

ACYA

E - BULLETIN

ISSUE 5 - JANUARY 2026



# new dawn new age

ARCASIA  
COMMITTEE  
ON YOUNG  
ARCHITECTS

**Editor** Ar. Yasmin Rahman

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CYBERJAYA, SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

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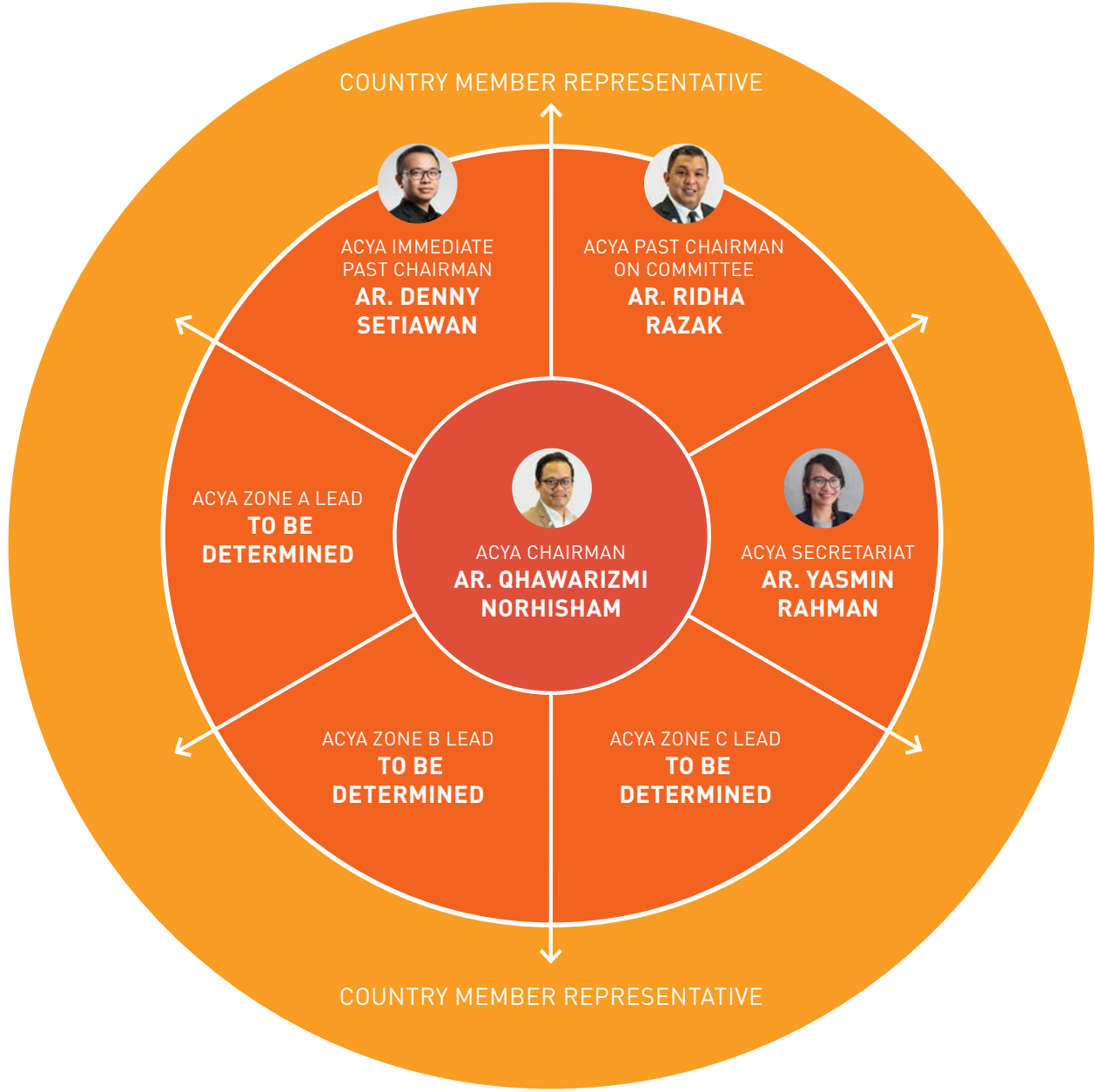
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TERM 2026 - 2027

The structure of ACYA is intentionally designed to ensure continuity, contextual understanding, and operational effectiveness within a committee that spans diverse countries, cultures, and professional realities across the ARCASIA region. The inclusion of the Immediate Past Chairman and Past Chairman on the ACYA Council serves as a critical bridge between past experience and future direction. Their roles are not ceremonial, but strategic. Zone Lead(s) allow regional activities conducted in their geographical proximity. Where context,

practice realities and political dynamic might has influence over the development of young architect’s developments. They will provide vital clustered coordination. Given ACYA’s regional scale and the voluntary nature of committee roles, the Secretariat plays a vital operational role in ensuring smooth, consistent, and professional committee functioning. This role allows elected committee members to focus on strategy, leadership, and programme direction, while day-to-day coordination and execution are managed efficiently.

COMMITTEE

Since its establishment in 2015, the ARCASIA Committee on Young Architects (ACYA) has grown from a shared aspiration into a meaningful regional platform for young architects across Asia. What began as an idea—born from the need for representation, connection, and dialogue—has evolved into a collective journey shaped by dedication, collaboration, and shared purpose.

Over the years, ACYA has witnessed changing contexts: shifts in professional practice, emerging technologies, evolving social responsibilities, and new challenges faced by young architects. Yet through these changes, the spirit of ACYA has remained constant—rooted in the belief that young architects, when empowered and connected, can contribute positively to both the profession and society.

This bulletin reflects not only the activities and voices of the present

term, but also the layered efforts of those who came before us. Each initiative, forum, and exchange builds upon the foundations laid by past councils, chairs, and contributors who believed in the importance of nurturing young talent across borders.

As Editor, I see this bulletin as more than a record of events. It is a living archive—capturing ideas, experiences, and reflections that speak to our collective growth. It is also an invitation: for young architects to share their stories, learn from one another, and continue shaping ACYA as a platform that is inclusive, relevant, and forward-looking.

As ACYA moves into its next chapter, may we continue to honour its journey while remaining open to new voices, new questions, and new possibilities. The strength of ACYA has always been its people—and it is through our shared contributions that its story continues to unfold.

(PAM) MALAYSIA

AR. YASMIN  
RAHMAN

ACYA Bulletin Editor



EDITOR’S  
Note



# COLLECTIVE STRENGTH







The Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA) is a leading professional organization that represents architectural institutes across Asia. Founded with the vision of strengthening collaboration among Asian architectural bodies, ARCASIA plays a vital role in shaping architecture, education, and practice within the region.

From the beginning, ARCASIA has pursued a set of core objectives designed to strengthen the architectural profession across Asia. Some of its objective includes uniting national architectural institutes; fostering intellectual, artistic, educational, and scientific ties; advancing architectural research, education and technical innovation; and facilitating dialogue between member institutes, governments, and global organizations.

Since its inception, ARCASIA has expanded significantly. Initially composed of six founding

member institutes, it has grown to include 22 member institutes from across Asia, representing diverse architectural cultures and practices.

trends, and innovations in architecture; ARCASIA Awards for Architecture, an annual awards program recognizing outstanding architectural projects across Asia; ARCASIA Thesis of the Year Awards, a platform promoting cutting-edge design thinking among architecture students; and ARCASIA Forum, a regular forum that facilitates conversations on emerging topics.

As an umbrella organization, ARCASIA plays a pivotal role in uniting architectural institutes across diverse cultural, economic, and environmental contexts in Asia. Its initiatives foster professional camaraderie, elevate architectural standards, and provide forums for critical dialogue on global challenges such as sustainability, social equity, and urban resilience.







## ARCASIA COMMITTEE ON YOUNG ARCHITECTS

In the dynamic and diverse world of Asian architecture, the ARCASIA Committee on Young Architects (ACYA) stands as a vital platform dedicated to nurturing the next generation of professionals. Established under the umbrella of ARCASIA, ACYA focuses on empowering architects under the age of 40 with opportunities for leadership, collaboration, innovation, and professional growth.

ACYA was created to address the unique needs of emerging architects and to offer them a structured space within ARCASIA's framework where their voices, ideas, and professional aspirations could be recognised and supported. ACYA operates as part of ARCASIA's broader committee system, alongside other focus groups such as architectural education, professional practice, and social responsibility.

Asia is one of the most architecturally dynamic regions in

the world, characterised by rapid urbanisation, cultural diversity, and evolving social needs. In this context, ACYA's role is especially significant as it elevates voices of young professionals in a region where experience is traditionally prized, bridges cultural and professional gaps between countries with different architectural traditions, promotes innovation and fresh perspectives on regional and global challenges, and encourages a future generation of leaders who are globally connected and locally rooted.

As ACYA continues to evolve, it remains focused on expanding opportunities for engagement, fostering resilient and diverse leadership, and integrating young architects into the broader ARCASIA mission. The committee's activities empower individuals and contribute to the sustainable and socially responsive development of architecture across the Asian region.





**(IAP) PAKISTAN**

# AR. FAWAD SUHAIL ABBASI

Past Chairperson ACYA 2015-2016



Young architects today face a world that is rapidly changing, environmentally, socially, technologically, and culturally. These changes bring challenges that stretch beyond drawing boards and software screens. They ask us not only to design spaces, but to rethink the role of architecture as a force for harmony, resilience, and justice.

One of the core challenges our generation must address is how architecture can respond meaningfully to climate fragility, social fragmentation, and the urgent needs of communities whose voices are often unheard. Young architects should engage with these issues not as abstract theories, but as real conditions that shape human life and dignity. We must work to understand how local materials speak, how natural light informs comfort, how cultural narratives enrich built form, and how architecture can heal rather than harm.

This term, I hope young architects will aspire to be thoughtful practitioners of context. Aspiring

architects must strive not to mimic global trends, but to interpret their own regions, climates, histories, and languages. Synthesising tradition with innovation. As designers, our work should be rooted in observation, looking at the world with open curiosity, humility, and a deep commitment to humanity. The beauty of architecture lies not in visual spectacle, but in the timelessness of meaning, comfort, and purpose.

Young architects should also see themselves as collaborators and community builders. Architecture does not exist in isolation, it is shaped through dialogue with users, craftspeople, policymakers, and nature itself. In this era, architects must advocate for equity in space, for culturally responsive design, and for sustainable practices that respect people and planet. We should value social responsibility as much as technical skill, and contextual empathy as much as conceptual originality.

From ACYA, I hope to see a renewed commitment to bridging diversity with unity. ACYA's strength lies in

its collective energy, the ability of young architects from different cultures and countries to learn from one another. I hope this term will see more shared platforms for knowledge, mentorship networks, collaborative research, and cross-border projects that reflect the realities of the Asian context. I hope ACYA nurtures leaders with compassion, ideas with impact, and initiatives with deep engagement.

Ultimately, architecture is not just about buildings, it is about the people who live through them. I hope ACYA will continue to cultivate architects who are unafraid to challenge convention, eager to explore new paradigms, and ever mindful of the profound responsibility we hold toward future generations. May this term be one of bold aspirations, grounded action, and enlightened community.

