

REFLECTION

P4 - Landscape Architecture Track

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Reflecting through the relationship to Flowscapes Studio

As part of the Flowscapes Studio, This project follows the main theme of the Circular Water Story Lab. The Circular Water Story Lab focuses on designing with water elements from ecological, social, and economical perspective. The Lab also stresses the narratives in landscape design, bringing people's engagement in the design to promote the role of the human as an essential part of landscape architecture.

The thesis Project *A New Watery Balance - Redefine The Scenic and Circular Waterscape in The Villages In Wuyuan, China* Brings people's sight to the water villages in Wuyuan, China, which people Misunderstand as poor and backward lands. However, people could still see the value of the rural life that the villagers live and work with nature, the fresh air, the green forest, the silky water, and the precious culture, and therefore, many people come to the countryside for tourism. However, the improper tourism model causes some negative influence on the villages, such as the big crowd of visitors, the over-commercialization, and the disappearance of the water culture and tradition of the village. The Sever climate change even deteriorates this situation by water management imbalance. As a landscape Architect, This project is aimed to, on the one hand, gain back, remodel and revitalize the rural watery life for both the inhabitants and the visitors. On the other hand, It promotes people's participation in the water activities and events to educate and raise their awareness of the value and quality of rural life.

The relationship between research and design

The research of this project consists of three aspects, the study of the traditional water system, the evaluation of the existing tourism, and the study of the water management imbalance issues. By exploring these three main topics, The interrelation between each topic is structured for the designer to seek the potential and vision for the future of Wuyuan. In this project, Design by research, research design method is applied. The research enables the designer to formulate the design vision from scale to scale. The research and proposal on the regional scale provide the big context and guideline that the design works are responding to. The research and proposal on the zoom-in scale fascinate the designer to explore and enrich the design possibility that cannot be shown on the regional scale. This scale to scale research approach provides coherent scopes to the designer. In the design process, the designer would look back to the research part, questioning, thinking, and re-framing the error in former research. This design by research, research by design method enables the designer to have a more comprehensive sight in back-forth process.

Elaboration on research method and approach

The Method used In this project is,

1. Learn from history, the traditional water knowledge to extract the value and quality of it. This extracted knowledge represents the identity and quality of the design site. It can still be revalued as part of the design tools nowadays.
2. Explore the potential and proposal for the future of Wuyuan based on the research.

3. Investigate the relevant case studies of three fields, which can be of essential help to the Design. They are Urban acupuncture, Rural regeneration, and Voluntourism. Extract the essence of the theories and turn them into principles.
4. Adapt the extracted traditional knowledge and principals from the case studies to the design process based on the potential and proposal pointed out in the research part.
5. Design Implementation

The Influence of the Outcome

The water elements are the main theme of the project, which brings the interventions together. The outcome of the project consists of two parts. The first part is a regional planning framework as a guideline to the design part of the project. This stresses the potential and strategy on a large scale. The vision of the large scale scopes on the strategy regarding the flooding issue, tourism development, and the development of the villages in framework. The second part is an exemplary village design following the regional framework. The exemplary design part scopes on the implementation of bringing back people's relationship to the water in space and program design. This exemplary village design can be a paradigm for the rest of the region. Thorough the whole design implementation, It redefines countryside life. As mentioned in the fascination chapter of this thesis, people, in general, have a positive impression on the environment of the villages. But they mostly appreciate the picture of this place not the water identity. This design shows the ambition to give people the impression that rural life can be of quality and benefit, and people can have a colorful life living and working with nature in the countryside.

Limitation and Dilemmas encountered in doing the project

The most difficult part of the project is the research part. Since this project is a village Project in China, where the data and maps are comparatively limited. It is hard to find the resources and data of the site. What makes the project more difficult is that I spent a large portion of time working on reading the resources and visualizing the information illustrated by text only. At the start, it was really tough for me, however, later I started to enjoy the process of understanding and extracting the knowledge from the resource and the visualization. Because, through this process, I have a more comprehensive understanding of the site condition instead of acquiring the maps and drawings directly from others. I have grown up more critical thinking of what is the essence of the resource, doubt the possible arguments in it.

The other difficulty I was facing is that I failed to go on a field trip to the village due to the strict lockdown by the Covid-19. Therefore, I need to read more resources and relevant cases to assume and test how things work out in the village. For instance, I figured out how the water system works in the project by studying another village in this region, which shares the same situation.

After going through all these up and down, I have gained experience in my academic skill, but also the persistence and courage in facing difficulties and challenges.