PRESS RELEASE

More than a museum: The Ningbo Urban Planning Exhibition Center

Shortly after the successful collaboration for the German Pavilion at the Expo 2010 in Shanghai, the two practices playze and Schmidhuber joined forces again to win the invited competition for the Ningbo Urban Planning Exhibition Center. Eight years later the construction has been completed and the center opened to the public. It is located at the heart of the newly built “Ningbo Eastern New Town” adjacent to the city hall and the civic square. The Ningbo Urban Planning Exhibition Center is supposed to be more than just a simple presentation space. The goal was to create an engaging, accessible public space in the new district, and thereby foster the dialogue between citizens and decision-makers.

A CONTINUOUS LANDSCAPE
To emphasize the role of the center as a public venue, it has been developed as a continuation of the surrounding waterfront landscape and is therefore an integral part of the public park. Connecting pathways, bridges and streets have been woven into a topography leading to the many entrances of the building. The boundary between park and building has been blurred.

A TRANSLUCENT CERAMIC SKIN
The City of Ningbo has a rich history in ceramic production. It was here that the so-called Ceramic Road began. The city played an important role in the national and international trade of ceramics throughout the civilization’s history. That said, the use of glazed ceramics is not simply an homage to the local traditions of Ningbo; the building’s textured glazed ceramics also create ephemeral reflections of surrounding landscape. These reflections animate the facade with varying intensity depending on time of day, season, and weather.

AN URBAN EXPERIENCE
The exhibition halls are mainly allocated on the third and fourth floors of the building. The first and second floors offer a large variety of public spaces, including a restaurant, library and reading space, meeting areas, a children’s education and playground, classrooms, as well as a large multi-purpose event hall. On the roof, that is also directly accessible from the landscape, a café invites visitors to relax and enjoy the views of the surrounding city.

A DIGITAL PROJECT
It was never the intention to demonstrate the capabilities of digital tools by means of this project. Nevertheless, this building couldn’t have been designed, developed, produced and built without the help of cutting-edge digital technology. In order to cope with the complexity of the spatial allocation and coordination of the structure, curtainwall, secondary structure and ceramic skin a tailor-made computer script had to be coded. The script automatically generated a 3D model of the structure and façade, as well as production drawings for the respective contractors.
PROJECT DATA

Location: Ningchuan Road / Heqing North Road, Ningbo, China
Client: City of Ningbo
Site area: 12'376 m²
General floor area: 24'929 m²
Status: Completed in 2019

Architecture (competition stage): playze & SCHMIDHUBER
Architecture (execution stages): playze
Local design institute: Shanghai Institute of Architectural Design and Research
Landscape design institute: Ningbo Institute of Urban Construction Design and Research
Façade consultant: RFR Group, Shanghai
General contractor: Hwaking Construction Group
Interior/exhibition design and construction: Feng Yu Zhu, Shanghai

Photography: CreatAR Images, Shanghai

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SCHMIDHUBER is one of the world’s leading specialists in brand communication - awarded over 300 international prizes. For three years in a row now, we have been voted spatial communication’s number one by both Horizont and W&V. It’s this kind of recognition that motivates us to keep pushing the boundaries in creative brand solutions.

We support internationally renowned customers of different sizes, industries and origins – medium-sized companies and world-famous corporate groups. The size of a project is not the most important thing for us. What matters more is the high quality of the concept and its implementation, which enables a clear, unique way to communicate a brand in a three-dimensional setting.

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