**(SIA) SINGAPORE**

# AR. TAN SZUE HANN

Past Chairperson ACYA 2017-2018



It has been a decade since I took on the mantle of chairing the ARCASIA Committee on Young Architects (ACYA). In these years, I find myself reflecting less on the role I once held and more on the trajectory it set in motion. At that time, my focus was understandably immediate: how to represent a diverse generation of architects across Asia, in its ever growing stature in the global arena; how to create platforms for dialogue; and how to ensure that young voices were not only heard, but respected. With the distance afforded by the time that has passed, however, I now see that the experience reshaped the way I understand leadership, community, and the expanding boundaries of architectural practice itself. More than that, it has given me a bit more acuity on trying to understand the global condition.

Chairing ACYA taught me that architecture is, at its core, a social act; one that sits at the intersection of culture, economics, policy, and environment. Working with peers from widely varying geographies and contexts, forced me to confront how unevenly opportunity,

resources, and professional agency are distributed across our region. That exposure instilled in me a nagging discomfort with the narrow boundaries within which we typically define success. It catalysed within me a stronger conviction that architects must engage natural and social systems, geopolitical conditions, and even embrace threats of a more uncertain future. That has then shaped both my life and my professional career and has led me to believe that we ultimately become the rock that we so desperately seek to build on.

## ***Stepping Out beyond the Chair.***

In the years since, my professional scope has widened deliberately. Sustainability was never a departure from architecture, but an extension of it. The questions I now grapple with, are simply the macro-scale consequences of decisions we used to debate in design studios. What has changed was my vantage point: instead of

asking how a building should look or function, I began asking how it performs over its life cycle, how it affects communities beyond its footprint and, crucially, how capital can be directed to trigger greater returns, and reward better outcomes.

Looking back, chairing the ARCASIA Committee on Young Architects was less a peak and more a foundation. It sharpened my awareness of regional responsibility, collective leadership, and the need for architects to evolve with the challenges of their time. Ten years on, I am now an architect of broader systems, guided by the same conviction that design, when coupled with strategy and stewardship, can shape a more resilient future.

These are the values and philosophies I will take on as I now assume leadership of the ARCASIA Committee for Green and Sustainable Architecture for the next two years. A full circle moment, perhaps, but more so a testimony to the foundation that ACYA builds.



(PAM) MALAYSIA

# AR. RIDHA RAZAK

Past Chairperson ACYA 2019-2021



## *One Sky, One Vision, One Future.*

Dear ACYA Members,

It gives me great pride and joy to see ACYA continue to grow, evolve, and adapt to the changing times. After the inspiring leadership of Ar. Bisma from Pakistan and Ar. Denny from Indonesia, the helm now returns to Malaysia under the capable guidance of Ar. Qhawarizmi. This smooth continuity of leadership across nations reflects the true spirit of ACYA, an alliance built on diversity, collaboration, and the shared belief that architecture can transform lives and societies.

During my tenure as Chairman from 2019 to 2021, I placed strong emphasis on preparing young architects for the future: nurturing leadership, embracing technological advancement, promoting sustainable and green design, and celebrating our cultural and heritage roots. These pillars, I believe, remain timeless and must

continue to guide us as we step into new horizons.

The world we face today is even more complex. We stand at the edge of profound changes driven by artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and new forms of mobility. For architects, these are not challenges to fear but opportunities to embrace. ACYA must position itself as a platform that equips young architects with the ability to adapt, innovate, and collaborate across borders.

We need to create stronger networks, open doors for mobility and exchange, and encourage joint projects that transcend geographical boundaries. At the same time, we must be pragmatic. For the profession to thrive, young architects must not only be visionary but also financially resilient.

Architecture cannot be sustained by passion alone but it requires viable pathways for practice, fair opportunities, and entrepreneurial courage. It is my hope that ACYA continues to empower its members with knowledge, tools, and

networks to build careers that are both meaningful and sustainable.

Yet, amidst all these changes, one truth remains constant: architecture is for the people. It is for the public. Every building, every space, every design carries with it a responsibility to uplift communities and to contribute to a better future.

Let us always remember that our ultimate role is to serve society, and in doing so, we create architecture that is truly timeless and impactful. To the new committee and members of the 2025–2026 term, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and leave you with a poem:

Beneath one sky our visions meet,  
Heritage strong, the future's seat,  
With ACYA's hands, young dream revive,  
To serve the people, keep ARCASIA alive.

May this be a term filled with courage, collaboration, and creativity. May ACYA continue to pave new paths and inspire young architects across Asia to dream bigger, work harder, and build with purpose.

(IAP) PAKISTAN

# AR. BISMA ASKARI

Past Chairperson ACYA 2022-2023



## *Step forward. Step together.*

To be a young architect today, under forty, is to enter a world still being written, a ground that shifts beneath your feet. Cities breathe, fracture, and demand attention, layered with memory, urgency, and possibility. You inherit questions without answers, structures without justice, systems mid-collapse and mid-birth. This is not a delay. This is the threshold. This is where becoming begins, where your hands, your lines, your choices shape the future of architecture itself.

As Buckminster Fuller said, "The best way to predict the future is to design it." Every line you draw, every space you shape, carries weight, power and care, inclusion and exclusion, permanence and change. Architecture is never neutral. To design is to act. To design is to take responsibility, for form, for consequence, for the lives your spaces touch.

Be architects who listen fiercely before speaking, who read the city as a living, breathing text, attentive to what is spoken and what has been erased. Let curiosity drive you restless. Let empathy anchor you. The most powerful architecture rarely shouts. It seeps. It holds. It transforms, in dignity restored, access granted, lives made gentler by spaces that care.

Walk together. The era of the solitary "master builder" is gone. Today, architects are collaborators, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, learning from engineers, urbanists, social scientists, artists, and communities. Dialogue, mentorship, shared courage, these are not optional; they are the lifeblood of meaningful change. Leadership is claimed through action, integrity, and the courage to lift others as you rise.

This is the spirit of ACYA. Not a title, not a moment, but a living network, where young voices are not only heard, but united. A platform where curiosity meets accountability, where collective voices transform ideas into action,

and where emerging leaders together define not just spaces, but the culture of architecture itself. Rooted in service, carried forward with courage, care, and solidarity.

Step forward with fire, conviction, and a united purpose. Together, rise as one collective voice and shape the future of architecture.

The Future of Architecture Starts With Us.



**(IAI) INDONESIA**

**AR. DENNY  
SETIAWAN**

Immediate Past Chairperson ACYA 2024-2025

**Happy New Year 2026.**

**May this season of celebration bring renewed hope, collective strength, and optimism as we move forward into a better year ahead.**

The year 2026 marks a significant new chapter for the **ARCASIA Committee of Young Architects (ACYA)**.

This milestone begins with the appointment of a new Chairman, Qhawarizmi Norhisham, whose leadership is expected to bring fresh vision, renewed energy, and strategic programs that respond to the evolving challenges and aspirations of young architects across the region.

This new leadership is further strengthened by the presence of representatives from member institutes, who not only represent their respective organizations but also serve as vital links between national contexts and the broader regional platform of ACYA.

As the **Immediate Past Chairman**, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all new officers and members. It is my sincere hope that ACYA will continue to be a safe, inclusive, and inspiring home for its community—a platform where ideas can be exchanged, collaborations can be formed, and professional as well as leadership capacities can be nurtured. More

than an organization, ACYA must consistently safeguard its core spirit: a strong commitment to delivering meaningful and sustainable benefits to its members.

The period of 2024–2025 can be recognized as a particularly positive phase for the development of young architects. Numerous initiatives and activities were carried out at both institutional and multinational levels.

Clear and tangible outcomes demonstrate that these efforts have created valuable opportunities for emerging talents to grow, gain international exposure, and engage with contemporary architectural discourse. Within this context, ACYA has served as a regional platform and a point of reference, supporting young architects in their journey of learning, collaboration, and professional development.

During this period, ACYA contributed through the organization of the **Youth Talk at the Kuala Lumpur Architecture Festival (KLAF) 2024**, as well as the **Emerging Voices Exhibition and Talk** held as part of the **ARCASIA Forum in Incheon**.

These initiatives functioned not only as platforms for presenting works and ideas, but also as spaces for cross-cultural dialogue that enriched the perspectives of all participants.

I firmly believe that ACYA's role as a **bridge for young architects**, connecting individuals, institutions, countries, and generations—will become increasingly significant in the years ahead.

In the face of growing global challenges, young architects are called upon not only to excel professionally, but also to embody and promote values of humanity, sustainability, and peace within their practices. Achieving this vision requires the active participation and collective responsibility of every individual within ACYA.

I am confident that under the leadership of Qhawarizmi Norhisham, ACYA will sustain and build upon this positive momentum, further strengthening its role in fostering a healthier, more collaborative, and more resilient professional environment for young architects at both regional and global levels.





(PAM) MALAYSIA

# AR. QHAWARIZMI NORHISHAM

ACYA Chairperson 2026-2027

**Empowering young architects through a dynamic, cyclical approach focused on collaboration, growth, and actionable outcomes.**

Architecture, at its best, is not a linear pursuit. It is iterative, reflective, and collective. In the same spirit, ACYA must function not as a one-off platform, but as a continuous loop of empowerment. Where ideas are generated, tested, refined, and translated into impact that benefits the wider ecosystem of young architects across the region.

As I assume the role of Chairperson of ACYA, I extend my deepest gratitude to all past Chairpersons who have shared their motivation, conviction, and inspiration in leading the young architects' movement across Asia. Their leadership has shaped ACYA into what it is today and laid the foundation upon which we continue to build.

With 24 member countries under ARCASIA, ACYA must now evolve beyond a platform of representation into a truly interconnected professional ecosystem, one that enables meaningful networking, facilitates exchange opportunities, and continuously propagates ideas, collaboration, and inspiration across borders.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the ARCASIA Council members for entrusting me with the role of ACYA Chairperson. I carry this trust with humility and a deep sense of responsibility. Your confidence is not taken lightly; it is a mandate that I accept as both an honour and a burden. To ensure that the voice, growth, and future of young architects in our region are continuously advanced.

My journey with ACYA began seven years ago, during STORMATHON KL, where I was entrusted to lead a Future Practice workshop under the Chairmanship of Ar. Ridha Razak. That period marked my first deep engagement with ACYA, not merely as a participant, but as a contributor to its evolving agenda.

