Towards the Regeneration of China's Rural Landscapes. Zhang Ke's Achitectural Acupuncture in Tibet as a Case Study

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Abstract

In contemporary China, the historicity of places fears a fate like Yang Yongliang's 'Phantom Landscape' series, which envision the dystopian consequences of the hyper-construction syndrome and market frenzy of late 20th century China. Nevertheless, the allure of cultural tradition still attracts the interest of a minority of independent firms that today embody the best practices in architecture, urban planning and landscape design in the country. In this scenario, in little more than five years, starting in 2007, ZAO/standardarchitecture has constructed a constellation of buildings in the Linzhi area of Tibet, with which it has responded to the request to boost the local tourist vocation with new accommodation facilities, experimenting with different forms of dialogue with the landscape of this remote autonomous region of China. The 'pressure points' of the architectural acupuncture prepared by Zhang Ke, owner of the indipendent firm founded in Beijing in 2001, are small- and medium-scale interventions that stand out for their 'archaic' modernity and for their profound understanding of the possibilities concealed in the interaction between architecture and indigenous building knowledge and techniques. Topographical sensitivity, with an almost geological matrix, inspires the settlement strategies of these architectural fragments, guaranteeing, without apparent effort, their sublimation in the hosting landscape.

Keywords: landscape, Cina, ZAO/standardarchitecture, natural stone, regeneration.

Dystopian visions

In 2006, artist Yang Yongliang began a series of figurative works, created with digital techniques, inspired by traditional Chinese landscape painting. The title of this successful research is *Phantom Landscape* [1], which engaged the artist until 2008.
Using "images of architecture as brushstrokes" [Yang 2006] [2] spread out to saturate the heavy mountain rocks, with profiles identical to those of the paintings of Song dynasty masters [3] such as Wang Ximeng [4], Dong Yuan [5] or Li Cheng [6], the artist prefigures immense rural megalopolises: dystopian landscapes that manifest the feeling of concern of a generation. After witnessing the destruction of historic districts in major Chinese cities, this generation fears for the future of its internal landscape.

Whereas ancient painters depicted landscapes to celebrate the grandeur of nature, Yang's works unmask the aggressiveness of the Chinese construction industry at the end of the 20th century –perpetrated for at least thirty years between the 1980s and the early 2000s and described by Arbasino as "alarming, with atrocious and shameless visual forms" [Arbasino 1998, p. 41]– with the aim of prompting a critical reevaluation of contemporary reality [Li 2016].
This seminal work was to be followed by others, similarly fascinating as they were disturbing, always realized as a series –Artificial Wonderland (2010); Moonlight; Artificial Wonderland II (2014); Journey to the dark (2017)– concerned with the same themes of hyper-growth and land consumption.

Since 2019, with the work Sitting alone by the stream I, the dystopian tone of Yang's visions changes; the artificial mountains of Song's inspiration are no longer the result of an asphyxiating superposition of buildings, towers, infrastructures, antennas, cranes, but acquire a naturalistic dimension of unprecedented serenity; almost as if to testify to a rediscovered faith in the future, perhaps justified by the quality of the work carried out by a large group of young, independent architects who, during the first twenty years of the 21st century, were able to experiment with another modernity [Xue, Ding 2018; Pagnano 2022, p. 66], in tune with tradition and respectful of places (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Detail of the Namchabawa Visitor Cente and its relationship to the landscape. Credits: ZAO/standardarchitecture.

Fig. 2. Construction site photo during the construction of the Niyang River Visitor Centre. Credits: ZAO/standardarchitecture.

The protagonists of this quiet revolution have been young Chinese architects who, after completing their studies in their own country, often followed by significant further training in Europe or the United States, decided to "take advantage of the many opportunities offered by 'market communism' to experiment with an alternative dimension to the chaotic and identity-free image of contemporary architecture in China" [Bucci, Vercelloni 2011, p. 21].

