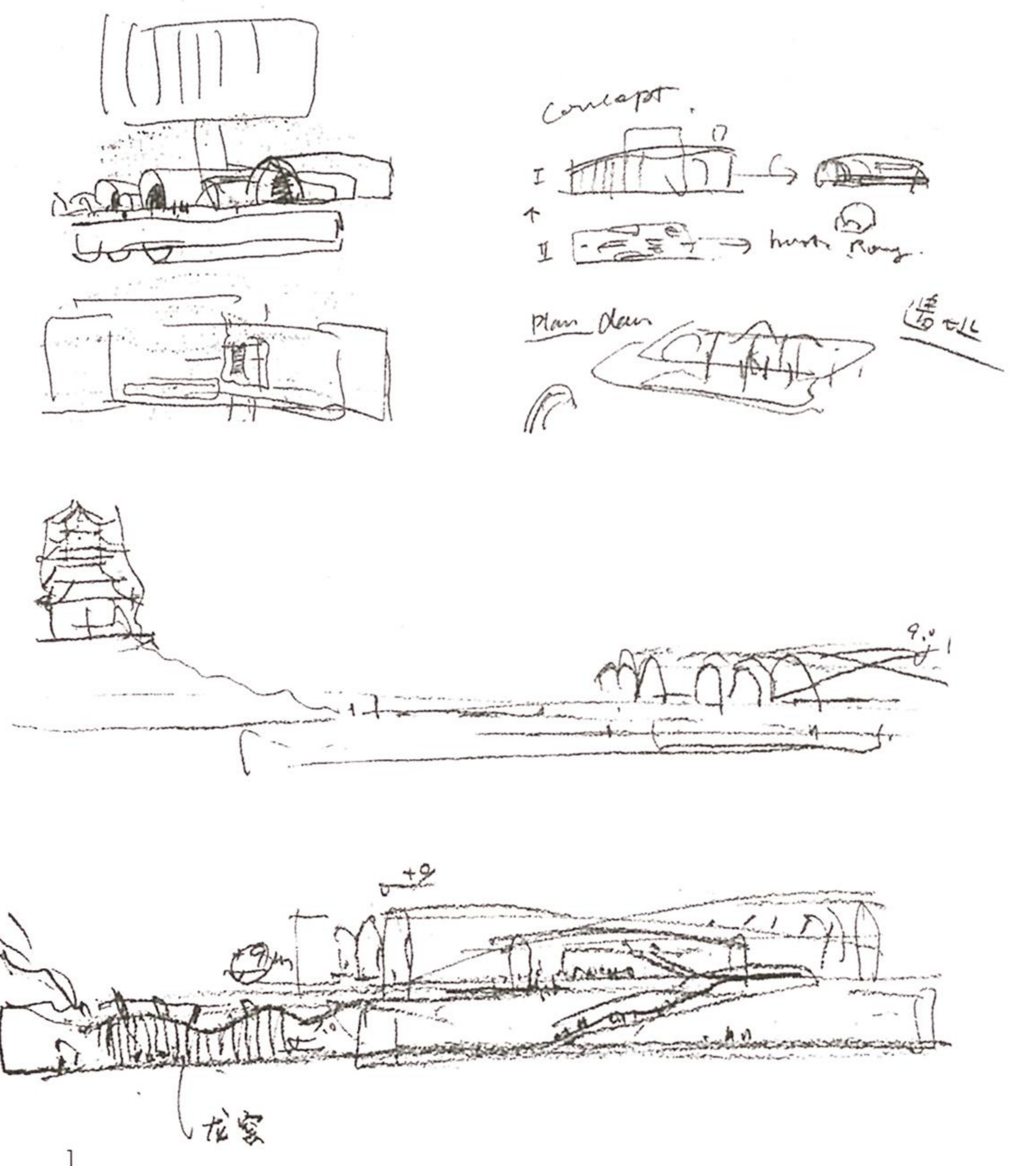


# IMPERIAL KILN MUSEUM

## A TIMELESS MONUMENT

JINGDEZHEN,  
JIANGXI, CHINA



Studio Zhu-Pei

Founded in 2005 in Beijing, the practice focuses on art and cultural projects, blending forms, spaces, light and materials with great contextual sensitivity.





Located in the typical landscape of southern China full of water and mountains, the ancient town of Jingdezhen was for centuries the center of exquisite porcelain manufacturing; from the Song and Yuan era through to the Ming and Qing dynasties. Excavation works during the city's urban development in the last 20 years brought to light many vestiges of this ancient tradition. Today, molds, glazes, varnishes and kiln firing are still part of people's everyday life in Jingdezhen; a mind space as they think back to how they would occupy the abandoned kilns or keep warm sitting close to the hot kiln bricks. The craftsmen who built the last kilns by hand are still here, waiting to pass on their knowledge, even if there is little likelihood of this happening.

But the grand opening of the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Museum is a signal of hope. Designed by Studio Zhu-Pei and exhibiting the works of four famous Chinese art and architecture artists - including Zhu Pei himself -, the museum has allowed Jingdezhen to proudly reoccupy a seminal moment in Chinese artistic culture.

The outdoor model made of Jingdezhen's unique "shadowy-blue" porcelain gives us a glimpse of the Imperial Kiln Museum: the building is first and foremost a spatial composition with a metaphorical color. The long arched forms typical of the Jingdezhen kiln are made up of interspersed red and shiny black kiln bricks that seem to be sweating from the fierce heat held within. The staggered geometric forms appear arranged randomly, a bit like an archaeological excavation site that reveals a medley of structures and artefacts from different eras. Placing part of the building underground and preserving original vestiges of the ceramic industry of the past gives the site a profound significance. The museum lies close to a gentle rise on which stands an imposing old house with white walls and gray tiles. This sharply contrasts with the nearby apartment blocks in a scenario where old and new, real and fake, overlap.

In this setting, the Imperial Kiln Museum becomes a focal point, bringing together all disparate features of the place. The water garden around the main building calmly reflects the volume. It stretches like a shallow moat, creating an ineffable boundary between the museum and its surrounds, setting it apart in time and space to underline the historical importance of the place and the activity that went on there for so many centuries.

The interiors also provide a unique spatial experience, with the ceiling lights creating the sense of a night sky. Located below grade, the artificially lit exhibition area extends over several courtyards evoking the contained world that was the porcelain industry of the area and its legacy. The spatial organization of the building also demonstrates Zhu's mastery of "natural architecture": the museum is designed as a porous, spongy building, with alternating north-south arches and outdoor courtyards; the indoor/outdoor traverses bring the building closer to nature, while a sunken inner courtyard creates the same effect as the chimneys in the kiln, allowing natural ventilation in the summer time.

The Imperial Kiln Museum marks an important point in Jingdezhen's urban development. Not only the most important exhibition venue of its kind, showing finds from the porcelain excavation work as they are revealed, it will also serve as cultural hotspot and meeting place for design professionals and enthusiasts alike. A tribute to China's cultural heritage, Studio Zhu-Pei's project is not only a local landmark for the city of Jingdezhen. It is also a striking example of contemporary Chinese architecture.

The staggered geometric forms appear arranged randomly, a bit like an archaeological excavation site that reveals a medley of structures and artefacts from different eras.