During the same term, ACYA explored new territories and formats. We experimented with an E-Sports Stadium design competition, supported the production of the ACYA Bulletin, and initiated the ACYA Alumni Design Lecture Series—all driven by a shared desire to expand how young architects learn, exchange

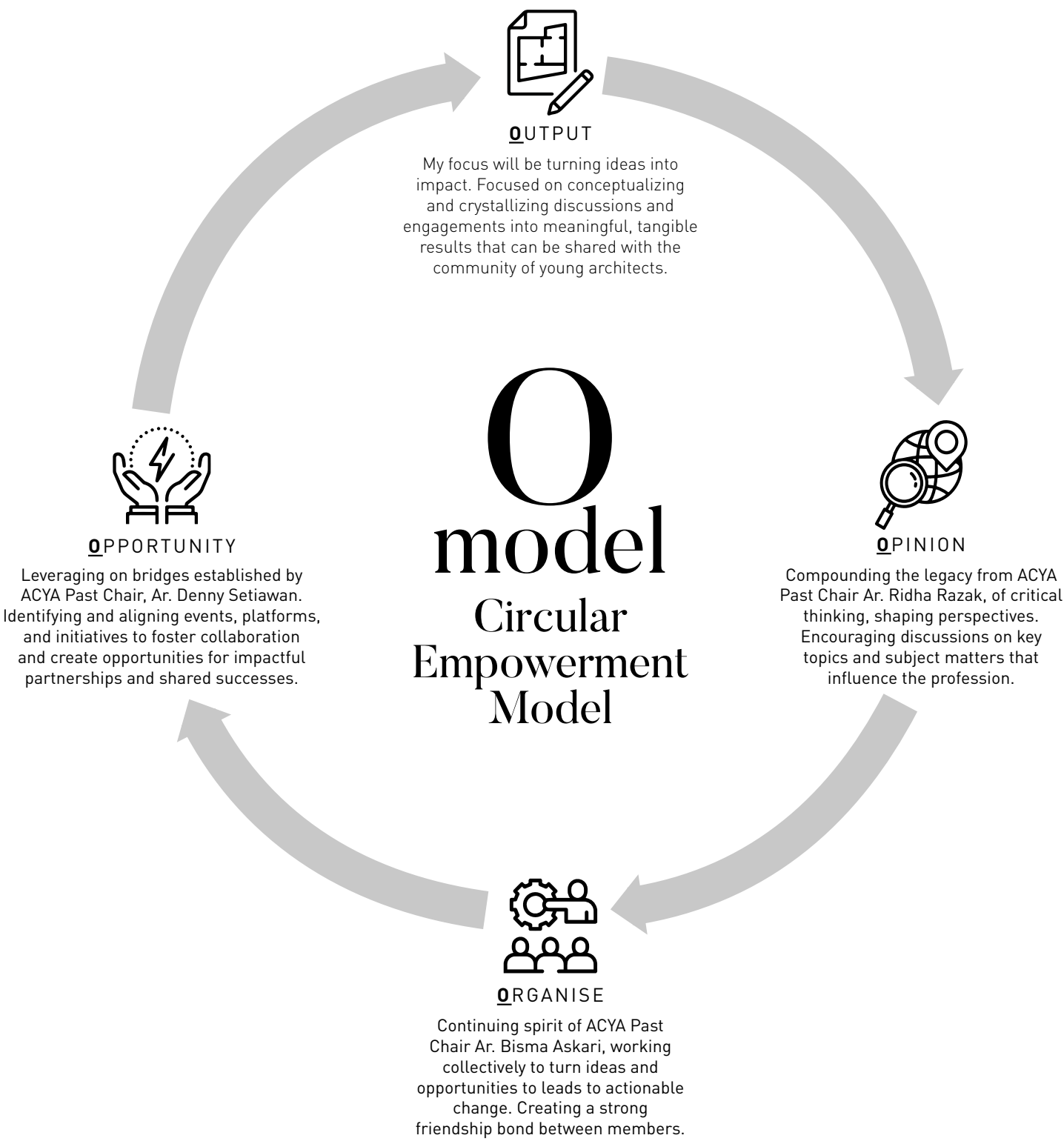
ideas, and engage with one another beyond conventional platforms.

In the subsequent term under Ar. Denny Setiawan's leadership, our collaboration continued and matured. Together, we organised Emerging Voices of Asia, bringing an architectural exhibition to Incheon. A significant milestone for ACYA. It was particularly meaningful as it marked one of the first occasions where ACYA presented physical architectural models alongside an ACYA Forum, reinforcing the importance of tangible work, shared discourse, and regional presence on an international stage.

These experiences shaped my understanding of ACYA not as a static committee, but as a living, evolving ecosystem. Built through trust, experimentation, and collective effort. They continue to inform how I approach leadership today: with respect for continuity, openness to new formats, and a strong belief in translating ideas into meaningful action.



# Vision Outlay



# Core Initiatives

1	2	3	4	5
Platforming	Output	Elevate	Advocacy	Empowering
<b>Raising the bar</b>	<b>Punching the ceiling</b>	<b>Healthy Profession</b>	<b>Spearhead Next Gen</b>	<b>Continuous &amp; Perpetual</b>
Provide space and opportunity for young architects to <u>share their ideas, vision and ideals.</u>	Deliverables focus to ensure <u>propagation of positive impact in youth ecosystem.</u>	Array of initiative to improve knowledge, and network for <u>holistic personal uplift.</u>	Contribution to other focus group to <u>improve the future of the next generation.</u>	Support and encourage youth activities to induce <u>self-initiative synergy.</u>

At the heart of my leadership is a Circular Empowerment Model, a system where dialogue leads to action, action leads to learning, and learning feeds back into stronger ideas and communities.

My focus is to turn ideas into impact. Discussions, forums, workshops, and exchanges must not end as conversations alone. They should be conceptualised, crystallised, and transformed into meaningful, tangible outcomes, deliverables that can be shared, replicated, and built upon by young architects across borders.

## Raising the Bar

We will create spaces and opportunities for young architects to articulate their ideas, visions, and ideals. ACYA should be a platform that challenges young professionals to think deeper, speak bolder, and aspire higher, pushing intellectual and ethical standards across the region.

## Punching the Ceiling

Beyond inspiration, we will

emphasise deliverables. Programs and initiatives will be outcome-driven, ensuring that positive impact is not contained within events, but propagated throughout the youth architectural ecosystem, locally and regionally.

## Healthy Profession

A resilient profession begins with well-supported individuals. ACYA will introduce initiatives that strengthen knowledge, expand networks, and encourage holistic personal and professional growth, recognising that mental, social, and intellectual wellbeing are integral to architectural practice.

## Spearheading the Next Generation

Young architects today carry a responsibility to shape the future for those who follow. ACYA will actively contribute to cross-committee and cross-disciplinary efforts, supporting policies, platforms, and initiatives that improve pathways for the next generation of architects.

## Continuous & Perpetual Engagement

Empowerment must be sustained. ACYA will support and encourage youth-led initiatives, fostering self-driven activities and organic collaboration. By nurturing synergy rather than dependency, we aim to build a culture of continuous engagement and shared ownership.

ACYA's strength lies in its people. Diverse, passionate, and deeply connected to their local realities. My hope is that through this term, ACYA will not only represent young architects, but enable them to act, lead, and leave a lasting impact on the profession and society at large.

**Young Architects aspire to heal the problems of yesterday, and tomorrow, today.**

# EXPERIENCES & SCENARIOS





*Japanese cultural room in the National University of Singapore, SINGAPORE*

# Architecture through the Lens of Multicultural Living Experience



Kohei Hayashi-Alleman  
JIA, Japan

The question of what architecture is has already been asked many times.

As a question, it has been defined, critiqued, updated, and sometimes denied alongside the rise of modern architecture, this question has repeatedly fulfilled its role throughout history. And yet, we continue to circle around it. It is not so much that the question itself holds novelty, but rather that the very act of continually returning to it seems to linger as a kind of inertia within the practice of architecture. Living between the two cultural contexts of Switzerland and Japan has offered me not so much an opportunity to renew this question, but rather a lens through which to observe how it has been reflexively, almost unconsciously, reproduced over time.

Experiences of different cultures are often spoken of in terms of “diversity” or “sensitivity.” In reality, however, they function more like a device that exposes the architect’s selfhood as unstable and provisional. Values that hold meaning in one place can be easily rendered meaningless in another. Every attempt to define oneself is relativized by context and gradually hollowed out. Intercultural experience does not grant a new identity; it relentlessly confronts the architect with the fragility and provisionality of their very being.

Architecture emerges at the intersection of multiple institutional forces: client demands, legal frameworks, site conditions, and economic constraints. In this process, it is doubtful how much the architect’s “intentions” or “beliefs” truly matter. Intentions are often translated into the language of

institutions, and beliefs erode within procedures. Perhaps the architect is closer to an observer who happens to witness the noise and discrepancies generated by these systems, accepting them without being fully in control. Architecture does not arise from the strength of the subject; rather, it barely takes shape in a space where the subject continues to waver.

The distinction between star architects and anonymous architects is another mythological construct that modern architecture could never entirely relinquish. Those who stand on the stage, and those who support from behind—the difference is not essential, and many architects understand this. Yet, this distinction has been repeatedly preserved by architects themselves. Perhaps the problem is not which category one belongs to, but that the distinction itself is still believed to be valid, and that architectural value is considered measurable through this narrative.

Tradition, too, offers no safe harbour. Elements such as tatami mats or sukiya architecture have been repeatedly cited as symbols of Japanese-ness, yet they are merely residual images, already filtered through countless translations, misreadings, institutionalizations, and forms of consumption. Each time tradition is preserved, it transforms; each time it is referenced, it accrues new meanings. If architectural elements are reinterpreted abroad to create new social contexts, this is not an accurate “transmission” of Japanese culture. Rather, it is the moment when the very concept of Japanese culture is deconstructed and reassembled into a new form.



Japan has long been considered a place where cultural influences arrive last. Yet this delay is not simply a disadvantage. It places one in the position of witnessing, for the last time, value systems already in the process of collapse.

The eclecticism found in pseudo-Western architecture (Giyo-fu) is not evidence of successful cross-cultural understanding; it is the trace of different logics forcibly coexisting in the same space without full comprehension. These distortions and inconsistencies, when looked back upon, reveal

and continuously updates human knowledge, a medium as heavy, immovable, and site-bound as architecture may be becoming outdated. In such a moment, the necessity for architects to remain the primary agents of creation is quietly fading as well.

And yet, we continue to build. The reasons are unclear. Not social duty, not cultural responsibility. We do not sincerely believe that architecture will solve anything. We merely hold the illusion that something, not yet articulated, remains in the gaps between



Goldfish bowl, SINGAPORE

themselves as the fault lines of an era.

Architecture is often said to endure into the future, yet this is closer to a liability than to hope. Before being a device to preserve human knowledge, architecture is a collection of what could not be discarded, of what has failed to be forgotten.

In an age when AI externalizes

systems. As long as that illusion persists, we cannot stop our hands.

This awareness emerges daily in my own design practice. It becomes most vivid not as an abstract idea in the mind, but in the very process of creating concrete spaces. For



Kohei Hayashi-Allemann

example, in the Japanese cultural room I designed at a university in Singapore, we incorporated local materials and climate conditions while creating a space where bodily cultural practices such as Japanese dance, tea ceremony, and flower arrangement could be experienced as performative acts within the architecture.

This was not simply an export of form, but an attempt to reconstruct the spatial sensibility of Japanese culture through engagement with the local bodies and social contexts.

Bowl.” In these accumulations of small experiences, architecture appears not merely as form but as a device in which concepts are materialized—a residue of meaning emerging in the interstices of systems and context.

**And yet, we continue to build. The reasons are unclear.**



Traditional house renovation, SWITZERLAND

Traditional tea room in Nomura Museum, Kyoto, JAPAN

This project is more than a mere “case of architecture.” The abstract idea of witnessing the gaps in systems and generating form amidst uncertainty intersected with real conditions to manifest as a concrete space. As a result, within the glass-enclosed, stage-like installation, the movements of people become visible from the outside, and local users affectionately call it the “Goldfish





# Architecture as Civic Infrastructure

## Reclaiming Community in a Rapidly Urbanising Malaysia

*A recycled aluminium kinetic façade reflects the shimmering textures of Seri Kembangan's tin-mining past, transforming industrial memory into a living architectural surface*



Esmonde Yap Shiwen  
PAM, Malaysia

Cities evolve through decisions we make, sometimes consciously, often quietly. In Malaysia, the last two decades have reshaped not only the skylines of Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Penang, and Perak, but also the rhythms of everyday life. Between 2010 and 2020, more than a thousand commercial buildings were approved in Kuala Lumpur alone, signalling a development culture driven by economic imperatives. Yet behind these numbers lies a more subtle and profound transformation, which is the gradual erosion of public spaces that once anchored our collective experience.