How to regenerate: two possible directions

The image of the contemporary Chinese megalopolis – whose density and impact on the human scale, or the linguistic schizophrenia of architectural episodes, were masterfully represented by the photographic works of Weng Fen [7] at the beginning of the new millennium– has recent origins; and the Beijing Olympics showdown, with the completion of the OMA CCTV, marks an important breaking point.
The slowdown of China's economic momentum, which culminated in the fall of 2023 with the financial collapse of state-owned giants in the construction industry like *Evergrande*, along with the saturation of cities –a result of a capitalist frenzy that, in building the present, recklessly destroyed large portions of the past, thereby compromising the future of its own memory [Shu 2013, p. 47]– has led China to invest resources in regenerating what already exists rather than continuing to consume land and build anew.
With great benefit to the community of independent firms led by architects born between the 1940s and the 1980s, who are sensitive to their disciplinary traditions and trained in the legacy of the Modern Movement, the future of Chinese architecture lies in a return to tailored, auteur-driven work, seeking a quality that was previously sacrificed for quantity, rather than continuing the expansion of megalopolises.
In the insightful analysis presented by historian Xiangning Li at Harvard in 2016 [Li 2016], the future of Chinese architecture can be seen as moving in two main directions: urban regeneration –understood as the transformation and reuse of existing buildings or the conscious introduction of traditional spatiality, techniques, and materials in new public and private architecture– and the development of rural areas.

Zhang Ke or "'Chineseness' Means Nothing to Us"

With the real estate market in major cities managed by state design institutes, these independent architects, when not working on smaller-scale projects in the suburbs, often found themselves operating in rural areas, which are less industrialized and high-tech. Observing the early results of this shift, Joseph Grima noted that the most interesting projects seemed to be those that had "abandoned any reference to the restrictive notion of 'tradition' to focus instead on the conceptual contextualization of their work, allowing themselves to be influenced by the limitations and opportunities provided by the locally available construction methods" [Grima 2008, p. 14].
Years later, during the conference *Recent Projects in Rural China* [Fung 2018], Professor Stanislaus Fung highlighted the influence of three architects –Liu Jiakun, Li Yichun of Atelier Deshaus, and Zhang Ke of ZAO/standardarchitecture– considered particularly important for having introduced construction-oriented approaches in contemporary Chinese architecture. These architects emphasized the role of building techniques as central to their design philosophy (fig. 2).
In an early interview, Zhang Ke confirmed this focus and described it as a potential justification for a broader research horizon, stating: "we are no longer interested in imitating the stylistic traits of the big names in Western architecture […] and we don't care about trying to distinguish or characterize Western architecture from Chinese architecture, nor do we think in generational terms. The idea of creating something truly Chinese just for the sake of showcasing it in the West doesn't concern us […] in this sense, 'Chineseness' means nothing to us. What matters more is introducing concrete innovations into the construction process. At some point, we might establish a dialogue with tradition and explore new ways of using traditional materials, but this is not an essential condition" [Grima 2008, p. 42].
In this context, in 2007 –just a year after the dystopias of Yang Yongliang's first Phantom Landscapes and a year before being included in Instant Asia, an important showcase publication featuring future leaders of world architecture from China, South Korea, and Japan– the young architect Zhang Ke [8], born in 1970, began a coherent body of projects located in the extreme landscapes of rural China, specifically in Linzhi, an autonomous region in Tibet.
This experience allowed him to embark on his own personal research, which can be positioned within the thematic frameworks of critical regionalism [Frampton 1983] and critical pragmatism [Xiangning 2016; 2018; 2023]. His work contributes to shaping a contemporary Chinese architectural modus, combining a sensitivity to local context with a pragmatic approach to construction.
Through a reconfiguration of the landscape, initiated by the creation of a diffuse infrastructure consisting of numerous scattered civic buildings across the territory –designed as architectural 'pressure points' that impose a minimal footprint on the sites and are strategically located– Zhang Ke's work in the Linzhi region not only supports the economic and social revitalization of a landscape in crisis but also serves as an exemplary case study of the concept of architectural acupuncture [9]. This approach is worth exploring for its potential replicability in the regeneration of abandoned rural areas.