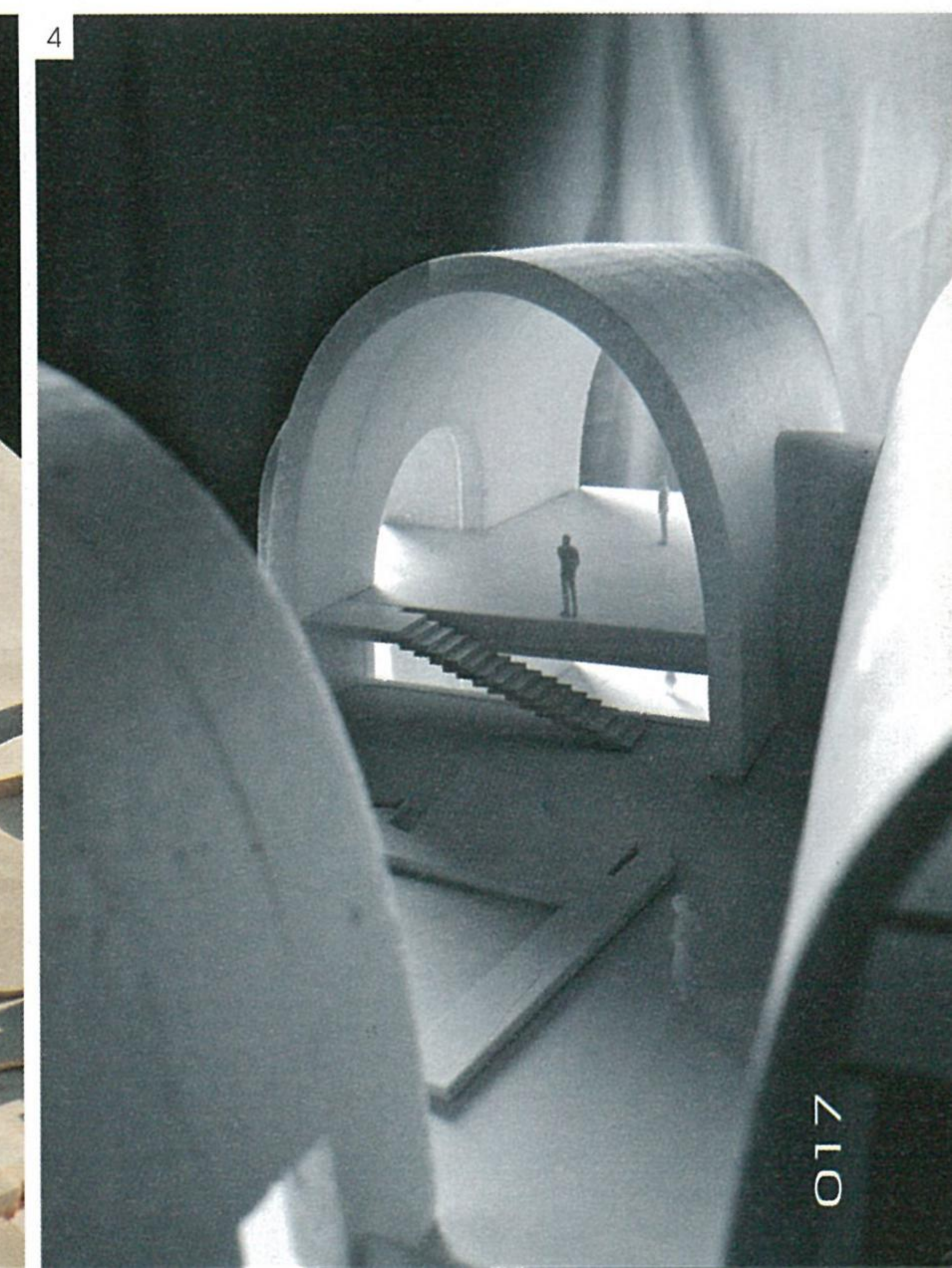
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1. Preliminary study sketches 2/4. Study models 2. Wood detail of the vaulted units' sections 3. The museum in its urban context 4. Interior view of the vaulted spaces: the relation between human and architectural scales