Growing up in Kuala Lumpur, I witnessed this shift intimately. The playground behind my childhood home gave way to a commercially viable development. A field that once hosted evening football matches was replaced by two 43-storey apartment towers. The nearby market, once alive with the sounds of hawkers and the smell of fresh produce, was eventually absorbed into another high-rise footprint. Publicness became a commodity, belonging became something you had to pay for. These losses were not merely architectural, they were emotional, social, and formative.

These early memories shaped how I now understand architecture: not as object-making, but as a form of civic infrastructure, a framework capable of holding culture, memory, and community together. Much of my work today is a response to this lived experience, an attempt to restore the relational spaces that rapid development has swallowed. My engagement in academia, teaching a design studio on affordable social housing and communal open spaces, further

sharpened this pursuit. Working with students to rethink density, liveability, and shared ground surfaces revealed how urgently Malaysian cities need public environments that are inclusive, generous, and emotionally resonant.

In Malaysia, public space carries a cultural significance that extends beyond recreation. As a nation of many ethnicities, religions, and traditions, the places where we meet such as markets, plazas, small parks, neighbourhood halls form the foundation of our coexistence. When these spaces disappear, so does the opportunity for mutual understanding.

Public spaces are where Malaysians encounter one another in unscripted ways, where the elderly chat on benches, migrant workers gather on their day off, teenagers stake out territories, and communities celebrate festivals. These places hold social memory, the rhythms of bargaining in markets, the shared rituals of open-air celebrations, the informal gatherings that build trust over time.

Yet in the rush to modernise, these humble civic platforms are increasingly overshadowed by mega-projects, retail complexes, and high-density developments. The erasure does not happen overnight; it happens through a thousand small decisions, the approval of another tower, the conversion of a market into a commercial footprint, the dismissal of a park as “underutilised land.”



Architecture must respond not by resisting progress, but by redefining what progress means. Development should not come at the expense of public life, it should reinforce it.

### **Craft, Ecology, and the Rediscovery of Local Identity**

One of the most pressing questions for Malaysian architecture today is how to negotiate identity in a landscape of rapid change. For many cities, what remains of heritage is often a façade, preserved in fragments while the life that once sustained it fades. Yet identity need not be nostalgic; it can be reinterpreted, layered, and reimagined.

Designing markets across Ipoh and Seri Kembangan revealed how powerful local crafts, materials, and ecological histories can be when integrated meaningfully into contemporary architecture. Ipoh's long-standing tradition of bamboo blind-making, almost forgotten after seven decades, became a catalyst for rethinking the façade of a community market. The material's tactility, porosity, and natural light-filtering qualities provided both cultural and environmental logic. Identity did not need to be imported; it emerged from the place itself.

Similarly, Seri Kembangan's past as a tin-mining town inspired an adaptive façade made of recycled aluminium, echoing the textures of rusted tools and the shimmering surface of former mining lakes. Here, craft was not decoration; it was a generative design tool that reconnected architecture with ecological memory.



In developing these ideas, I often return to Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture Without Architects*, which celebrates the intelligence of vernacular environments and the communal intuition embedded in local craft. Rudofsky argued that the most humane spaces arise not from heroic gestures but from lived experience, a perspective that continues to ground my approach to Malaysian public architecture.

*The Ipoh Market proposal reinterprets traditional bamboo blind-making into a contemporary façade system, reviving a craft nearly forgotten while restoring a sense of cultural memory and local identity*

*The Ipoh Market plaza frames a generous civic ground for festivals, gatherings, and everyday encounters, reasserting the market not merely as a place of trade but as the social heart of the community*







*A pixelated, colour-driven ground plane animates the Pudu Pocket Park, creating an accessible civic space where diverse residents gather, linger, and reconnect in the dense urban fabric*

## What do you remember?

## What do you miss?

### Everyday Spaces, Extraordinary Impact: The Power of Small Urban Interventions

While large civic buildings play significant roles, Malaysia's public life often depends on smaller, quieter spaces such as the gaps between buildings, leftover plots, narrow alleys transformed into communal grounds. These micro-interventions can have outsized impact, especially in dense urban quarters where open land is scarce.

In neighbourhoods like Pudu, where foreign workers, long-time residents, and transient urban populations intersect, public spaces often emerge informally along kerbs, backlanes, or the edges of carparks. Recognising this, our pocket park design sought

to legitimise these behaviours rather than erase them.

A pixelated ground plane metaphorically represented Pudu's demographic diversity, while a small herb garden jointly tended by Malaysian families and migrant workers invited shared responsibility. Despite being under 50 sqm, the park now functions as an everyday anchor, a modest proof that publicness is measured not by scale but by accessibility, openness, and cultural resonance.

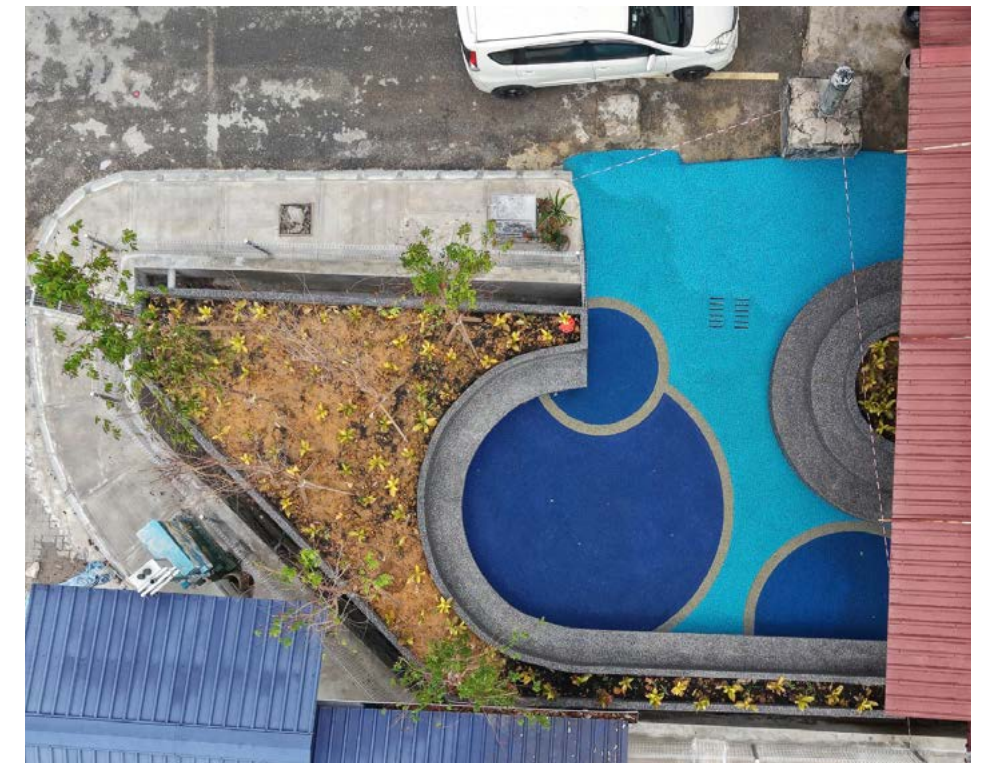
### Community as Co-Author: Participatory Design in a Malaysian Context

Architecture gains its deepest meaning when communities participate in shaping it. In

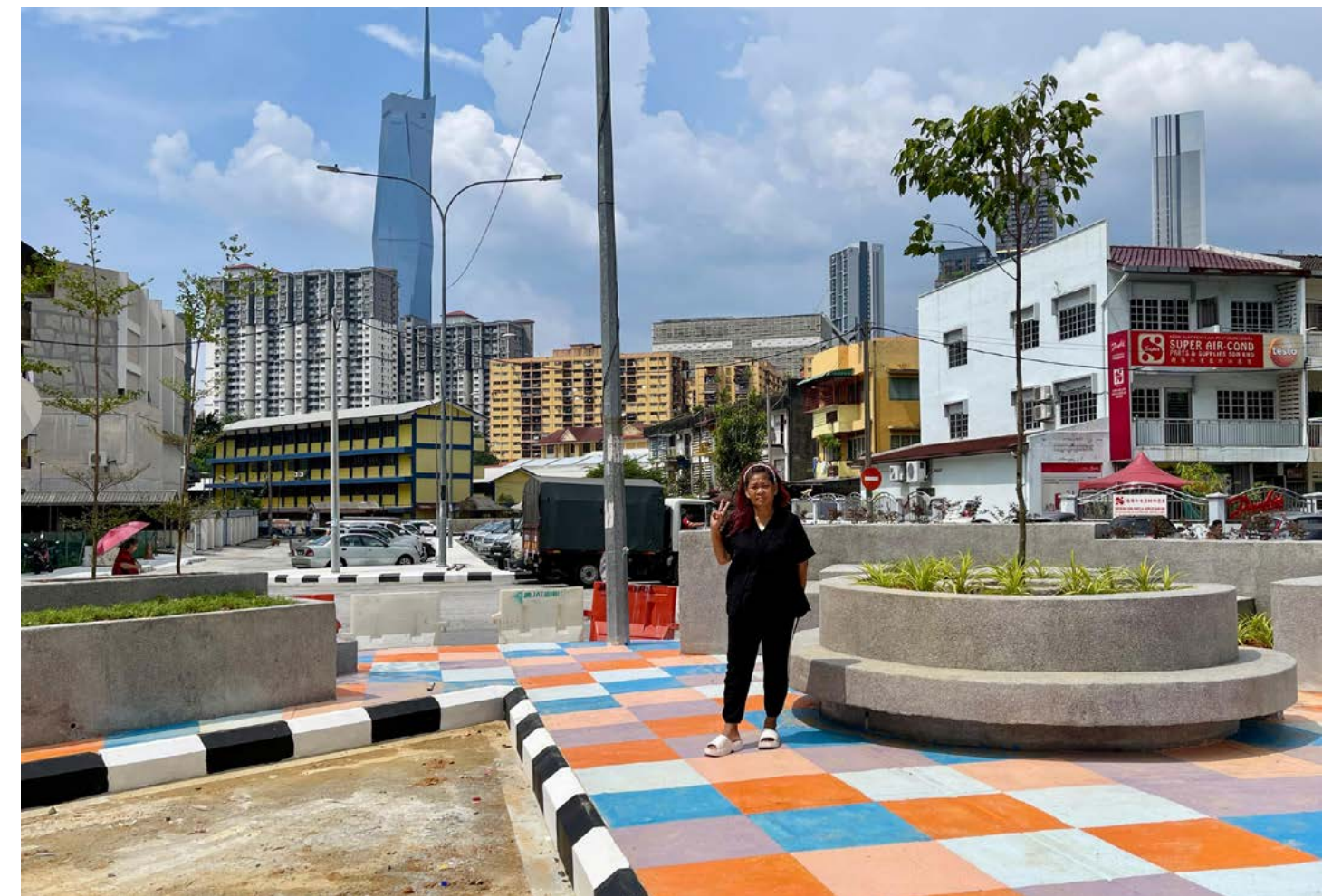
Malaysia, where public discourse on development is often limited, participatory engagement becomes both a design strategy and a democratic act.