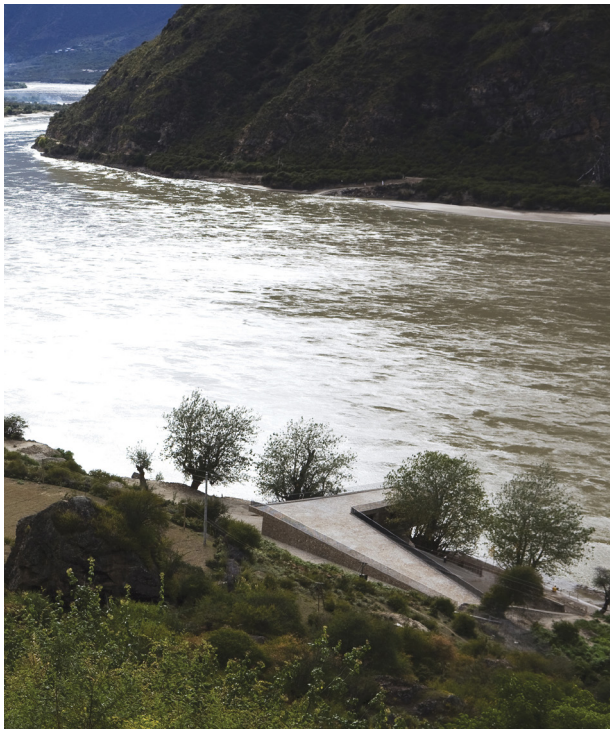
Bringing experience into form

Not assuming that the construction process can be precise, Zhang Ke develops what he calls a "phased design, where the second phase corrects the mistakes of the first, and the third corrects those of the second" [Fung 2018]. In a lecture at Harvard [Ke 2016], he elaborated on this concept, embracing a 'visual logic of imprecision' in his works. He described his design approach as a 'design of tolerance', which stems from a 'protected continuity' rather than a pre-designed one, achieved by giving workers significant freedom

Fig. 3. Namchabawa Contemplation (overall view). Credits: Chen Su.

in defining the details of his projects. To accomplish this, Ke explained, "you have to know the contractors and understand the local construction skills you can find and use them in the project" [Ke 2016] [10].
The masonry of the buildings in Linzhi exemplifies this method: emerging only at the conclusion of the construction process, they were "impossible to design on paper!" [Ke 2016] [10]. Instead, they were 'designed on-site' by local villagers, renowned for their skill in cutting and assembling the stones of the 'mani' [11], the traditional Tibetan stone structures used for prayers and inscriptions.
This attitude, which can be described as a "bringing experience into for" [Pasqualotto 2001a, p. 57; 2001b, p. 15], draws Zhang Ke's research closer to the ancient Chinese *modus*, already the foundation of traditional thought and the archetype of *Shan-Shui* pictorial art [12].

Fig. 4. Yarlung Tsangpo River Terminal (fifth façade and its relationship with the river). Credits: Chen Su, Wang Ziling.



An indigenous modernity which aspires to be "extremely contemporary without shouting it out" [Ke 2016] [13]; where the somatic features of the new –hence the characters, the materials and the way of working and laying them– derive from the indigenous ones –purged of vernacular accents thanks to a geometric simplification aimed at the abstraction of the exempla of the Modern– because he is convinced that "despite the tension towards its global affirmation […] architecture is still a very local practice, after all" [Ke 2016] [13].

Along the Grand Canyon of the Yarlung Tsangpo River

"The 'noble man' finds his joy
[in] the mountain and [in] the water".
[Confucio, ***Dialoghi***, VI, 21, p. 109]

The Linzhi area is in the southeast of the Tibet Autonomous Region in China, at the foot of Namchabawa, a mountain 7,782 m above sea level, near the Yarlung Tsangpo, the river that flows at the highest altitude in the world.
In this area, in just over five years, ZAO/standardarchitecture has managed to construct a constellation of small and medium-sized buildings –Namchabawa Contemplation (2008); Yarlung Tsangpo River Terminal (2008); Tibet Namchabawa Visitor Centre (2008); Niyang River Visitor Centre (2010); Grand Canyon Art Centre (2011); Yarlung Tzangbo River Hostel (2013); Niang'ou Boat Terminal (2013)– which, responding to the demand to enhance the local tourist vocation with new accommodation facilities [14], have distinguished themselves for their construction quality and deep understanding of the possibilities that lie in the interaction between architecture and indigenous characteristics of the place.
Ke's landscape design in this Tibetan series is an *ensemble* of autonomous elements; differing in orientation, in the relationship that the sections establish with the site, in the geometries that govern their plan compositions, and in the *dispositio* of the volumes or parts that compose them.
The seven 'pieces', of which at least four are river architectures while the others are located inland, differ in size –the interior spaces vary between 400 and 7,500 sq m– and settlement approach; while all are united by the totalizing use of local stone in the façade and in the paved parts, finished with wooden fixtures and details and simply plastered interiors.
The Namchabawa Contemplation (fig. 3) is a zero-volume intervention, obtained by redefining a pre-existing plateau, located near an ancient, sturdy mulberry tree, one thousand

