

For Immediate Release:

Bamboo Forest House completed in Taiwan to design by ROEWU, London



photo by Marc Gerritsen

ROEWUarchitecture based in London, UK have recently completed a vacation home for an extended family in eastern Taiwan. Located in a dense urban area and confined on two sides by blank party-walls the house must gain all its light and air from the street while maintaining privacy within. It was also essential to maintain security while windows are left open for natural ventilation. The narrow and elongated plot was addressed by placing a series of solid volumes along the length of the site, allowing void spaces in between to create continuity for light and air. A bamboo screen wraps around the house creating a buffer between the street and private life within.

On entering the house the experience is akin to being surrounded by an organic forest. Sun light, air and shadows filter through the bamboo poles into the spaces within. The mood and quality of the spaces changes during the course of a day and shifts with the changing seasons. In winter, a Karaoke Lounge and Spa on the second floor, form a focal point for bathing or singing. During summer, the roof deck with its variably patterned sun-shade system and surrounding bamboo, invites cooling breezes and becomes the family's favourite spot for outdoor living.

Taiwan is a country that is just beginning to be concerned about global warming and this project proposes a model for more sustainable development that fits with the climate and local lifestyles. The main source of energy consumption in Taiwanese buildings is air-conditioning during the long hot and humid summer months. By introducing several double and triple-height void spaces that penetrate through the heart of the house and open to the roof the whole house is naturally ventilated even though 2 sides of the site are party/ lot-line walls where no openings were allowed.

This openness, however brings security risks and the screen developed here by ROEWU addresses this with a radical updating of the conventional Taiwanese window screen. The new screen also proposes a new use for highly sustainable fast-growing, locally-sourced bamboo which is little used in construction at the moment.

The design of the bamboo screen is an example of ROEWU's research into the combination of hi-tech digital techniques with lo-tech fabrication. Using a detailed 3D model produced by the office in London, precise descriptions of every component were provided to the fabricators in Taiwan, who followed a series of quite simple step-by-step instructions to assemble the complex whole. A unique concealed fixing was also developed so that the bamboo poles appear to float in the air. The result is a dynamic dancing array; A unique form which combines digital calculation with an organic materiality. During the day, as the sun passes overhead, the bamboo screen catches the light in many different ways creating changing effects both inside and out.

Project Name: Bamboo Forest House
Location: Yi-Lan County, Eastern Taiwan
Construction: May 2007-April 2008
Area: 100 *ping* (330 M2)
Cost: NT\$10 M (US\$ 325,000)
Client: Confidential
Structural Engineer: JJ Lou, New York
General Contractor: Tsai Construction, Yi-Lan
Screen: Chuang Steel, Yi-Lan County.

Further information about the project, a press pack and/or complete photo-documentation by Marc Gerritsen and the designers can be obtained from:

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More about ROEWU:

ROEWU is a young office with a global pedigree. Currently based in London the office was founded in New York City in 2003 as a collaboration between Stephen Roe (Ireland) and Chiafang Wu (Taiwan). Since then the office has won many awards including the Young Architects Award from the Architectural League of New York in 2005, First Prize in the Competition for Ephemeral Structures for the Athens Olympics in 2004, the Kalil Fellowship for Smart Design in 2003 and the Kevin Kieran Award from the Arts Council of Ireland in 2007 among others. The office represented the UK at the 2006 Beijing Biennale, and is currently undertaking a major funded research project on the Weather and Architecture.

The partners have taught and carried out research at schools in the US and the UK focussing mainly on architectural materials, digital technologies and qualitative relations between buildings and their environments. Both partners were 2004-05 Emerging Practitioner Fellows at the Ohio State University and have also taught a graduate level Diploma Unit at the Architectural Association in London.