3



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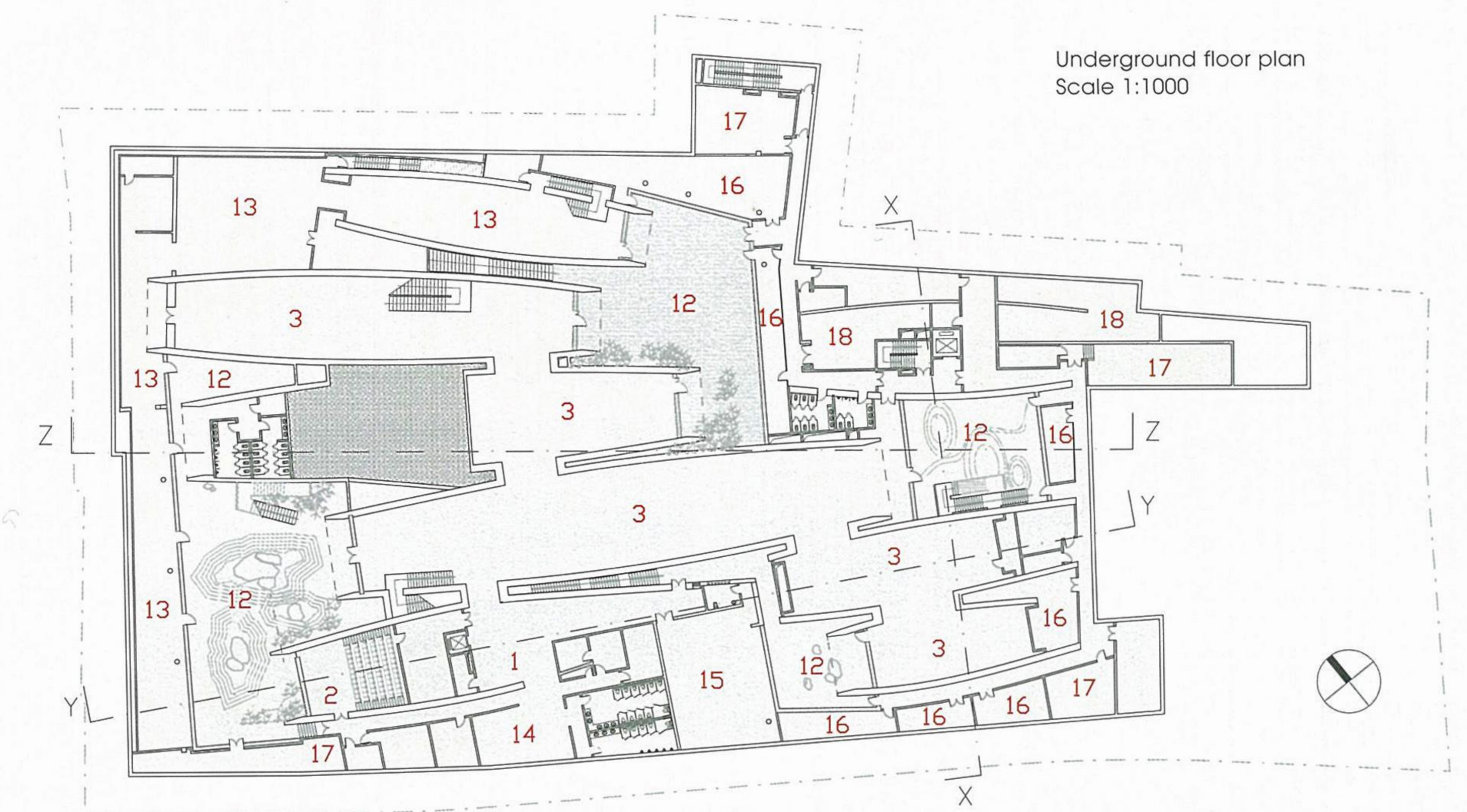
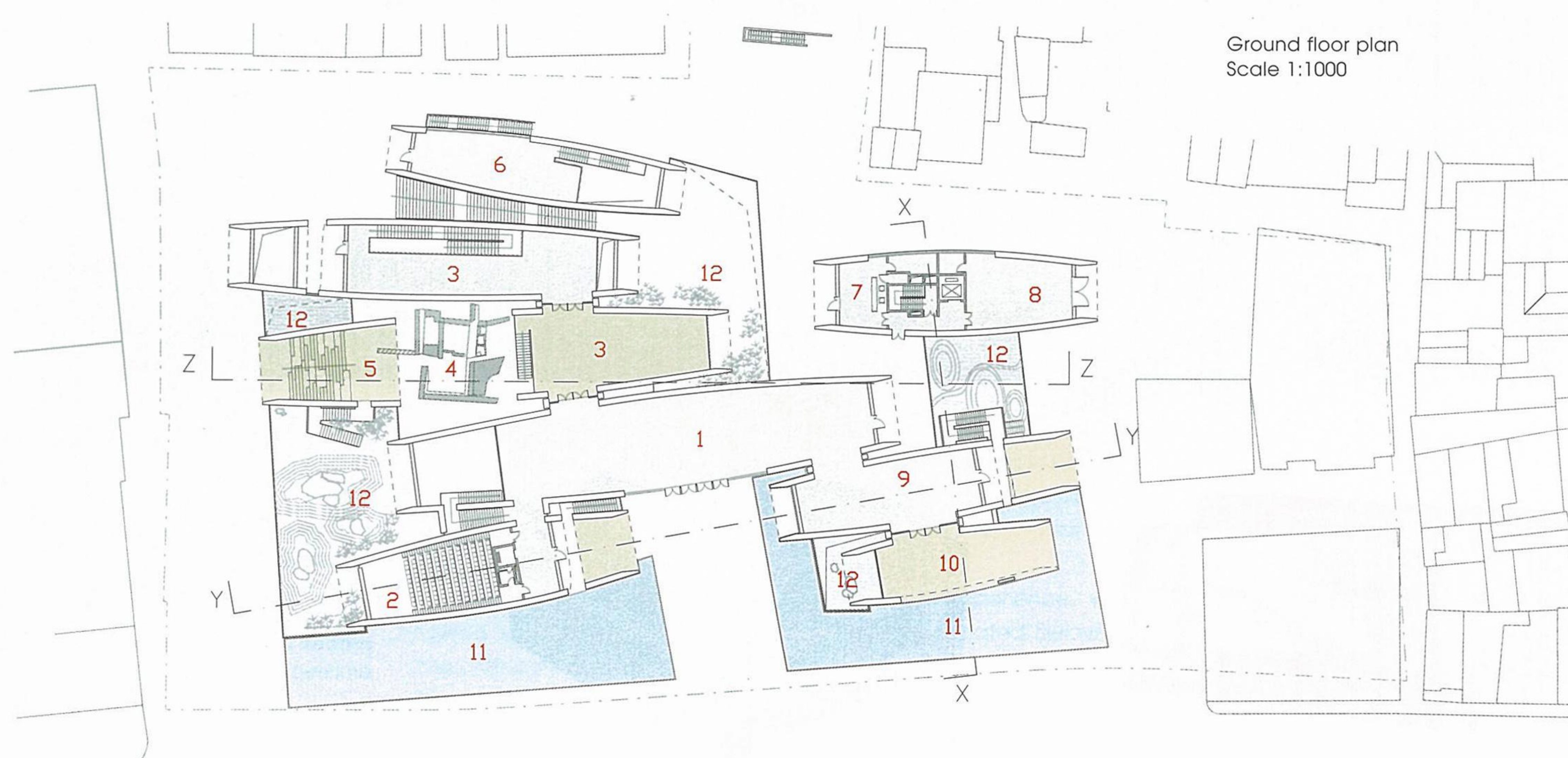
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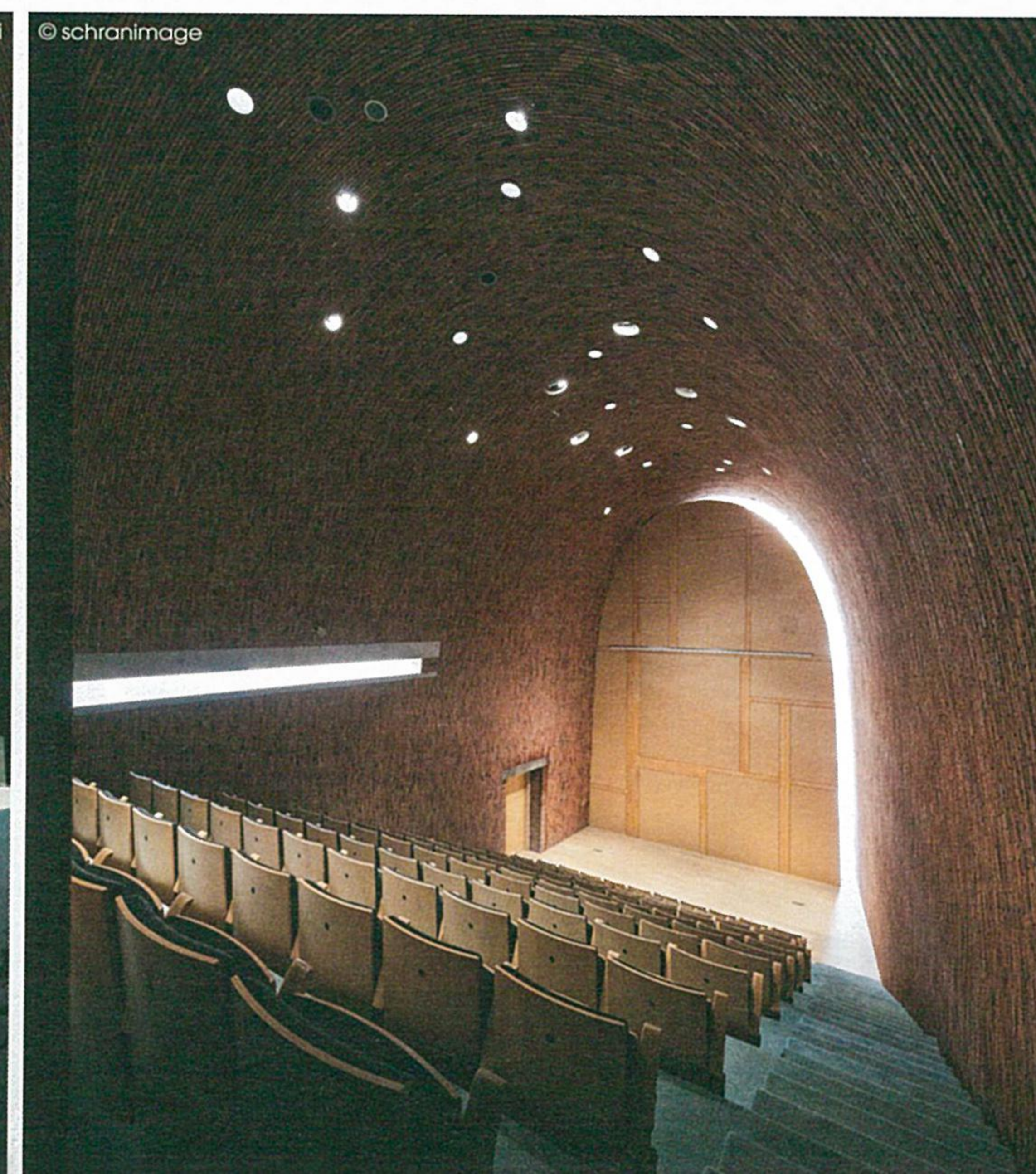
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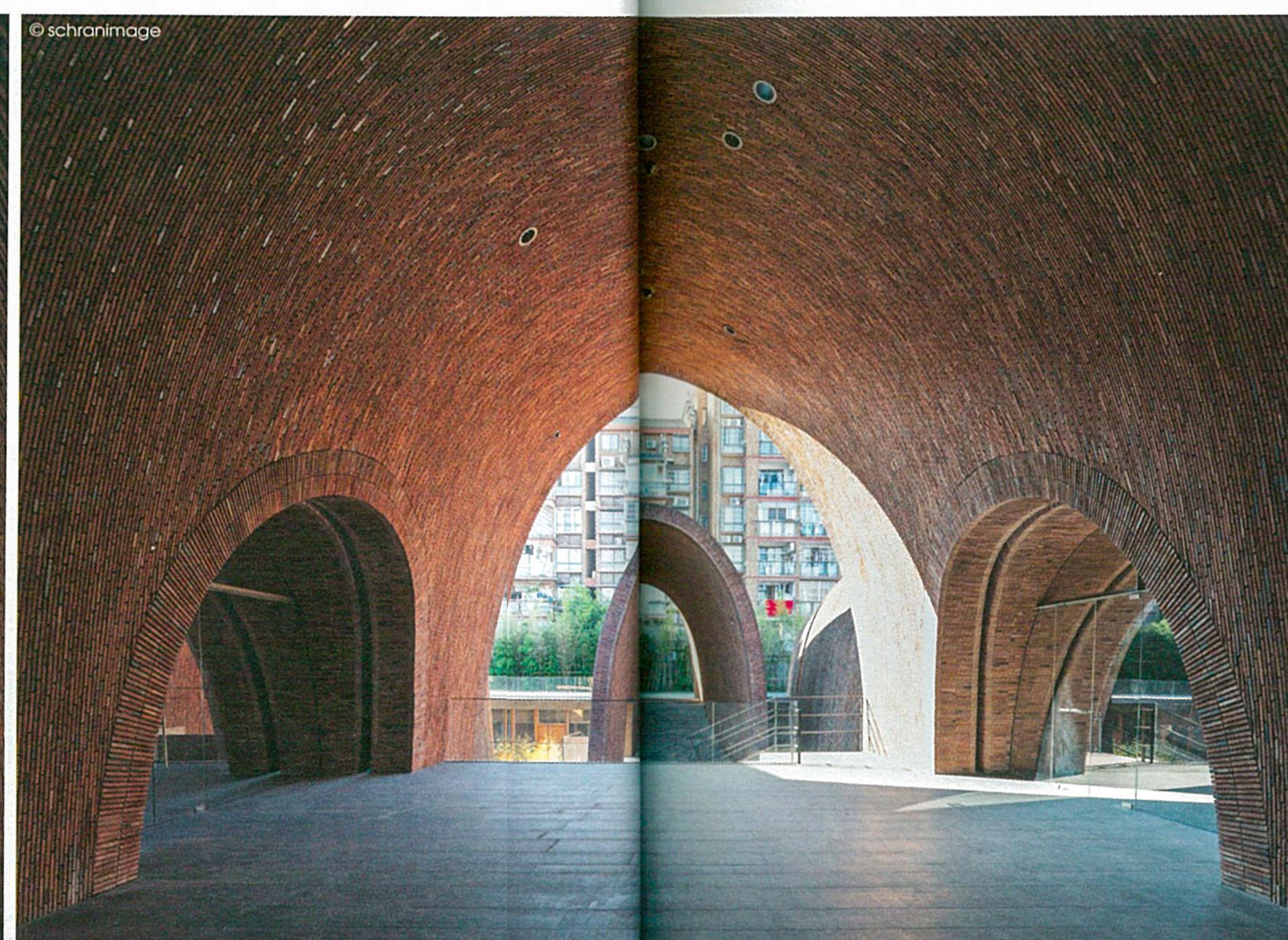
- 1- Foyer
- 2- Auditorium
- 3- Permanent exhibition
- 4- Ruins
- 5- Amphitheater
- 6- Exchange exhibition foyer
- 7- Office lobby
- 8- Loading dock
- 9- Bookstore, café
- 10- Tea room
- 11- Pool
- 12- Sunken courtyard
- 13- Exchange exhibition
- 14- Coat check
- 15- Multifunctional hall
- 16- Restoration room
- 17- Mechanical room
- 18- Storage