In markets, parks, and installations I've worked on, engagement begins with simple questions.

The answers reveal the emotional geography of a neighbourhood. Elderly residents speak of places they once gathered. Teenagers describe their longing for spaces not tied to consumption. Migrant workers speak about invisibility and the desire for recognition. Traders highlight concerns about dignity, weather protection, and logistics.



*A newly completed pocket park along Jalan Setar uses soft blue hues and geometric forms to carve moments of refuge and prospect, offering pedestrians a calm threshold space between the neighbourhood and the busy*



*Conversations with long-time resident Mrs. Tan, who has lived in Pudu for over 30 years, guided the design process, grounding architectural decisions in lived experience and local memory*



These conversations shape form, materiality, program, and public interface. More importantly, they affirm that public spaces succeed not when architects design them alone, but when communities claim ownership of them.

In a rapidly urbanising nation, local voices are essential for meaningful, resilient, human-centred architecture.

**The Architectural Softness of Memory**

Memory is a powerful, often underutilised architectural resource. It is preserved not only in heritage buildings or plaques, but in rituals, crafts, landscapes, and everyday human rhythms.

Designing Whisper of the Wind, an installation in Johor Bahru inspired by fishing nets, reaffirmed this truth. Its draped, porous canopy evokes the city’s early days as a fishing village. Under its shade, residents gather for celebrations, games, and quiet conversations. The structure does not dictate activity; it invites it.

This architectural softness, light, welcoming, culturally rooted, creates spaces people intuitively adopt. It is in these moments that architecture stops being a statement and becomes a companion.

**Toward a More Generous Architecture**

The challenges facing Malaysian cities today are complex: rapid development, privatised space, social fragmentation, and diminishing cultural visibility. Yet within these challenges



lies the opportunity to redefine architectural value

A more generous architecture is one that prioritises civic life over commercial yield, draws from local material intelligence and vernacular craft, engages communities as partners, creates democratic spaces for all residents,

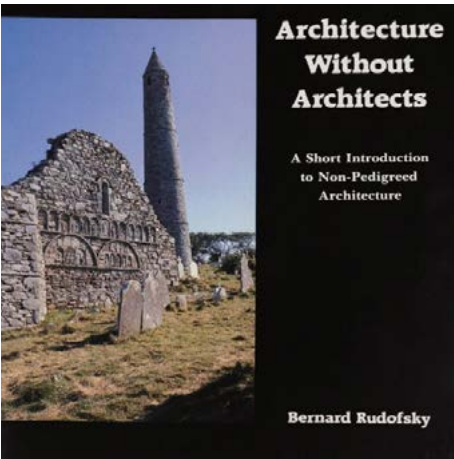
These principles emerge not from theory alone but from listening, deeply and consistently, to the everyday stories of Malaysians

across markets, parks, streets, and neighbourhoods.

*Inspired by the form and delicacy of suspended fishing nets, Whisper of the Wind offers a porous, communal canopy that recalls Johor Bahru’s fishing-village origins while inviting new public life*

**A Personal Closing Reflection**

Every project I undertake is, in some way, an attempt to recover what my own city lost. I design for the grandmother seeking a familiar place to rest, for children needing safe play spaces, for migrant workers wanting a moment of belonging, for traders who sustain the pulse of our streets. These individuals are the quiet protagonists of Malaysian public life.



*Bernard Rudofsky’s Architecture Without Architects anchors the project’s theoretical lens, affirming the value of vernacular intelligence and the enduring wisdom of community-built environments*

**What did you wish this place could become?**

Architecture, at its best, does not impose; it enables. It repairs social fractures, restores cultural threads, and rekindles the communal warmth that makes a city human.

As Malaysia continues to urbanise, we must remember that progress is not measured only in height, yield, or skyline, but in the spaces where people gather, connect, and see themselves reflected in the city. My hope is that our future urban landscapes will embrace this truth: that architecture will not simply build cities, but rebuild community.





Architecture has once again positioned as the medium of dialogue between human, space and culture through the East Design Festival 2025 (EDF 2025). Held over three days from 12 to 14 December 2025, the festival brings together ideas, works, and architectural experiences shaped by social and the contemporary urban challenges of Makassar.

Initiated by the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) South Sulawesi Chapter, EDF is conceived as an open and inclusive platform. The general public plays a vital role in the celebration, alongside creative communities presenting diverse initiatives. Academics and practitioners actively engages in discussions and the exchange of ideas, while the new generation of architects are given a space to showcase their works. The entire programme was hosted to encourage cross-sector participation and openness of

thoughts.

Visitors are treated to exhibitions featuring the young architects' works, reflecting the contemporary design thinking. Many of the showcase projects draws inspiration from local social and cultural contexts. Exhibition space was filled with architectural products and building materials, introducing the public to material innovations, emerging technologies, and current design trends. Together, these displays offer fresh insights into today's architectural practices.

**New ideas  
on a heritage  
ground.**

# Architecture and Local Wisdom at EDF 2025







Throughout the festival, Fort Rotterdam becomes a vibrant hub of activity. A series of seminars and discussions take place within the historic precinct, addressing the role of architects in urban development. Issues of inclusivity and sustainability take centre stage, alongside conversation on local wisdom and cultural values. Talk shows foster dialogue between architects and key stakeholders, while the Jong East Architects Forum open integrational conversation, nurturing collaboration through intensive and open exchanges.

EDF 2025 also offers unique experiential programmes for visitors. One of the highlights is Arsirun Makassar Heritage, a casual running event that invites participants to explore the city's historic districts. Beginning





within the heritage area, the route traces architectural landmarks, blending physical activity with an appreciation of Makassar's urban heritage.

In another perspective, EDF 2025 serves as a platform for celebrating young talents. Competition forms an integral part of the festival with architectural students's works receiving special

attention. Universities from across the region send their, best representatives, and awards are presented to projects recognised for their innovation and contextual sensitivity. These achievements reflect the dynamic landscape of architectural education in South Sulawesi and position the festival as a stage for emerging ideas about future cities.

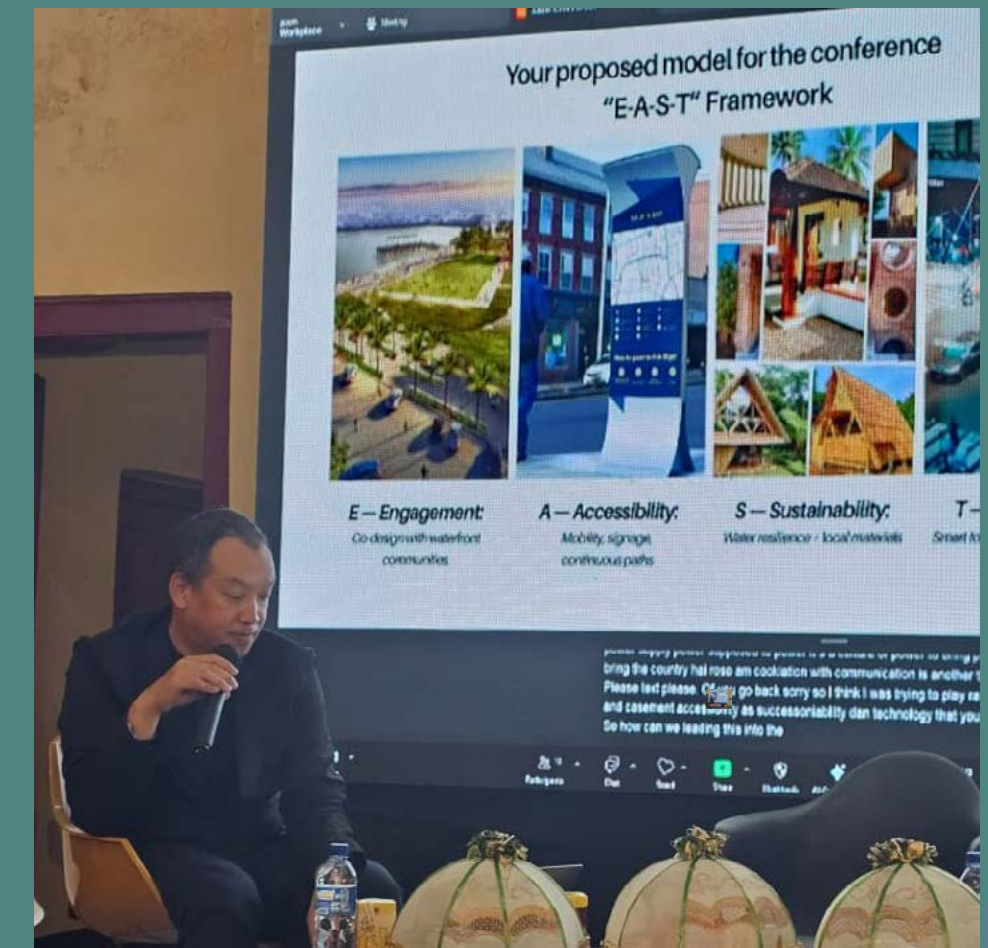
The design narratives on display enrich the public experience by framing architecture as a social practice. Visitors are invited to see how each work articulates the relationship between space and people. A strong interdisciplinary approach is evident, where creativity is paired with environmental awareness. Visual critiques of the built environment emerge throughout the festival, reaffirming EDF 2025'S message—Design matters in everyday urban life, and Architecture remains deeply grounded in lived realities.







# East Legacy International Seminar 2025



The East Legacy International Seminar 2025 stood as cornerstone of the East Design Festival 2025, framing architecture as a critical medium through which cultural memory, social responsibility, and future urban aspirations converge. Held within the historic precinct of Fort Rotterdam, Makassar, the seminar provided a powerful spatial and symbolic setting, where layered histories of the city formed an actie backdrop for contemporary architectural discourse.

Bringing together international and regional architects, academics, researchers, urbanists, and cultural practitioners, the seminar created a platform for rigorous intellectual exchange reference on the notion of “legacy”. Rather than approaching legacy as a fixed or nostalgic reference to the past, the discussions redefines it as dynamic and evolving construct.

Across keynote lectures, panel discussions, and moderated conversations, speakers examined how local wisdom and vernacular knowledge can inform architectural responses to today’s challenges, including rapid urbanisation, climate resilience, and social inclusivity.

The seminar highlighted Eastern architectural traditions not as oppositional to modernity, but as repositories of environmental intelligence, communal values, and adaptive design startegies. Case studies from Southeast Asia and beyond illustrated how these principles can be translated into contemporary practice without losing cultural specificity.



A significant emphasis was placed on the ethical role of architects in shaping cities. Discussions extended beyond form-making to interrogate architecture’s responsibility in fostering equitable urban environments, supporting community agency, and sustaining ecological balance.

Participants reflected on how design decisions that are often perceived as technical or aesthetic, carry long-term social and environmental consequences, reinforcing the need for architects to engage critically with the contexts they operate within.

Functioning as an intergenerational meeting ground, the seminar allows established practitioners shared insights with emerging architects and students.

Investigating living with & around water in a coastline cosmopolis.