three hundred years old. Paved with white gravel, on which megalithic boulders and new benches made from roughly cut blocks arranged in two rows stand out, this contemplation space located along a scenic road, constructs the ideal space from which to contemplate the leap in scale of the nearby peaks and begin to become aware of the landscape.
The Yarlung Tsangpo River Terminal (fig. 4) is a pier located near the small village of Pai Town. Its simple L-shaped volume rises from the ground like an inhabited ramp that wraps around a series of poplars, then descends to the various levels of the river, which varies by as much as 8 m in a year. The very simple functional program –public toilets, ticket office, waiting room and a hall, which can be used as guest quarters– is resolved with pathways and terraces that follow the contours of the levels, accompanying visitors from the riverbank to the rooftop belvedere, suspended over the water.
The Tibet Namchabawa Visitor Centre (fig. 5) is in Pei Town, on a slope between the river to the north and the Namchabawa peak in the background to the east, next to the road leading to the last village, Zhibai, deep in the Grand Canyon of the Yarlung Tsangpo. It is a visitor's center that is also used as a civic center, reservoir and thermal power station for the local community, as well as a supply base for hikers. The building is designed as a series of stone walls set into the slope, rotated with respect to the access road parallel to the river, in the direction of the valley. To handle the required functional complexity, the building was set up as a system of volumes of different heights, made of straight, one-meter-thick concrete walls faced with local stone.
The Niyang River Visitor Centre (fig. 6) is a small tourist reception center, located near the village of Daze, along the Mirui path; a tourist road that connects Tibet to the province of Sichuan. Along the Niyang River, in the 20 km leading to the Brahmaputra Canyon, one arrives at this isolated pavilion. It takes the form of a large, irregular, porous boulder, hollowed out in the roof and on the sides by five deep frames opening onto as many horizons. The central courtyard connects four openings, which house different functions: a ticket office, a changing room for rafting and toilets. The construction employs and develops traditional Tibetan building techniques: the masonry is load bearing, composed of thick stone; the roof is obtained with two frames of beams of different sizes and covered with a monolithic 15 cm layer of clay, in accordance with the Aga technique.
The Grand Canyon Art Centre (fig. 7) is located at an altitude of 2,900 m at the entrance to Pai Town, opposite the Tibet Namchabawa Visitor Centre. The site faces Duoxiongla

Fig. 5. Namchabawa Visitor Center (overall view of the north-west elevation). Credits: ZAO/standardarchitecture.

Fig. 6. Niyang River Visitor Centre (overall view and relationship with the river). Credits: Chen Su.

Fig. 7. Grand Canyon Art Centre (overall view and relationship with the mountains). Credits: ZAO/standardarchitecture.