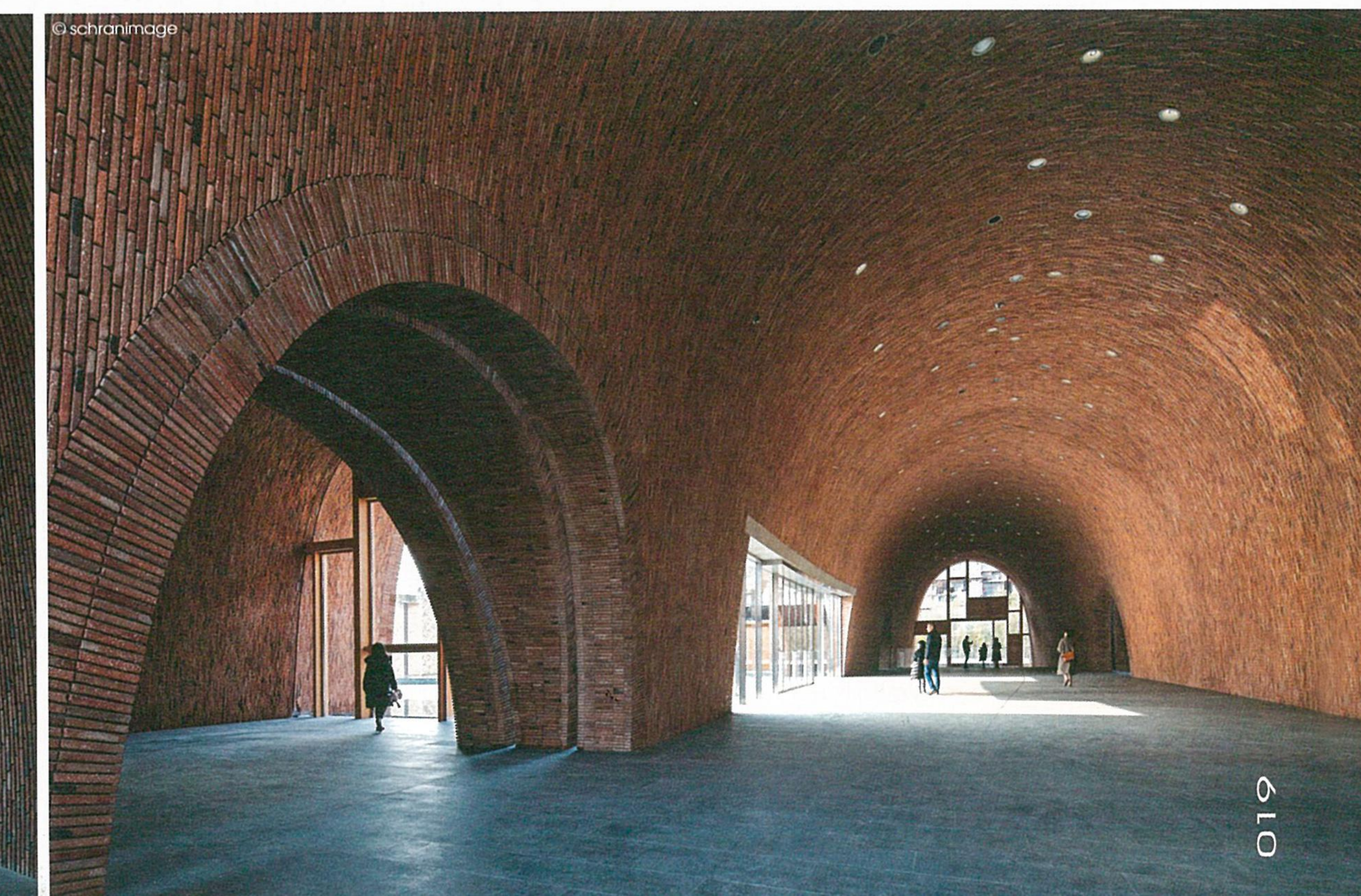
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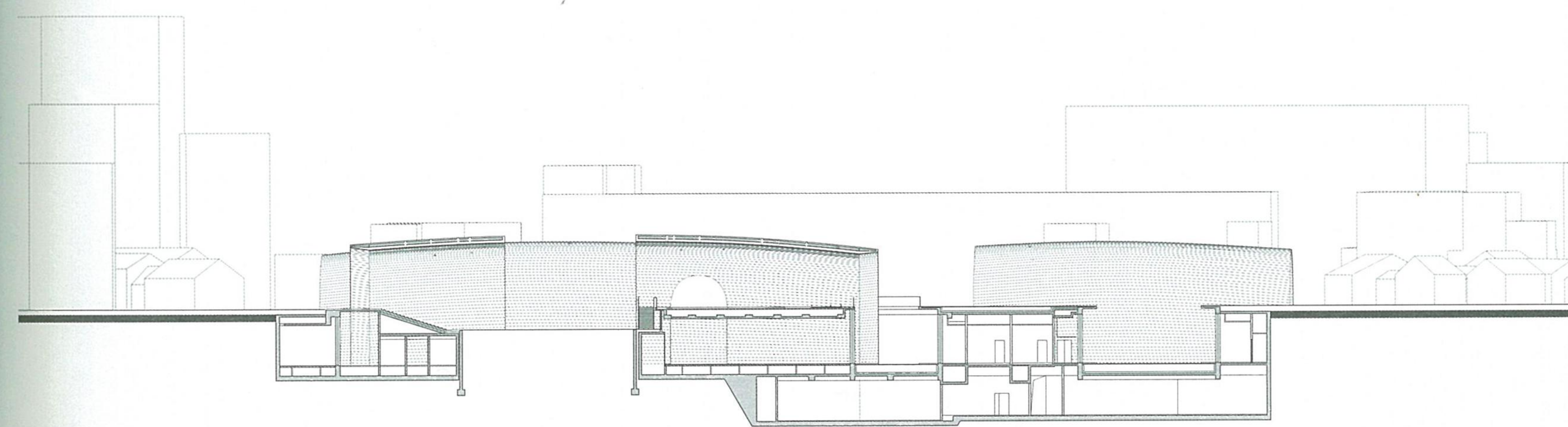
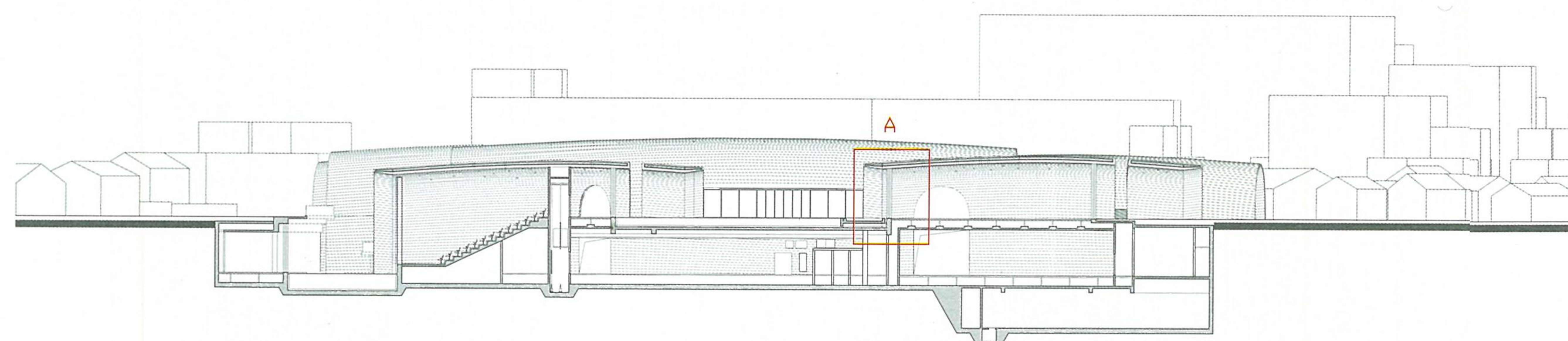