# EAST LEGACY

## INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR 2025

"Re-imagining Spatial Solutions, Human Settlements, Technology and Communities for Urban Waterfront Cities"

As Shafid Azam Shardin  
Member of Architects Bangladesh, International of Associate

As Qasim Farid Nurhidam  
AD Under 40 Emerging Architects Malaysia

Dr. As Rattapong Angsueh  
Member of the Council of Thai Architects

As Wani Wardhana  
Awarded Seoul Design Award 2025, IN South Sulawesi

Sunday, 14 December 2025

09:00  
- 10:00 AM

CATHEDRAL VENUE  
(BENTENG FORT BOTTERDAM)

Benefit:

- KUM Score: 5
- Provides a casual platform for Eastern Asia architectural practitioners to exchange ideas.
- Enables knowledge sharing between students and professionals globally.
- Broadens discussions to enrich the EAST manifesto.

HTM

EARLY BIRD: 200K  
23 November - 01 December 2025

REGULAR: 250K  
02 December - 12 December 2025

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This exchange nurtured a culture of mentoship and critical questioning, allowing younger voices to challenge dominant narratives while learning from accumulated professional experience. Such dialogue underscored the idea that architectural legacy is not solely embodied in buildings, but also in knowledge transfer, discourse, and collective learning.

Significantly, the East Legacy International Seminar framed architecture as a social practice deeply embedded in everyday life. Speakers emphasised the need for design approaches that are inclusive, participatory, and responsive to lived realities. The seminar advocated outcomes

remain relevant and meaningful over time.

As part of the broader East Design Festival 2025, the seminar reinforced the festival’s overarching narrative. Design matters because it shapes how people live, interact, and relate to their environment.

By situating future-oriented discussions withing a historical and cultural framework, the East Legacy International Seminar 2025 reaffirmed architectire’s role as a mediator between past and future, offering not definitive solutions, but critical perspectives for imagining humane, resilient, and culturally grounded cities.





亚洲建筑的挑战与机遇国际  
暨亚洲建筑师协会主席交接

# ACYA 26/27

## ARCASIA HANDOVER MEETING SHANGHAI, CHINA





US Ambassador HE Julie Chung  
visiting a student stall

For a country reeling and rebuilding from the aftermath of an intense and vehement war, the quiet damage brought on by COVID-19 was a challenge we were not ready nor familiar with. Time marches on relentlessly, and the quick, mute passage of it during lockdown was easy for us to overlook. Weeks turned into months, which collected into almost a year of halted projects, cancelled construction and architectural careers put on pause.

It became evident that while trying to sustain an architectural career, one also had to find other creative means of survival - not only as a financial support but an act that would also keep the spirit of creativity and lateral thinking alive and well during such a heavy time.

During this period, I had recently stepped down from a full-time position in a fairly large firm with the intention of going solo. It

seems timing was not a friend, as I faced a dearth of projects and opportunities almost immediately due to prolonged lockdowns. As much as it may have been tempting to sit back and let the world go by, it only seemed right to begin looking into other avenues of creative functioning that would also bring in reasonable income. It was this exploration which allowed me to then throw the net beyond to larger circles of associated and allied areas of art and design - which then came back with a startling result - I was not the only one in this exploration.

With the pandemic slowly integrating itself into everyday life, communities soon began going about their lives in altered manners. This applied to the architectural fraternity as well - where once singularly practice-oriented architects were now dabbling in ways and means of creative entrepreneurship and

# Back to the Drawing Board The Forum Design



Shahdia Jamaldeen  
SLIA, Sri Lanka



A tremendous crowd at the Market -  
with architectural vendors specializing  
in all forms of business including baked  
goods.





Archit Pulasthi at his 4th FDM – with improved work and creative products alongside collaborative efforts. Image by Shahdia Jamaldeen

business beyond the standard bread and butter that was construction. We began to see flourishing design-related passion projects related to the arts, crafts and product design take place and it only seemed right to then explore how these burgeoning businesses could be assisted in getting bigger and better.

I, alongside the working committee of the ForumCSA - the alumni association of the City School of Architecture - brainstormed the concept of a design market; one that would provide a platform where architects and students with serious intent and rising creative entrepreneurship would be provided the chance to market and sell their products and services to the public under the support of

the ForumCSA. The Forum Design Market, as it is now known, began for the first time in 2022, fresh out of the chokehold of the pandemic, and witnessed its first success as a marketing platform. With over a million Lankan Rupees in revenue earned collectively by its architectural vendors, it was an immense motivation towards each purveyor to keep going and pushing for further improvement for the next iteration.

Now in its fourth year, the Design Market has only grown from year to year - with its own improvements. The last held market was not simply a single-day event but a culmination of over a year's worth of workshops, curation, mentorship and quality control involving each entrepreneur Architect or student. Mentorship and workshops included a 2-day masterclass session in which product designer and fabricator Kanil Dias Abeyagunawardene covered basics

on building a small-scale creative business, working with materials in pragmatic manners and how to bring out the best finish quality in a B2B product. Renowned artist Firi Rahman outlined lessons on how to be strategic in creating and selling fine art to a growing market of art enthusiasts. He also explained in detail his thought process behind the conceptualization and production of fine art along with how specific marketing methods apply in sensitively creating the right type and level of attention towards one's art.

The masterclass was concluded by a well-received tutorial and live exercise by Architect and Creative Meshari Fahim - who co-runs the creative agency Tones and Colours, and also began his agency's first commercial foray through the initial Design Market - in how to build your personal and product branding towards a fickle and everchanging audience of consumers. His practice as an architect as well as a producer and creative chief allowed for a very nuanced and targeted set of advice which was timely. The second day session was held as a practical assembly where each entrepreneur presented their improved and updated business and product based on the mentorship and guidelines received earlier.



Architecture alumni across ranges of practice exhibiting at the FDM Image by Shahdia Jamaldeen

It is in this manner that we hope to nurture and cultivate not just a level of production but a new way of thinking and acting smart based on business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit. It is these resilient and new thought processes that are then also applied across the board into architecture and design as well. Architects are famously poor at conducting business - a gripe that is seen across the world in terms of low or negotiated fees, unregulated pay or even in losing out projects to construction companies and external parties. The Design Market and its commercial structuring is only one way we feel we can learn to sharpen our skills creatively and conductively while keeping the spirit of design alive. Each entrepreneur has come a long way since their first Market and it has only been a pleasure to help talent and skill grow in the best way possible.



Architect Pulasthi Handunge at his first Design Market in 2022. He is now an established and upcoming fine artist in Sri Lanka





# Digital Regionalism

## International Collaboration and Technology in Vietnam's Architectural Narrative



Nguyen Xuan Man  
KTSVN, Vitenam



Over recent decades, Vietnamese architecture has gained global attention, marked by a return to local roots, using materials like bamboo and embracing biophilic design, creating a poetic sensitivity to nature amidst rapid urbanization. However, the future brings new challenges: denser cities, larger projects, and global crises like climate change. While vernacular craftsmanship remains vital, the younger generation needs new tools to apply this spirit to complex problems. I believe the next wave will integrate this local heritage with global knowledge and digital technology.

My journey to bridge local context and global standards was supported by an international scholarship program at The Bartlett, UCL. I initially found the avant-garde environment daunting but realized technology acts as a great equalizer. Digital studios facilitate international collaboration, as geometry, data, and algorithms are universal languages for working across borders. Working with global firms like Group8asia, ZHA, and LAVA showed me how computational design manages complexity beyond

human capability. Digital fluency is essential for Vietnam to handle its future, from mega-projects to climate adaptation.

At XMArchitect (XMA), we are exploring how to apply these lessons through a “Glocal” approach, staying grounded in Vietnam while collaborating globally to refine our technical capacity. Three recent experiences illustrate how international collaboration allows us to address projects of vastly different scales and purposes:

### Learning from Complexity





### Learning from Complexity: Neom Trojena (Saudi Arabia)

As part of the competition winning team, our collaboration with LAVA on the Neom Trojena project offered a profound learning curve in high-tech design. Trojena is a project of immense ambition—a pristine wellness destination with a ski resort embedded in a desert mountain range. The challenge of the brief here was complex. The topography and environmental constraints were so vast that the traditional approach would have struggled to keep up. By utilizing computational tools like Rhino and Grasshopper, we were able to enter the workflow seamlessly. We helped script design iterations that responded to the data, syncing with partners in Germany and Australia. It was an encouraging realization

that physical distance matters little when the team shares a digital language.

### Learning from Coordination: Benghazi International Airport (Libya)

On a different scale, our work with NRY Architects on the Benghazi International Airport focused on the rigor of infrastructure. Large-scale public projects require a high degree of precision to ensure systems work in harmony. Through cloud-based Building Information Modeling (BIM), we participated in coordinating thousands of elements across borders. This experience highlighted that technology is not just about making interesting shapes; it is about the discipline of organization—a crucial skill as Vietnam continues to build its own

major infrastructure.

### Learning for the Local: Digital Modular House

Developed from the Master Thesis Back in the Bartlett, our recent “Modular Floating House” project is a collaboration with the United Nations International School (UNIS) and PlasticPeople, an organization dedicated to transforming plastic waste into safe construction materials. In this project, we are not just building a shelter; we are prototyping a solution for the dual crises of global warming and plastic pollution. By combining international educational resources with innovative material technology, we developed a modular housing system designed to float—an essential adaptation for Vietnam’s flood-prone regions.





This project demonstrates that international collaboration is a powerful tool for social impact. It allows us to combine local insights on climate resilience with global innovations in material science to create something that protects both people and the planet.

As we move forward, I believe there is an exciting opportunity for what we might call Digital Regionalism. We believed that we living in a Flat World where global culture is merging yet a need for distinctive local identity is urged within each individual design. We also believed in the advancement of technology which is not only creating new tools for design and constructing buildings but also creating a new system of thinking and perceiving architecture. We can imagine a future where the environmental sensitivity of our vernacular tradition is optimized by climatic analysis software. We can

envision a future where we clean our environment by turning plastic waste into floating communities.

For the young members of the ACYA community, my hope is that we see technology and international collaboration not as something foreign, but as a bridge. It is a way for us to tell our stories on a larger canvas. By becoming fluent in these tools, we ensure that the next chapter of Asian architecture is deeply rooted in our culture, responsive to our climate, and fully prepared for the future.

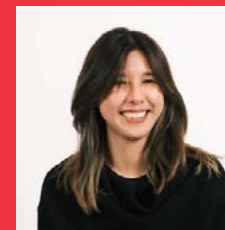






# Hat Yai in Practice

## Cross-Disciplinary Architecture in Southern Thailand



Jan Suttahathai Niyomwas  
ASA, Thailand

City development in Thailand prioritizes inclusivity and embraces cultural diversity. Terms such as “creating a city,” “sense of place,” and “urban intervention” have gained prominence in design festivals, alongside practices of co-designing spaces to meet local needs, using festivalisation as a tool and a sandbox for testing ideas by pushing them into action in real, shared spaces. However, in an economically driven city like Hat Yai, sustaining semi-public spaces often requires private sector involvement, raising questions about what constitutes truly public space and the role of commercial factors.

Working with people, grounding ideas in research, and translating them into design have always been important parts of architectural practice for us, from architecture school through professional work. Topics that operate at the policy level or require an understanding of stakeholder dynamics often appear distant or abstract. Yet through our work over the years, I have seen many architects, designers, and practitioners using the design process to collaborate and put their skills into action. These processes have proven to be not far-fetched at all, but closer and more embedded in architectural practice than ever.

