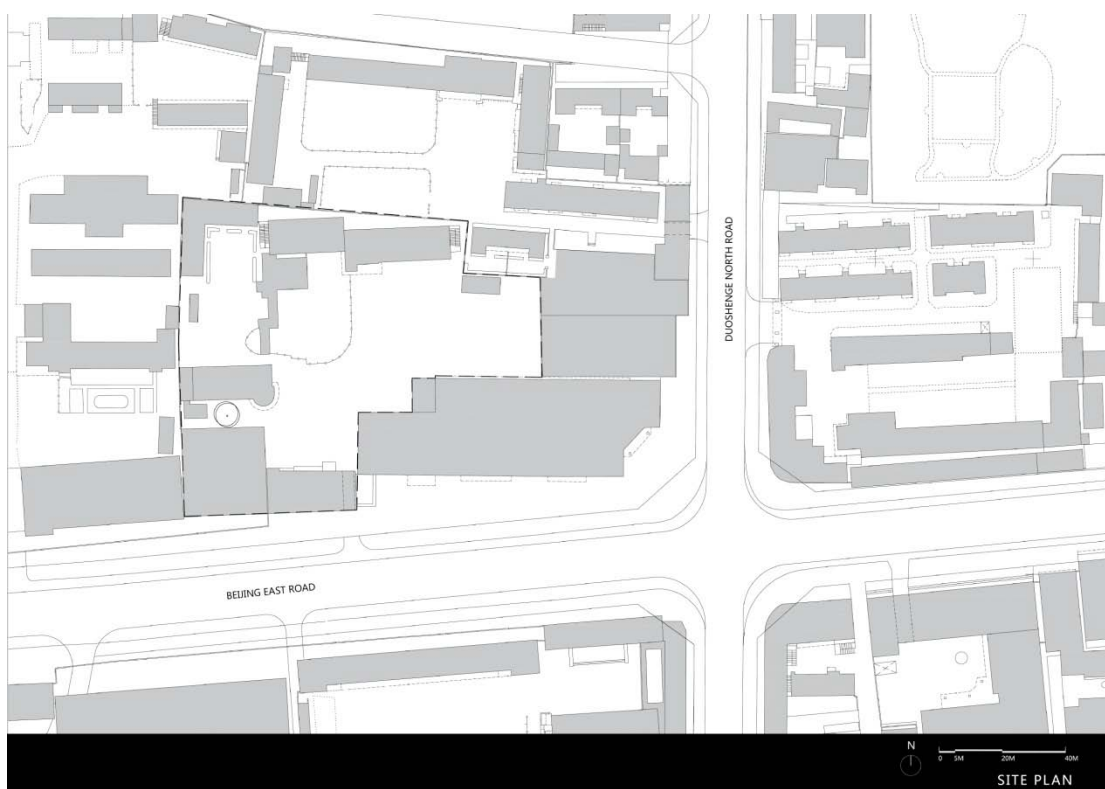
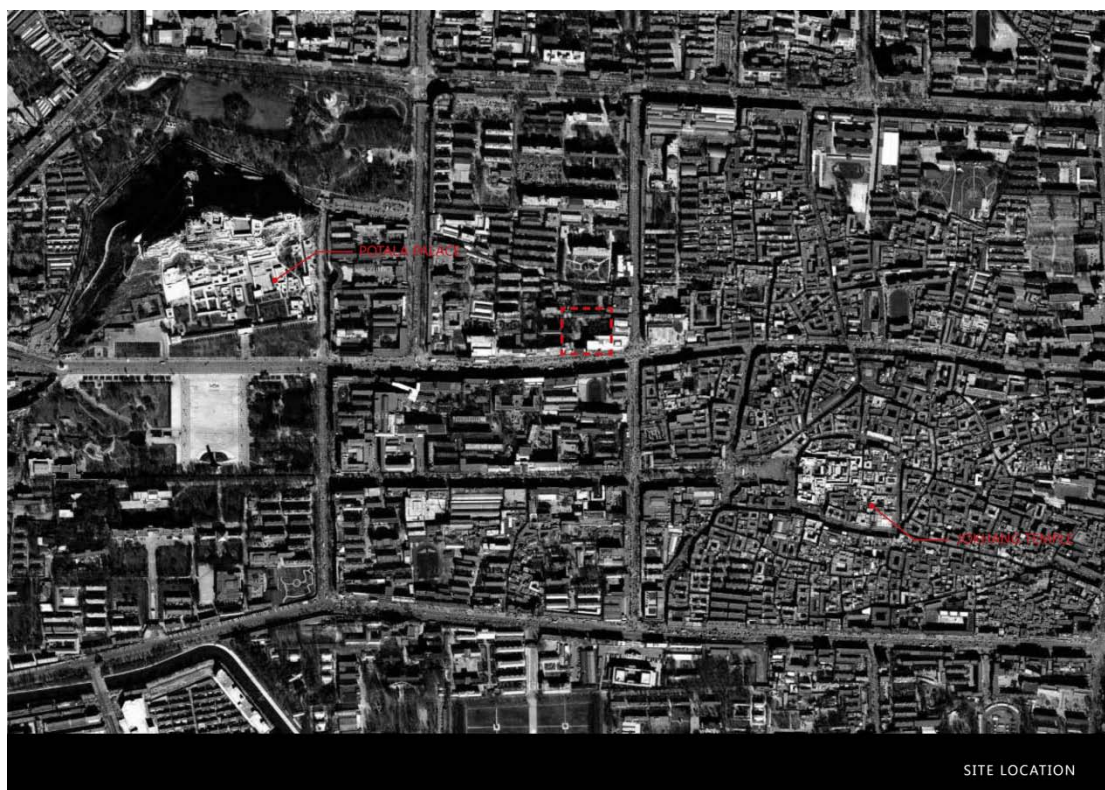
There is an old tree to be kept.