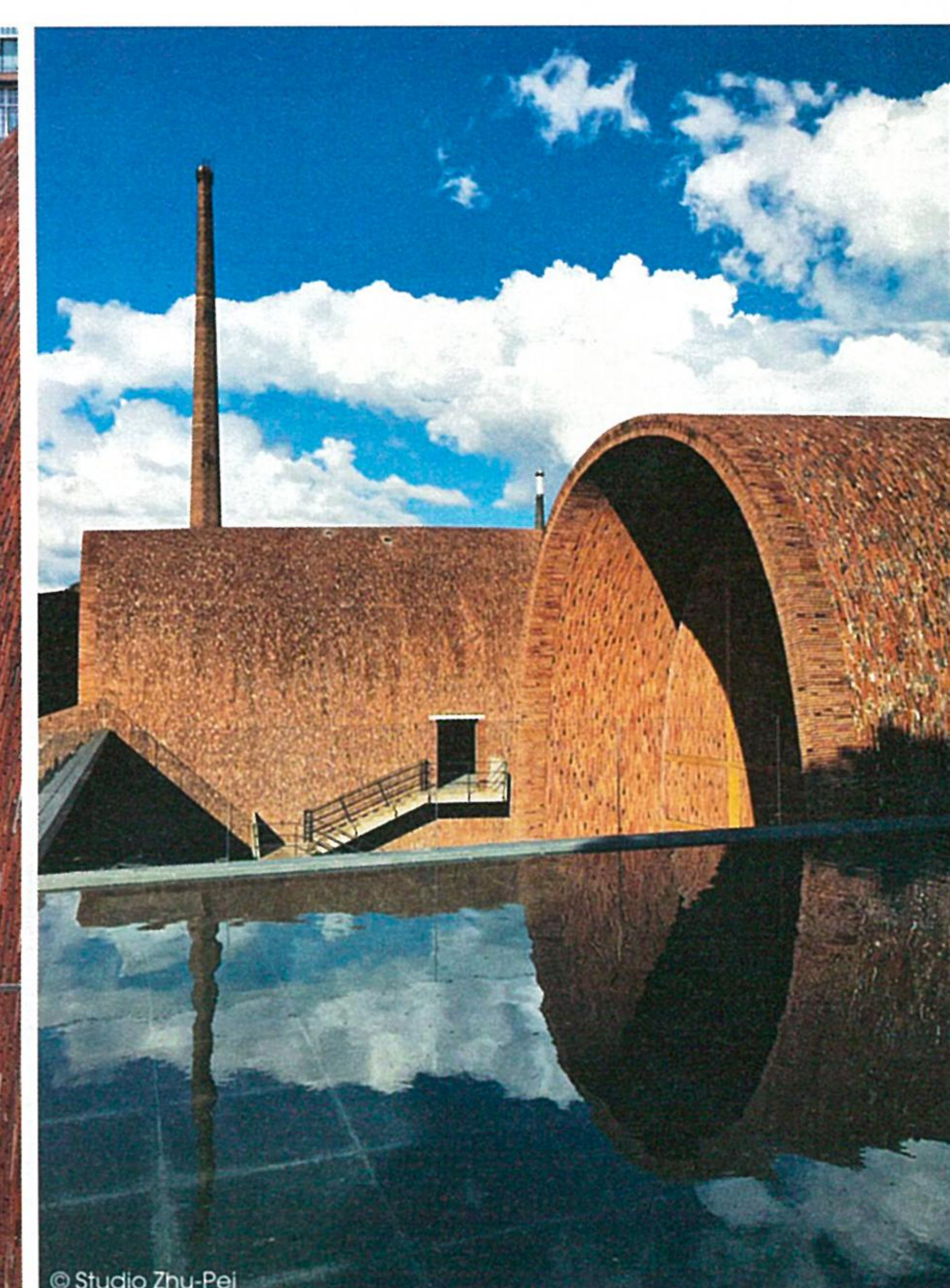
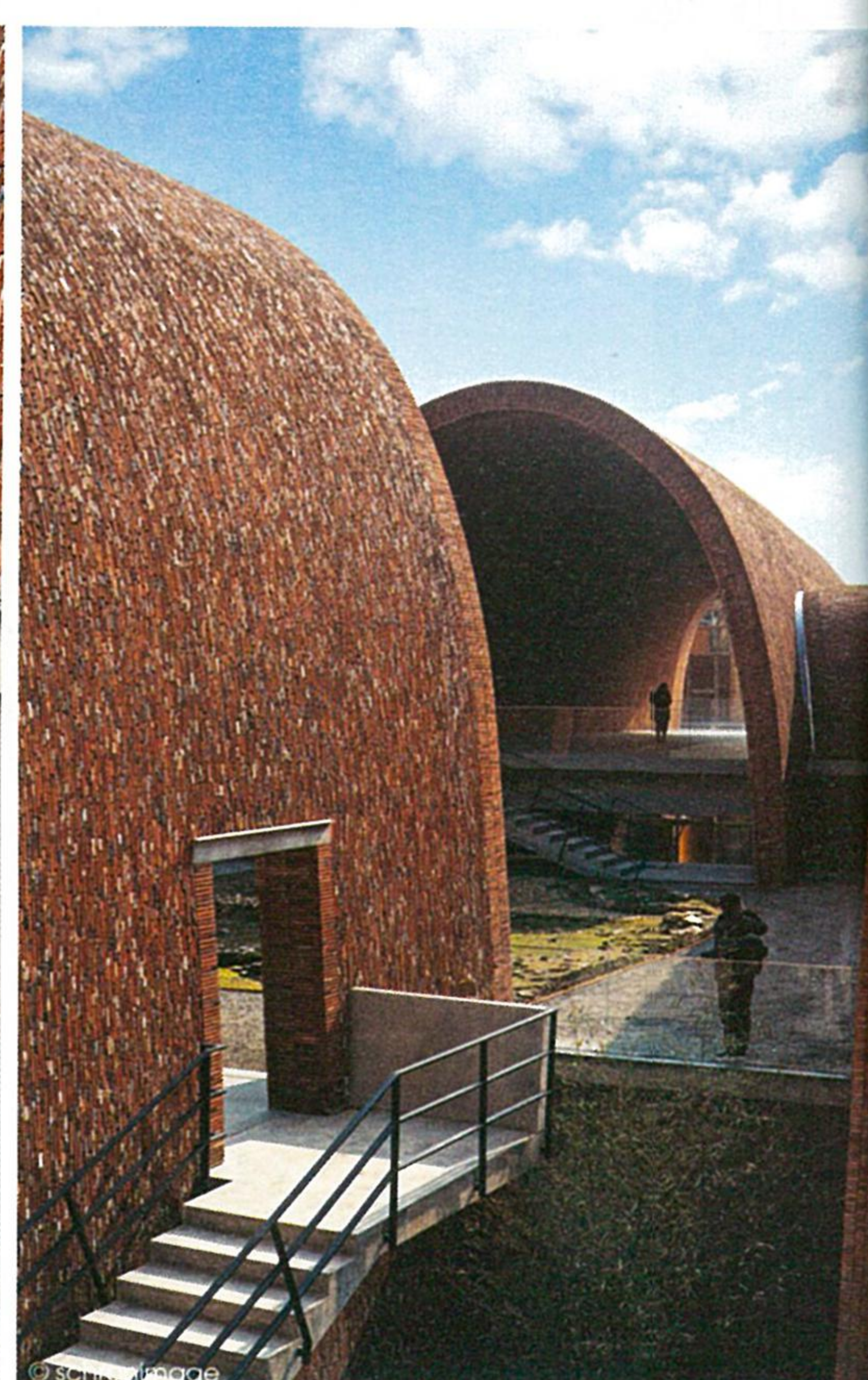
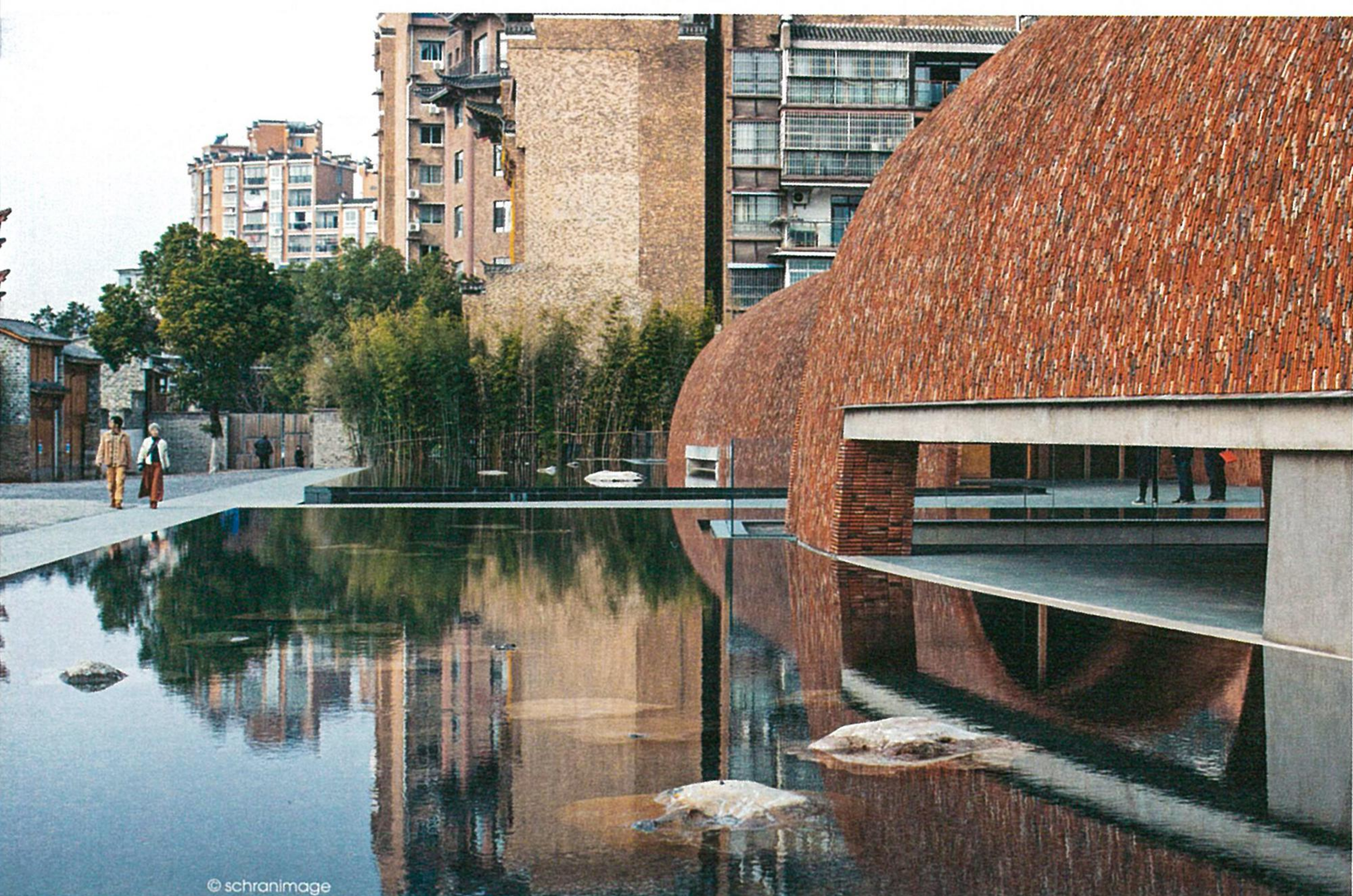
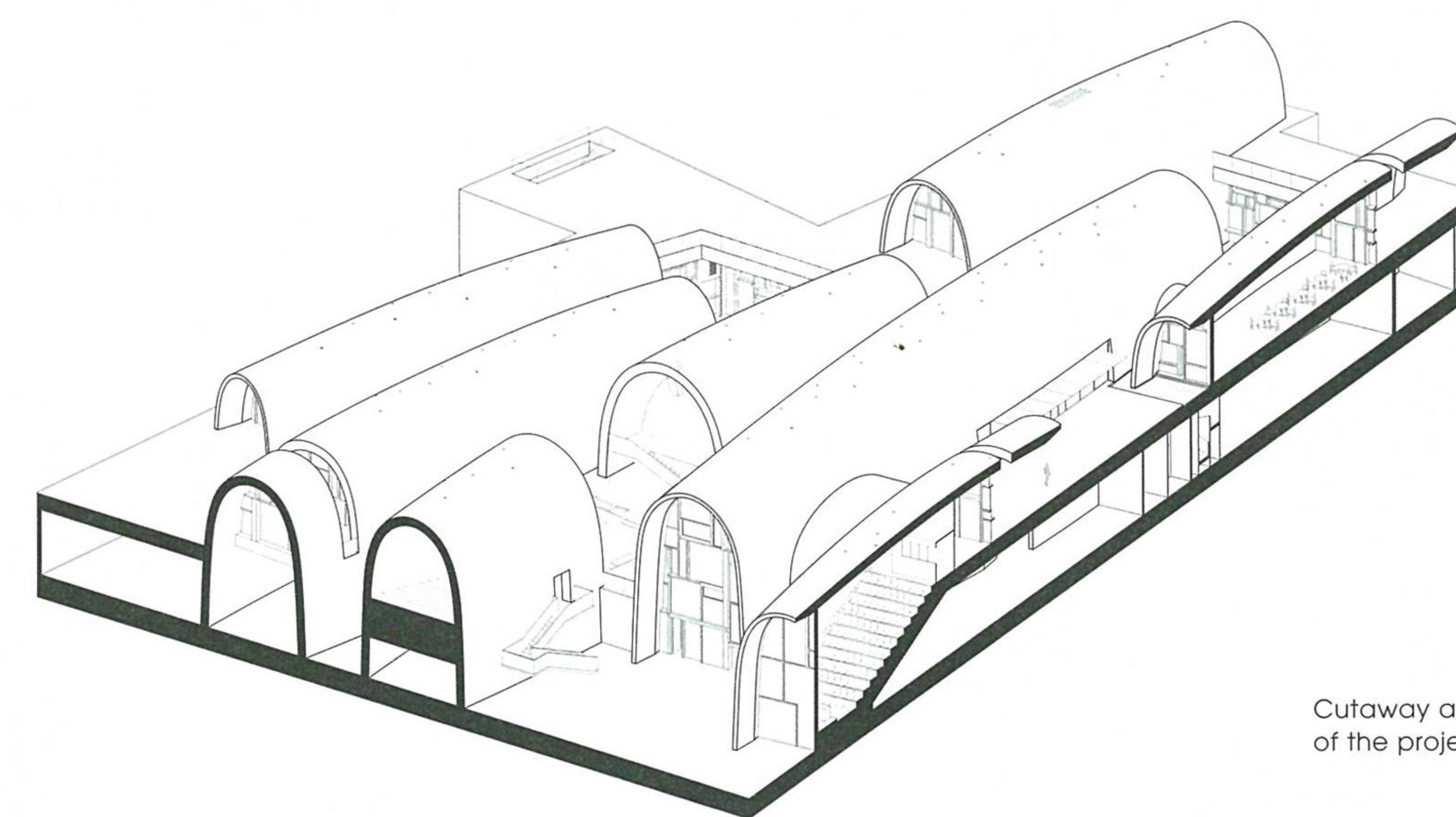
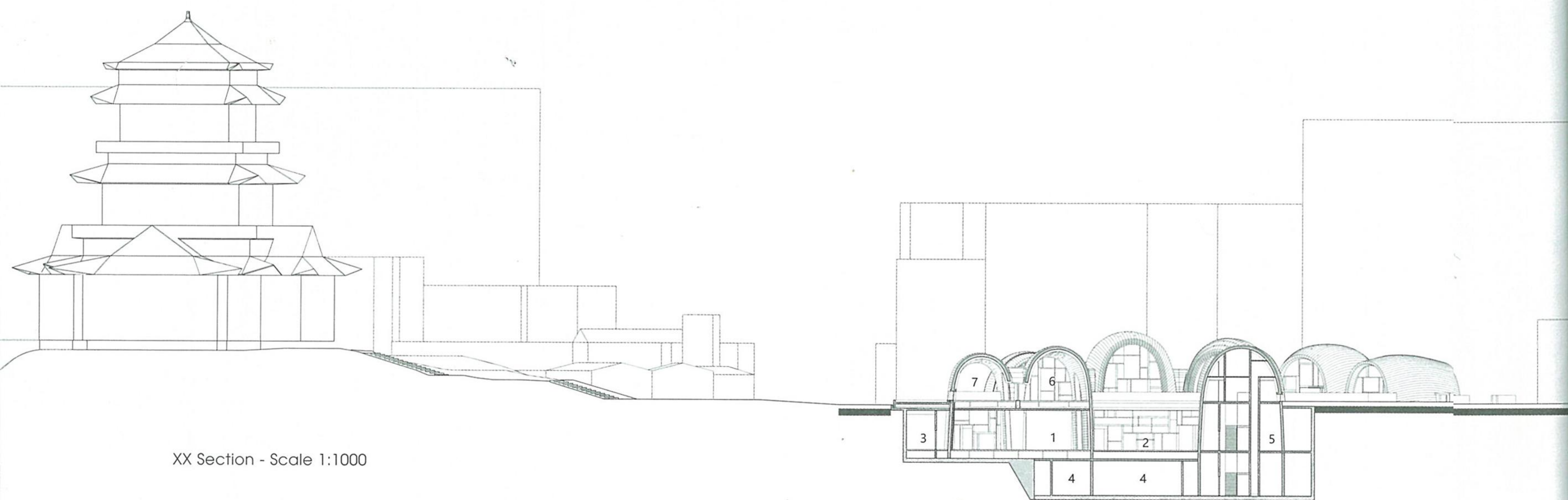