Mountain to the south and the Yarlung Tzangbo River to the north; Namchabawa is visible to the east. Seen from a distance, the building resembles an abandoned quarry, or a deposit of dormant boulders detached from the mountain. Identifiable with the 'plate and tower' type, the two-story composition of the exhibition plan libre is based on an irregular polygonal grid.
The Yarlung Tzangbo River Hostel (fig. 8), located along the slope of the river, near Pai Town, near the River Terminal built in 2008, is the largest and most architecturally challenging of the seven. More than 7,000 sq m of covered area accommodates one hundred rooms and communal facilities, distributed over four different levels, in nine bodies on one floor each. The volumes, covered by earth, shrubs and rocks, seen from the river, have convex façades, whose continuous glazing, set back in the shadows, is overlaid by a thick stone band; while the fifth façade picks up on the soft, irregular geometries of the nearby terraced rice fields. In the words of the designer "seen from afar, the hostel disappears like a few thin leaves floating down the river" [Zhang 2015] [15].
The Niang'ou Boat Terminal (fig. 9) is a successful attempt to deconstruct a complex program by distributing it across the landscape, over a 29 m drop, and presenting it as a piece of land art [16]. It is a zigzagging path in which each twist forms a platform, serving not only as a transition between circulations, but also as a pause for contemplation. Cut into two parts by the highway, the high ramp organizes the car park, staff dormitories, offices, conference rooms and theatre, forming a wide platform at an altitude of 3,000 m, guiding the visitor's gaze towards the magnificent meeting of the rivers. In the low ramp, which ends with a quay next to the water, are the ticket office, toilets, waiting room, canteen and kitchen. The main body of the terminal consists of a concrete frame, filled with rubble and stones collected from around the site.
All of these are architectures that are characterized by a certain 'archaic' modernity and a topographical sensitivity with an almost geological matrix. These are the manifestations of ideas that seek to root themselves in places, not by rewriting the vernacular characters, spatial or distributive, of pre-existing local exempla, but by privileging the dialogue with the orography through a careful re-foundation of the ways in which they are attached to the ground.

Drawing with landscape

In architecture, the way of representing the landscape in an operational way –specifically the relationship between terrain-building-context– finds its best tool in the cross-section.

Fig. 8. Yarlung Tsangpo River Hostel (fifth façade and relationship with the river). Credits: Wang Ziling.

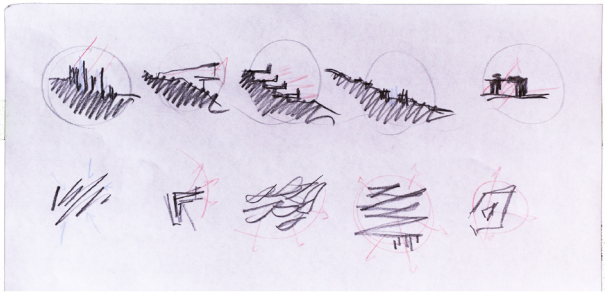
If with the frontal section one shows the new 'face' of the existing building, one only partially grasps the measures and relationships between the things that make up the 'flat' and distant picture of the landscape; in the cross-section, the ground line gives back the characters and qualities of the places, allowing the designer to com-prehend them in the project. Through the cross-section, which can accurately hold together both the scales of the landscape in its elevational development and that of the individual buildings, the designer is able to control the measurements and relationships between the parts and the whole and determine exactly how to settle and build.
By observing these case studies as a single collective work, it is possible to derive a taxonomy of the different settlement strategies experimented to construct a useful toolkit for architectural design thinking (fig. 10).
There are five identifiable modes.
With the emergent embedding or 'vertical outcrop' the building and ground are welded together, keeping them distinct; to uncover volumes and make them visible according to a figure-background logic. The orientation of the building with respect to the contour lines is necessarily determined, and therefore to be determined on a case-by-case basis, by the specific environmental conditions, but by favoring a counter-soil position one can more effectively confirm the initial intention of enhancing the architecture.
With the protruding or 'horizontal outcrop' the volume of the building can be broken down to adapt it to the slope of the terrain, making it appear as an out-of-scale geometry of the orography. In this case, the long-sloping layout, parallel to the contour lines, allows the building to integrate with the terrain, going so far as to hide from it in extreme cases.
The 'Suspension' raises the body of the building to gain an unprecedented vantage point over the landscape, and, by drawing a greater permeability to the ground plane, characterizes the building's ground connection with extraordinary inter-exterior spaces.
With the 'superimposition', which can become in the most radical cases almost a 'tracing' or 'resemblance by contact', the building is defined starting from paths or large voids found in situ, going on to geometrize them, transforming them into volumes and consequently to inhabit. In this mode, orientation is subjugated to the sign to be traced. The relationship with the outside is a consequence and not an imposition. This modality, as seen in the case of the Niang'ou Boat Terminal, but, if considered at its 'degree zero', which can also be identified with Namchabawa Contemplation, can also be described as a form of land art-architecture.
The 'standing on a flat level' can be used to describe the basic mode of the building-ground relationship. The simplest technically but not as much in planimetric definition, since, free of constraints, it can enjoy freedoms that the architect often perceives as complications. In fact, the extreme articulation of the Niyang River Visitor Centre or the Grand Canyon Art Centre result in weakening the clarity of the whole, which is all too corrupted by unjustified irregularities or difficult to grasp, beyond an easy, but dangerously arbitrary, analogy with the forms of nature.
From the analysis of this research by ZAO/standardarchitecture, it can therefore be derived that any architecture that aspires to establish a harmonious confrontation with valuable natural landscapes, must, or can, start from one of these modes, consistently confirming its characteristics at all scales of the project; trying not to add architectural details, if not necessary, and to operate an extreme simplification of geometry, so as to reduce the authorial imprint and, consequently, attempt to realize a temporally indefinable work, 'found in' and not 'imposed on' the place.