4. Description

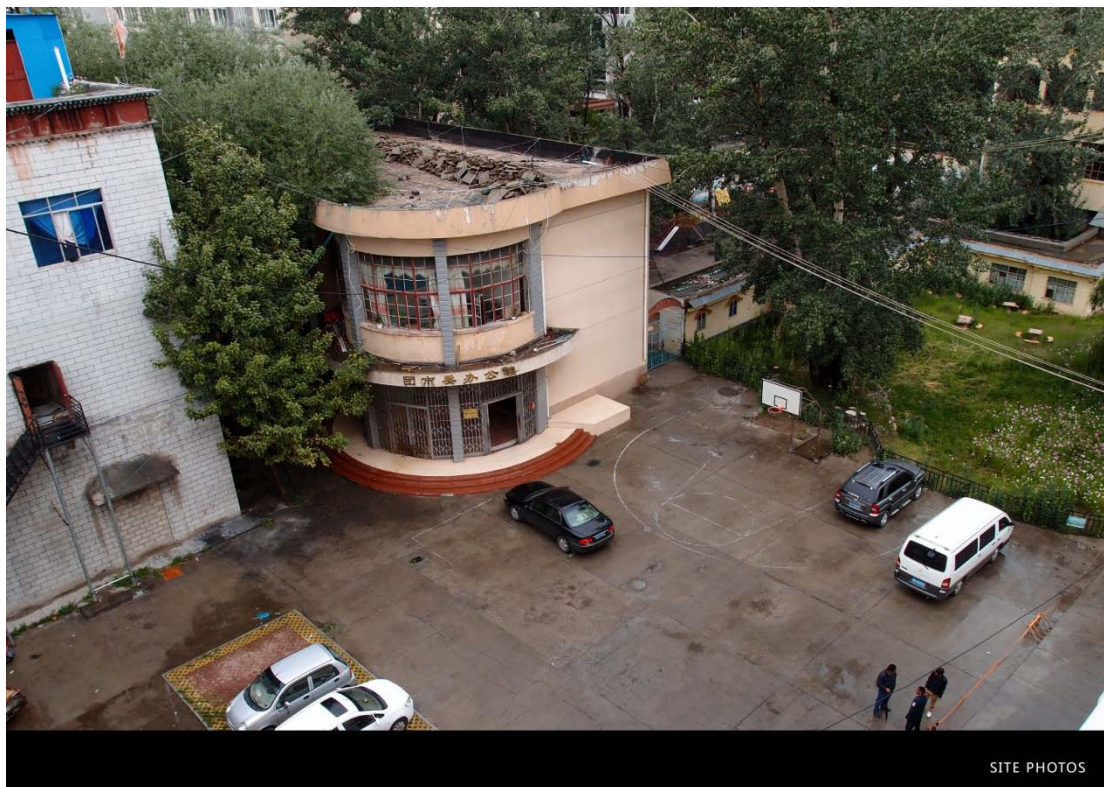
Located in the central area of Lhasa city, in-between the famous tourist spot Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple. This site is a sensitive because of the strong architectural presence of the old Tibetan city. The climate in Tibet is harsh and it has influenced traditional architectural styles to be heavy, dense and constructed mostly out of stone. The hotel should take into consideration the formidable climate and traditional site context. The objective for guests visiting this hotel is to experience Tibetan traditional culture and Tibetan medicine during their stay.