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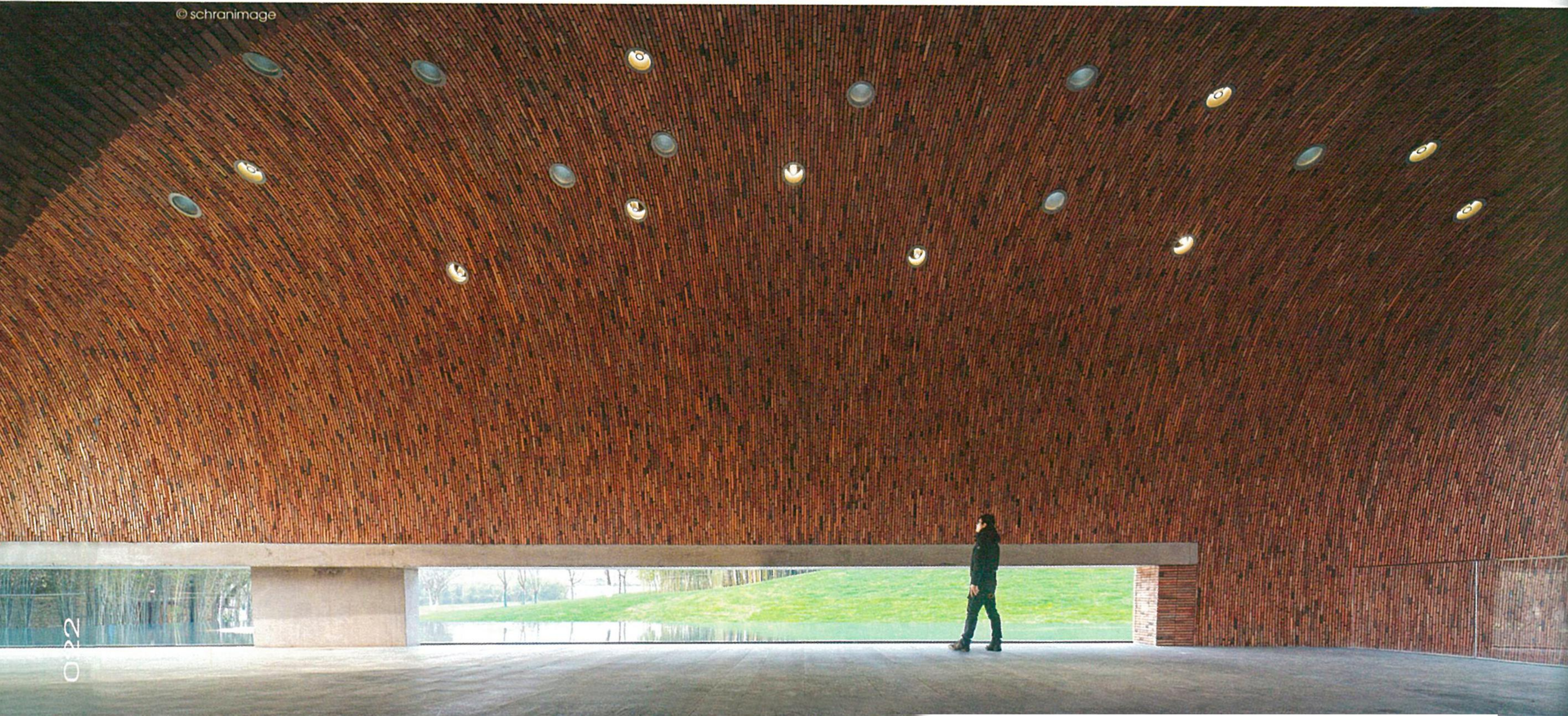
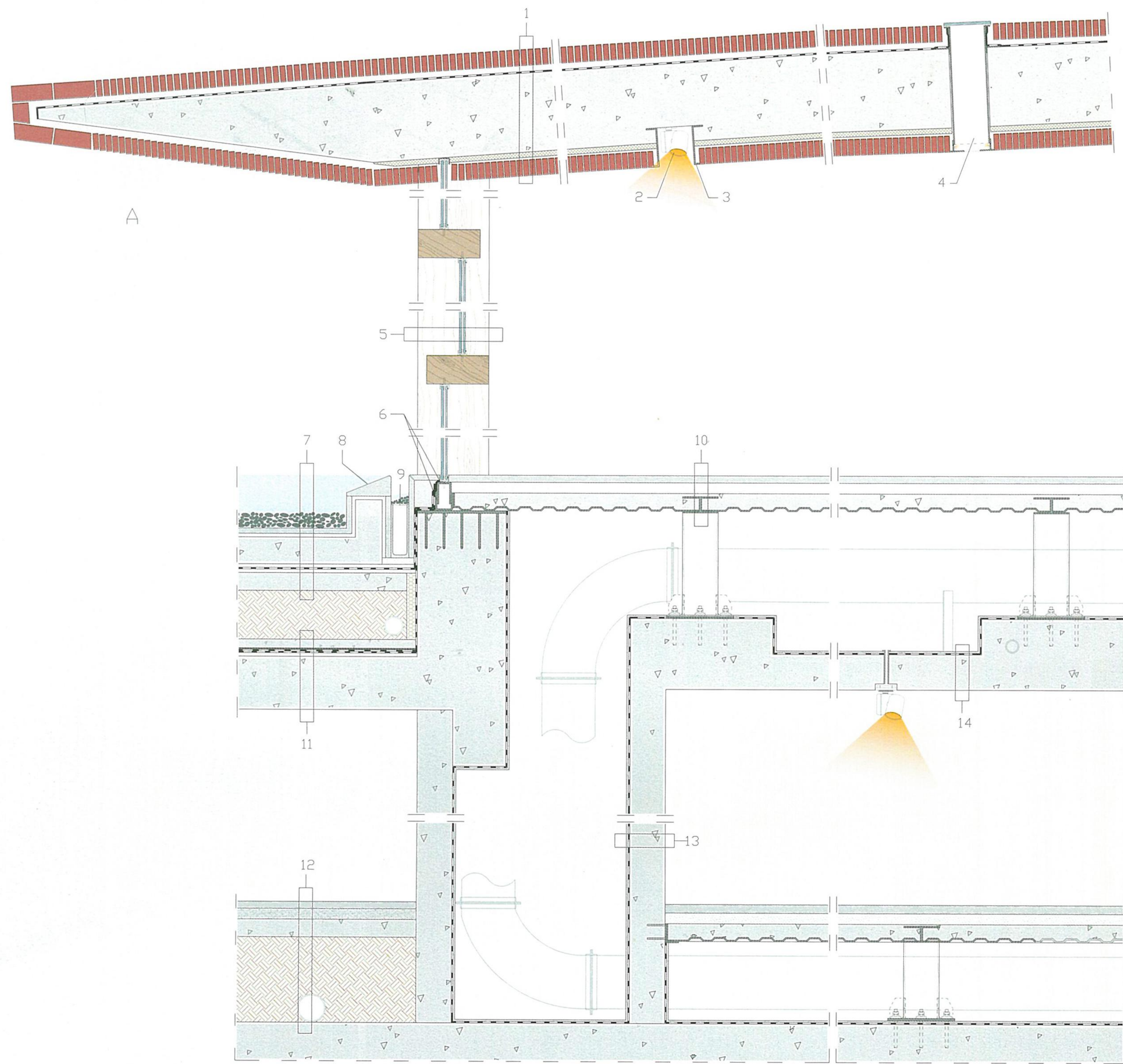