Fig. 9. Niang'ou Boat Terminal (overall view). Credit: Wang Ziling, Song Yuning.

Forms of incompleteness

"The theoreticians of Chinese painting –so wary of that which is accomplished in a particular form, and which does not 'avoid' complete realization– seem inclined to insist on the importance of non-saturation, so much so that as an exergue for their art they might write: 'It is necessary that, both above and below, there be emptiness and deficiency, and that on the four sides there be a distancing that allows passage, so that the object of representation may remain free –unbound– at ease'" [Jullien 2004, p. 11].
The work of ZAO/standardarchitecture in Tibet recalls these ancient principles insofar as its landscape fragments are, yes, always defined and recognizable, but never fully concluded (fig. 11). Oscillating between the concepts of unfinished, mutable, and incomplete or deteriorated, any artefact reminds us that "in the unfolding of temporal experience, it will be practically impossible to evade the sense of incompleteness" [Harrison 2017, p. 7]; or that architecture is a work that is never finished, in its half made of shadows, and always mutable in its dialogue with the Sun; or that the fourth dimension, entering the project without interruption, governs its destiny, and always prefigures its ruin. The latter, a condition apparently deplorable and to be avoided, according to one of the masters of the 20th century, is instead an essential quality of architecture. In fact, as is well known, Louis I. Kahn argued that architecture should be designed so that it can become good ruins, agreeing, perhaps unconsciously, with those who said that "after all, every builder only builds a forthcoming collapse" [Yourcenar 2014, p. 55].

Fig. 10. Building-ground relationship studies (transverse sections); plan layout studies (graphic elaboration by the author).



Of the work presented here, the category of conscious incompleteness is the one of interest. There are three forms that, resolved as 'collaborations', Zhang Ke uses to 'not saturate' the project with his own author's coinage, and, in so doing, leave his architecture 'free and at ease' to complete itself in time; time that may be the uncertain time of the project, the frenetic time of construction, or even the patient time of the geological eras that shape the landscape.
As already mentioned, Ke willingly leaves to the building site, and to the active collaboration of the workers, the possibility of completing 'on the spot' the design of the masonry equipment and thus the face of his architecture.
In the choice of materials, submitting his own eventual wishes to listening to the pre-existences, he selects only local ones for his architecture. Using thick stone for all the external surfaces of his various projects, he consciously seeks the fortunate collaboration of the 'great sculptor' [Yourcenar 2023], who, by corrupting the stone surfaces over time, scratching or patinating them, will enhance their qualities to sublimate the architecture within the landscape.
Another strategy is to have a collective approach [Kögel 2015, p. 2] to design, programmatically open to outside influences. In the specific case of this multi-year experience in Tibet, Zhang Ke has shared decisions on what to do with European firms and Chinese colleagues –Embaixada collaborates on the Niang'ou Boat Terminal; Zhao Yang on the Niyang River Visitor Centre– and with important local institutes: the Tibet Youdao Architectural Design Institute is mentioned in the credits of all the buildings, together with the China Academy of Building Research Architectural Design Institute; the latter, in the case of the Yarlung Tzangbo River Hostel is replaced by the Jizhun Fangzhong Architectural Design & Research Institute. By collaborating, Zhang Ke dilutes his authorial imprint; hybridizing his own visions with those of others, he corrupts his coinage, nevertheless achieving an outcome of great expressive force but managing to abstract it so much that it seems nameless and thus 'open' and 'unbound' and accessible (fig. 12).
Remembering, with Jean Luc Nancy, that "one does not determine the purpose of a place (this is the mistake of so many town planners, landscape architects). One can only let the place arrange itself according to its possibilities. One can give space to the place. This is called dwelling, or contemplating" [Nancy 2007, p. 81], Ke's method is concrete evidence of how this 'purpose' can be effectively translated into architectural design.