As community-led designers, we believe in the transformative power of connection to effect meaningful change in our societies and beyond. Working across disciplines has taught us that architecture can be more than just the building itself. It can be soft, considerate, and deeply human.

In today’s rapidly changing urban conditions, architects

are increasingly required to move beyond traditional roles. Architecture is no longer confined to static objects or iconic structures. Instead, it operates within complex social, cultural, economic, and environmental systems. Architects today must embrace this expanded role. We can choose to shape spaces that connect, empower, and transform communities, sometimes quietly, through care rather than spectacle.

“Architecture becomes powerful when it listens before it draws.”

Looking back at our example today, Hat Yai, a city of layers, movements. Hat Yai is not often positioned at the center of architectural discourse in Thailand. It is neither the capital nor a curated heritage city. Yet Hat Yai is one of the most dynamic urban environments in the southern region, shaped by trading culture, multiculturalism, transportation infrastructure, and everyday negotiations of space.

As designers working in Hat Yai, we see it as a unique example of a place where formal and informal systems coexist, where public and private boundaries blur, and where social life continuously reshapes the urban fabric. Markets spill into sidewalks, educational spaces are embedded throughout the city through universities and schools, and residents are deeply proud of their city, even when they struggle to articulate or define its identity.

These conditions challenge the norm of conventional architectural practice. It demands an approach that is adaptive, participatory, and deeply contextual.



# City Connex: An Interdisciplinary Practice Rooted in Thailand

City Connex is a Thailand-based interdisciplinary design collective working at the intersection of architecture, urbanism, culture, and community. As an architect and urban designer, I work alongside partners from diverse backgrounds including sustainable engineering, media strategy, social studies, and MICE management Which stand for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions.

Most of our projects are based on understanding the character of the city and community-led projects.

As a collective, we work across architecture, urban design, cultural programming, to communication strategy. Our work often translates social processes, lived experiences, and local narratives into spatial, strategic, and experiential design. Rather than treating design as a

final product, we approach it as an ongoing process, one that evolves through design dialogue, research, and participation.

Operating within the Thai context means acknowledging complexity. Same with a lot of cities across Asia, cities here are shaped not only by formal planning mechanisms but also by informal economies, cultural rituals, seasonal events, and deeply rooted social relationships.

For us, design becomes a method of navigating these layers rather than simplifying them.

Every work of City Connex involves a heavily research-based background in the design process, grounded in a deeply community-centric approach. We believe that each community has different backgrounds, needs, contexts, and ways of living. There is no specific universal solution, no one-size-fits-all design but we can create framework that can help understand and design with them.

Participatory design plays a critical role in our work. It becomes a tool for translation that turning lived experiences, local knowledge, and collective aspirations into

actionable strategies and spatial outcomes. In this process, architects are not sole authors but facilitators, mediators, and listeners.

In Hat Yai, participatory approach is particularly important. Communities in Hat Yai are shaped by layered identities. Thai, Chinese, Muslim, and Malay cultures exist side by side, maintaining their distinct characteristics while sharing the same urban space. Rather than blending into a single identity, these cultures remain legible in everyday life, from food practices in gastronomy culture and trading networks to religious spaces and social rhythms. Hat Yai functions as a regional center for trade and movement precisely because of this coexistence.

**Designing without acknowledging these nuances risks producing spaces that look resolved but feel disconnected.**

Within the context of festivals, markets, and collective rituals in Thailand. These moments reveal how commercial activities, cultural expression, and public life intersect.

1. How We Enter a Context  
Participation as an attitude begins before design starts. It affects how architects enter a community, not as experts delivering solutions, but as learners willing to listen.

2. How We Define the Problem  
Rather than assuming the problem is spatial from the outset, participation encourages architects to co-define issues with the communities.

3. How Decisions Are Made  
Participation shifts decision-making from a top-down process to a negotiated one. We still contribute professional skills,

but choices are informed by shared priorities, constraints, and aspirations. Design becomes a collective process of translation rather than individual authorship.

4. How Design Evolves Over Time  
Engagement does not end once construction begins, it continues.

5. How Success Is Measured  
Instead of measuring success only through visual coherence or at the completion of the project.

**A space succeeds when people feel connected to it and empowered to shape it further.**



Revisiting Kim Yong, Rakk Taii Design Week 2023, Participation board that use for data collect, as part of an on going Urban Strategic Planning.

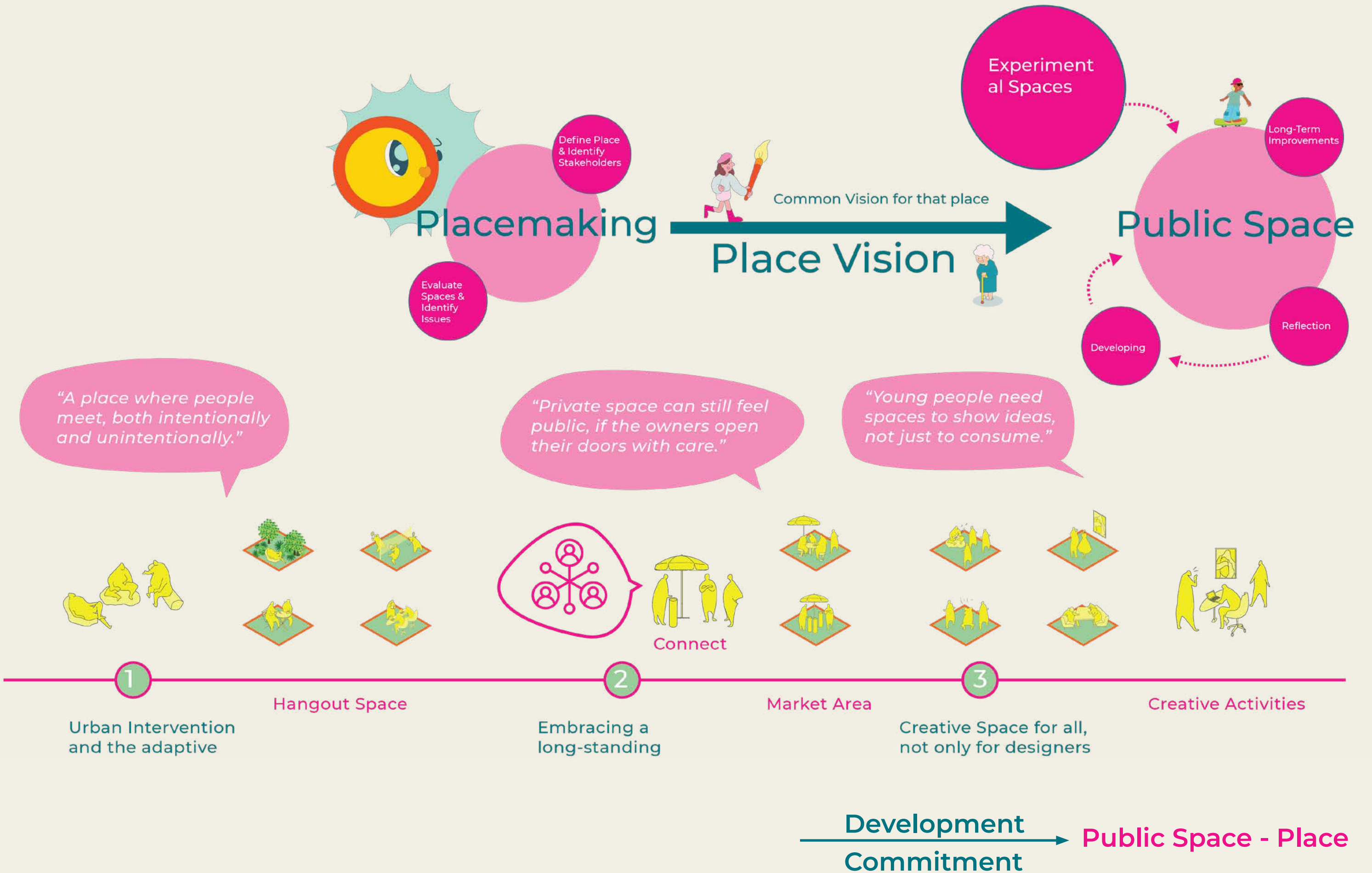


Revisiting Kim Yong, 2023  
Interactive Projection Mapping  
by 27 JUNE Studio



404 Hat Yai file not found, 2022.  
A photo wall exhibition that got 700K Reach + on  
Social Media and 7,000+ Organic Search via Map







# Architecture as Connection

Architecture becomes powerful when it connects people, nurtures places, and transforms quietly through care. In Hat Yai, this means working with what already exists, amplifying local strengths rather than imposing external visions.

**We believe in the power of connection to create change.**  
**Between disciplines.**  
**Between people.**  
**Between past, present, and possible futures.**

Architecture is not a singular act. It is a continuous process of listening, testing, and negotiating. It moves through moments of uncertainty, where ideas must be experienced before they are fixed.

One of the ways we operate within this in-between condition is through “Festivalisation”.

Festivalisation operates within this in-between space. It is not an end goal, nor a spectacle, but a working tool. Through temporary activation, cultural programming, and shared use, festivalisation allows architectural ideas to be pushed into action, observed, questioned, and adjusted in real urban conditions.

In a city like Hat Yai, where economic forces strongly shape space and long-term public investment is limited, festivalisation becomes a low-risk ground for experimentation. It creates space for encounter, participation, and collective ownership, while generating knowledge that cannot be produced through drawings alone.

What matters is what follows. Festivalisation must lead



“Where every corner tells a story, The city has its way of welcoming you home”  
A collaborative work between the designer, PEWAFLORA and the local restaurant, Nai Yao Porridge.



Jaisen - Timepieces Renovation, an exhibition with hand crafted design. by Southson Design x Samn.din



Path of Surrender - MUSE of Saneha by Jira.Artist



Saneha Renaissance, Exhibition design by Hatyai Connex x Mairuummaichee

somewhere. Its value lies in how temporary moments inform longer-term placemaking, negotiated public access, and sustained spatial practices. In this way, architecture remains connected not only to people, but to responsibility.

**Festivalisation is used not to decorate the city, but to work within it.**

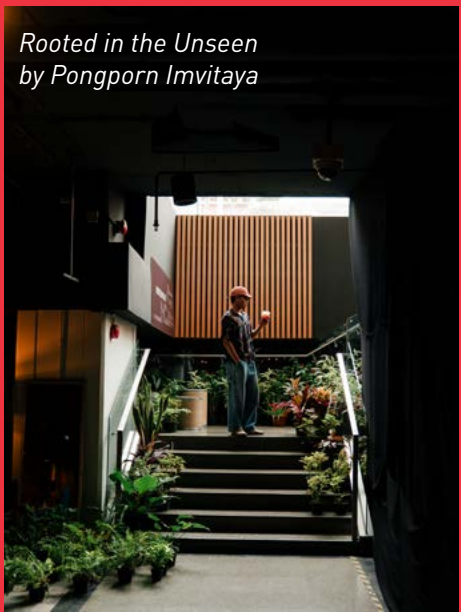
As a tool, it allows architects to intervene without prematurely fixing outcomes. Temporality creates room for negotiation, making it possible to test ideas in

full scale while remaining open to change.