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**Detail A: Construction system**  
Vertical section - Scale 1:30

- 1- Roof comprising  
9 1/16 x 1 1/8 x 2 3/8"  
(230x30x60 mm) new and  
reclaimed bricks, 1 1/8" (30 mm)  
bedding mortar, waterproof  
concrete sheathing, 17 3/4"  
(450 mm) max h tapered  
reinforced concrete roof slab,  
2 3/8" (60 mm) rigid insulation,  
1 1/8" (30 mm) bedding mortar,  
9 1/16 x 1 1/8 x 2 3/8"  
(230x30x60 mm) bricks
- 2- 2 3/8 x 8 5/8" (60x220 mm)  
flanged round C-section  
profile supporting lighting
- 3- Lighting system with spotlights
- 4- Ø 7 7/8" (200 mm) skylight  
with brushed steel frame  
and round light shaft
- 5- Façade system with  
6 1/4 x 13 3/4" (160x350 mm)  
solid timber framing and  
1/4 + 1/4 - 1/2 - 5/16"  
(6+6/12/8 mm) steel glazing  
units with toughened glass
- 6- Coupled steel C-profiles and  
flat steel bars for anchoring
- 7- Pond with 2" (50 mm) gravel  
bottom, 1 1/8" (30 mm) gray  
granite slab, 3/4" (20 mm)  
screed, 5 7/8" (150 mm)  
reinforced concrete pool,  
3/4" (20 mm) protective mortar
- 8- layer, waterproofing  
membrane, 3/4" (20 mm)  
mortar, 4" (100 mm) screed,  
compacted earth fill
- 9- Granite edging
- 10- Overflow with gravel  
and precast 4 x 11 3/4"  
(100x300 mm) concrete gutter
- 11- Floating floor comprising  
1 5/8" (40 mm) granite flooring,  
2 3/8" (60 mm) screed, composite  
slab of concrete fill over  
corrugated steel decking,  
3 1/2" (90 mm) h steel I-beam  
anchored to slab by flat steel bars  
and steel brackets
- 12- 1 5/8" (40 mm) granite flooring,  
2 3/8" (60 mm) screed,  
4" (100 mm) concrete base  
layer, compacted earth fill,  
reinforced concrete slab
- 13- 7 7/8" (200 mm) reinforced  
concrete services void,  
waterproofing cement  
sheathing, 3/8" (10 mm) mortar
- 14- Exposed reinforced  
concrete slab, waterproofing  
cement sheathing, 3/8"  
(10 mm) mortar