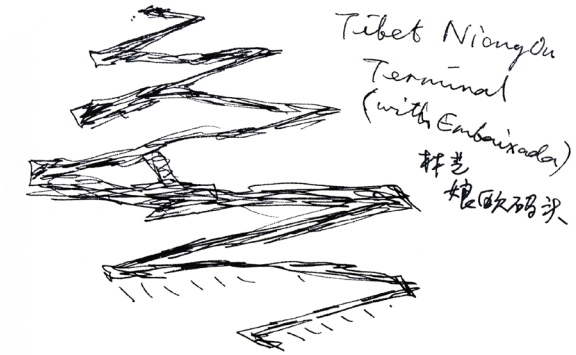


Fig. 11. Zan Ke, study drawing. Credits: Zhang Ke.

Fig. 12. Zan Ke, study drawing. Credits: Zhang Ke.

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Notes

[1] See the artist's website: <https://www.yangyongliang.com/phantom-landscape/6ynbiqfcqr0e4nx5ds52mewikxtlv0> (accessed 10 July 2024).

[2] See: <https://www.yangyongliang.com/phantom-landscape/6ynbiqfcqr0e4nx5ds52mewikxtlv0> (accessed 10 July 2024).

[3] "Paintings resemble the works of architects" [Shu 2013, p. 31].

[4] As an example: Wang Ximeng, Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains, 1113. The Palace Museum, Bejing (China).

[5] As an example: Dong Yuan, Along the Riverbank, before 962. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (USA).

[6] As an example: Li Cheng, Luxuriant forest and distant peaks, X century. Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang (China).

[7] See: Weng Fen's series Sitting on the Wall and Bird's Eye View.

[8] Bachelor at Tsinghua University in Beijing and Master at Harvard Graduate School of Design in Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA), Zhang Ke founded the firm ZAO/standardarchitecture in Shanghai in 2001. Visiting Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, he was a recipient of the Aga Khan Prize for Architecture in 2016 for his Beijing micro hutong renovation project called Micro Yuan'er Children's Library and Art Centre, Beijing. In 2017, he was awarded the Alvar Aalto Medal. In 2024, on the Venice Biennale, he exhibited his work in a monographic section at the Corderie dell'Arsenale.

[9] The 'architectural' declination of the metaphor of 'acupuncture', a practice of traditional Chinese medicine, used in this paper to define the strategy realised in the Namchabawa territory by ZAO/standardarchitecture, is intended to indicate a variation on the better-known technique of 'urban acupuncture', codified by the Finnish architect and sociologist Marco Casagrande [Casagrande 2010]. Interestingly, this modus operandi, which Zhang Ke implements but does not fully baptize, was taken up and codified by Tiantian Xu's DnA - Design and Architecture during a subsequent experience, carried out from 2014, serving rural communities in the Sonyang River Valley and published later by Hans-Jürgen Commerell and Kristin Feireiss [Commerell, Feireiss 2020].

[10] See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxg-A9vU1xo> (accessed 10 July 2024).

[11] "'Mani' means stone or precious stone and is a term that identifies

widespread constructions that Tibetans erect to pay homage to the Buddha" [Chiorino 2011, p. 51].

[12] "Landscape is said in Chinese to be 'mountain(s)-water(s)' (shan-shui), or 'mountain(s) and river(s)' (shan-chuan); also in modern Chinese, landscape painting is said to be shan-shui-hua" [Jullien 2004, p. 165].

[13] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxg-A9vU1xo> (accessed 10 July 2024).

[14] The client of all seven interventions is Tibet Tourism Holdings.

[15] Yarlung Tsangpo River Hostel, Tibet: <http://www.standardarchitecture.cn/Index/Index/details/id/162.html> (accessed 10 July 2024).

[16] See the description given by the co-designers on their site: <https://www.embaixada.net/design/niangou-boat-terminal_40> (accessed 10 July 2024).

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