

Swiss Quality – Chinese Speed

The Sino-Swiss architecture practice EXH Design operates as a general planner and architect in Shanghai and Zurich; what makes it so special is its combination of Asian aesthetics with Chinese speed and Swiss quality.

Oriental culture and aesthetics has been inspiring western architecture for more than a century. In parallel to this ongoing influence, Chinese architecture practices themselves are now making their way to the middle of Europe. One of the more extraordinary Sino-Swiss hybrids is the Chinese architect Zhang Xi, whose take on architecture combines western and Asian culture. In 2006 she founded the architecture studio EXH Design in Shanghai and then went on to open a second office in Zurich in 2016.

"We are strongly influenced by the Chinese attitude in which inside and outside space, humanity and nature are seen as a unity" explains Zhang Xi on the central theme of Chinese thinking and the aesthetics found within it. At the same time Zhang Xi brings Chinese work ethics to Zurich. "In China we have learnt to adapt to the changing market environment in a fast, open and flexible manner." Decisive for the opening of the office in Zurich was the growing interest of Chinese clients in the European market and the personal background of Zhang Xi herself. Immediately after her studies in Shanghai she worked for the world renowned Swiss architecture studio of Herzog & de Meuron in Basel, where she met Erich Diserens who would go on to become her office partner. A second degree at the ETH Zurich followed which also shaped her view on the world in general. "Coming to Zurich was a liberating experience. Creativity, having an own opinion and analytical approach were not in high demand in China".

With these insights she returned to her home country and straight away started to realise a whole row of projects through her practice EXH Design. Be it the Fullshare CEO Office in Nanjing, 2010, the Roche Campus in Shanghai, 2011, or the private residence in Kyoto, 2016 - the natural elements of earth and water along with the relationship of humanity with nature are at the focus of her work. The high-quality buildings are preceded by a strategic planning process and careful detail work, something that can only be achieved with a strong will in the high-speed driven Chinese building culture. The adaptation to local technology and building knowhow come naturally to EXH Design and lead to extraordinary results. The basic aesthetic premises of the East - the emptiness in context - is seen by the practice as a framework for life, in which social interaction is at the forefront.

Website: <http://www.exhdesign.com>

Press images can be accessed at : <https://photos.gisela-graf.com/EXH-Design>

In case of publication we would appreciate receiving a copy of the article. Thank you very much.