## CREDITS

**Location:** Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, China  
**Clients:** Jingdezhen Municipal Bureau of Culture Radio Television Press Publication and Tourism, Jingdezhen Ceramic Culture Tourism Group - **Gross Floor Area:** 10,370 m<sup>2</sup> - **Completion Date:** 2020  
**Architect, Landscape and Interior Design:** Studio Zhu-Pei - **Design Principal:** Zhu Pei  
**Co-Architect:** Architectural Design and Research Institute of Tsinghua University  
**Design Team:** You Changchen, Han Mo, He Fan, Shuhei Nakamura, Liu Ling, Wu Zhigang, Zhang Shun, Du Yang, Yang Shengchen, Chen Yida, He Chenglong, Ding Xinyue - **Main Contractors:** China Construction First Group Corporation Limited, Huajiang Construction CO., LTD of China Construction First Group

### Consultants

**Structural, MEP, Green Building:** Architectural Design and Research Institute of Tsinghua University - **Façades:** Shenzhen Dadi Facade Technology - **Lighting:** Ning Field Lighting Design - **Acoustics:** Building Science & Technology Institute, Zhejiang University - **Key Critique:** Zhou Rong - **Art Consultants:** Wang Mingxian, Li Xiangning

All images courtesy of Studio Zhu-Pei