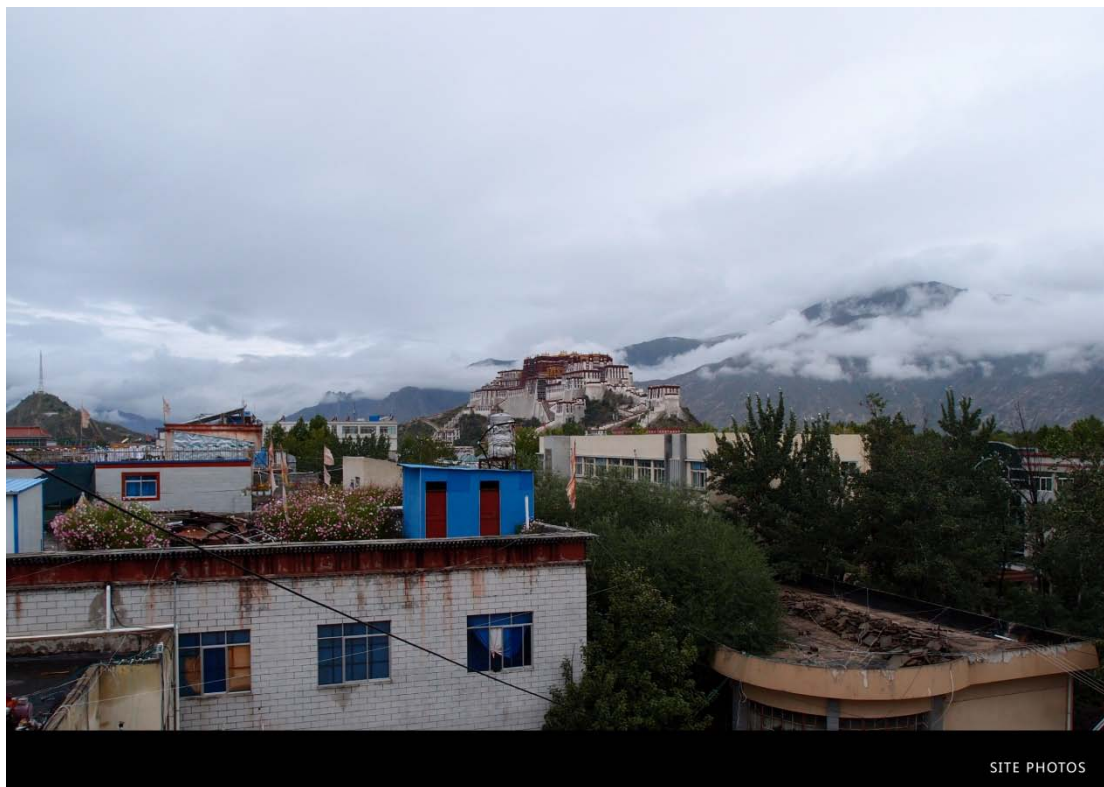
5. Proposed Functions:

Hotel	Area(sqm)	Description
Lobby	1,000	Lounge and check-in areas
120 Rooms	7,000	Suite, Double, and single rooms
Spa	500	
Restaurant	1,000	
Museum	1,000	









Research:

During the first half of the semester the studio will focus on research, with more time dedicated during the first few weeks. (By midterm reviews, however, it is expected that students will have developed building concepts in addition to research and site analysis.) The research will build on that which is currently being conducted by China Megacities Lab, which commenced during the 2012 summer workshop in Beijing. The research will include analyzing, documenting and cataloging past, current and proposed (contemporary) art museums around the world and in China. Various significant projects will be expanded as more detailed case studies and precedents. At the conclusion of the research project (estimated 2 years) the work will be compiled in a book/publication.

Museum Visits:

During the semester there will a number of museum visits scheduled in New York and in Beijing (during Kinne trip). These museum visits are mandatory and will be conducted together as a studio during studio time.

Interviews/Round Table Discussions:

As a continuation of the interviews and roundtable discussions with curators, architects, museum directors and artists conducted over the summer 2012, additional events have been planned during the spring semester at Columbia University and in China (during Kinne trip). The studio may also at times join a seminar taught by John Rajchman at Columbia University on Contemporary Art in China.

Research Goals:

General:

History of museums: global, China, Beijing

- Timeline format
- Identify key paradigm shifts, including its role/mission, planning, architecture, collections, etc.
- Select one or two case studies that best reflect each era

Types of museums: Precedents/Case studies

- Ideal types
- Collection specific
- Icons/symbols
- Organizational types (en suite/enfilade, spiral, open plan, etc)
- Develop a matrix or taxonomy

Data (for comparative analysis):

- Museums per capita by country/region/city
- Countries: China, US, Europe, Japan, etc.
- Regions: (for example, Dusseldorf region has 600 museums)
- Cultural capitals: New York, LA, Paris, HK, Beijing, Tokyo, London, etc.

- Global art biennales

Economics:

- Funding: public vs private
- Successful and failed museums

Technology and New Media:

- Types of technologies utilized/integrated in museums
- Interactive technologies
- Archive technologies
- New forms of art practices utilizing new technologies

Catalog: compilation of info on all art and contemporary art museums in China

- Spreadsheet with all pertinent information on museums (name, location, size, collection, director, year founded, mission, annual attendance, public programs/amenities, annual budget, etc.)
- Architectural floor plans and sections to scale
- Images
- Key map showing locations (China and city)

Case Studies:

China:

- 798 Arts District Beijing
- Caochangdi, Beijing
- Mingsheng, 798 Beijing
- Ullens Center, 798 Beijing
- Pace Gallery, 798 Beijing
- Shougang Cultural District, Beijing
- Taimiao, Forbidden City, Beijing
- Today Museum, Beijing
- M+, HK
- West Kowloon Cultural District, HK
- NAMOC competition, Beijing
- Shanghai Biennale

International

- MoMA
- Altes Museum, Berlin
- Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart
- Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven
- Guggenheim
- New Museum
- Whitney
- Dia, Beacon
- Menil Collection, Houston
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
- Tate Gallery
- Kunsthal, Rotterdam
- Kiasama Museum for Contemporary Art, Helsinki

- Pompidou Center, Paris
- De Young Museum, SF
- Lois and Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, Cincinnati
- 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan
- Schaulager, Basel