Rather than asking communities to imagine future outcomes, Experimenting through a design festival allows people to experience change directly. Shared moments of use create familiarity and confidence, helping to align expectations between communities, private stakeholders, and the city.



Pa-Bai-Pa-Bold (Rethinking Canvas) by Qanarn Brand in collaborate with Srisawattei Canvas Shop x Central Pattana



Rooted in the Unseen by Pongporn Imvitaya



# C'Mon Saneha, Design Festival 2025

## - A Case Study from The City Connex

C'Mon Saneha, A design festival in the Southern of Thailand located in the heart of the City. It was conceived as both a testing ground and a catalyst. Through temporary activation and collective programming, the event created new awareness of the Saneha district and repositioned it within the broader urban imagination of Hat Yai. Rather than approaching Saneha as a site for monumental design, the project offered a

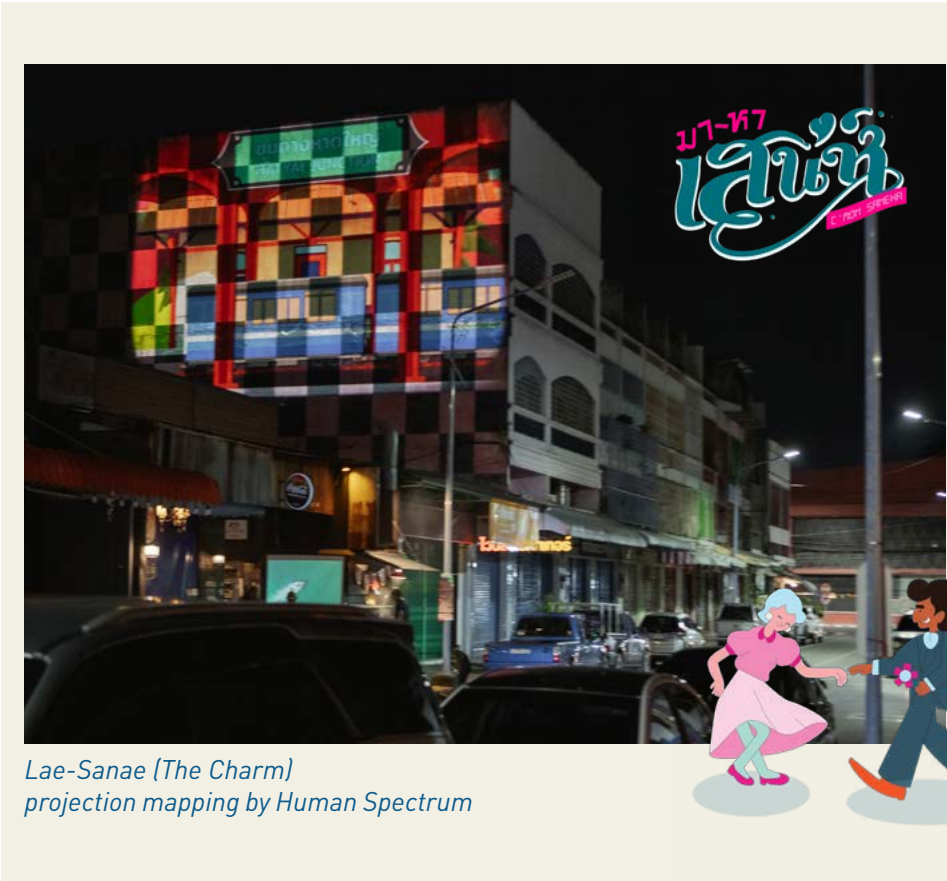
contemplative return to the neighborhood, shaped by collective presence and everyday use. It invited people to look beyond the district as merely a tourist destination, and instead engage with layers of memory embedded within its physical environment and social structure. These narratives were constructed through shared experiences, allowing collective memory to emerge from the act of being together in space.

### Festivalisation as an Experimental Platform

C'Mon Saneha operated through three experimental spatial layers, each functioning as a real-world testing environment rather than a symbolic installation.

This project we organized with **80+ organizations** working collaboratively in the area. From designers, cultural practitioners, community groups, businesses, and institutions co-creating together.

C'Mon Saneha engaged **more than 13,000 participants** on site and reached over **2,000,000 views** across online.



Lae-Sanae (The Charm)  
projection mapping by Human Spectrum

According to the project's economic impact assessment conducted by Nikkei Research & Consulting, the festival generated an estimated total value of 64.74 million THB reflecting the strength of collaboration among diverse partners in advancing the city's creative economy.

*"Property owners expressed high satisfaction and actively encouraged the continuation of the project and turn it in to a privately owned public space at least two more years. The event successfully created inclusive spaces that engaged people across different ages and backgrounds."*

This transition demonstrates how festivalisation can function as an in-between process. Temporary activation built trust, revealed spatial potential, and generated evidence that allowed discussions to move beyond speculation toward long-term commitment.

from something temporary to an actual cultural infrastructure of Hat Yai.

C'Mon Saneha illustrates how festivalisation, when treated as a tool rather than an outcome, can reposition neglected spaces, align diverse stakeholders, and open pathways toward sustained placemaking. The project shows that architectural practice in cities like Hat Yai can operate through experimentation, negotiation, and continuity, transforming short-term moments into long-term public value.



Neighbor-Hood Projection Mapping  
by Kidsbloom



PBS Local Lab - A Jarful of Hatyai  
Art work by Pholwitaya Bilingual School





# Computational Design for Ice Shell Buildings

## China's Extreme Climate Context

Overall view of the completed ice shell building



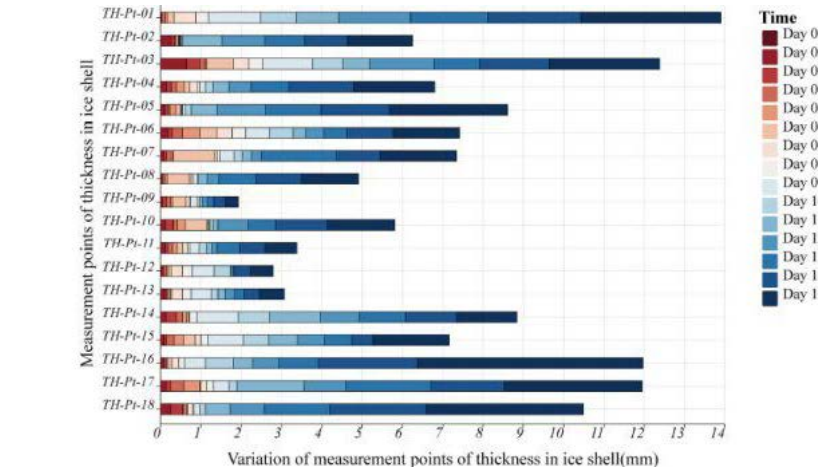
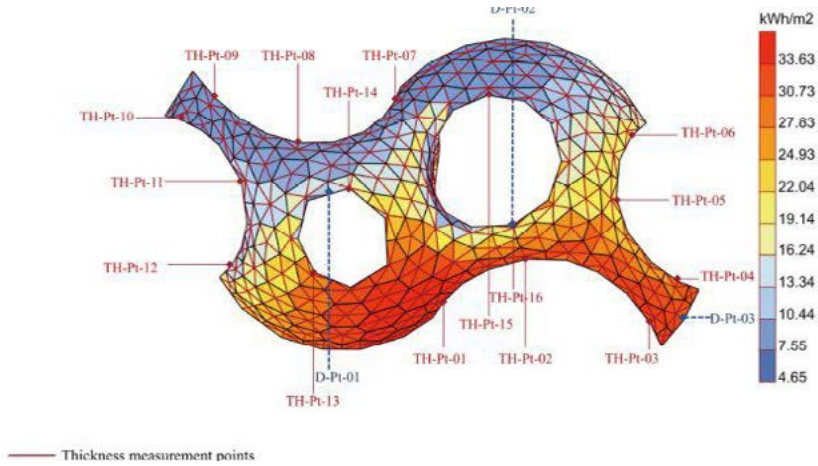
Yunsong Han  
ASC, China

Located at the Harbin Ice and Snow World Park in northern China, this project investigates how computational design can redefine the architectural use of ice as a structural material.

Developed and realized under extreme winter conditions, the work demonstrates how digital design and construction technologies can overcome the physical limitations of ice while significantly reducing material consumption and environmental impact.

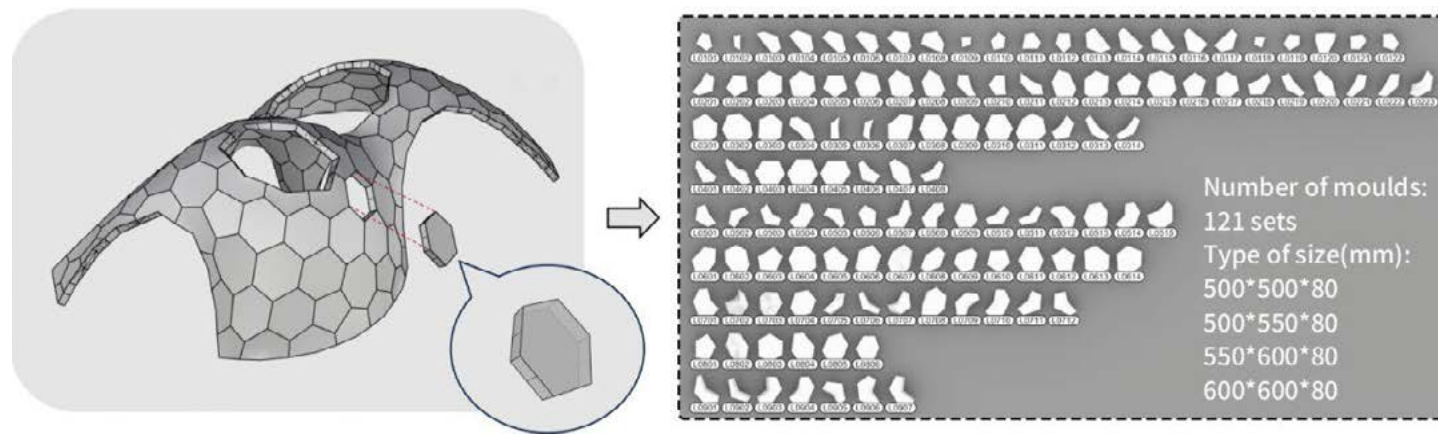
Traditionally, ice architecture has relied on massive forms and empirical construction methods. In contrast, this project adopts performance-driven computational workflows as its primary design

logic. Environmental data, structural simulation, and green-performance objectives were integrated into the early design stages, shifting architectural decision-making from intuitive form-making to data-informed form generation. Compared with conventional experience-based approaches, this shift enables structural feasibility and material efficiency to be evaluated simultaneously during early-stage design, rather than corrected through later construction adjustments.



Thickness distribution analysis of the ice shell





*Modular discretization of the ice shell into prefabricated ice components*

Through three-dimensional graphic statics, the design team generated non-standard shell geometries that enable ice to function as a spatial structural material rather than a purely sculptural one.

This approach allowed material thickness to be locally optimized, reducing unnecessary ice volume while maintaining structural integrity across the shell system. This form-finding logic directly informed subsequent thickness distribution and component discretization strategies, ensuring that geometric expression and structural performance remained tightly coupled throughout the design process.

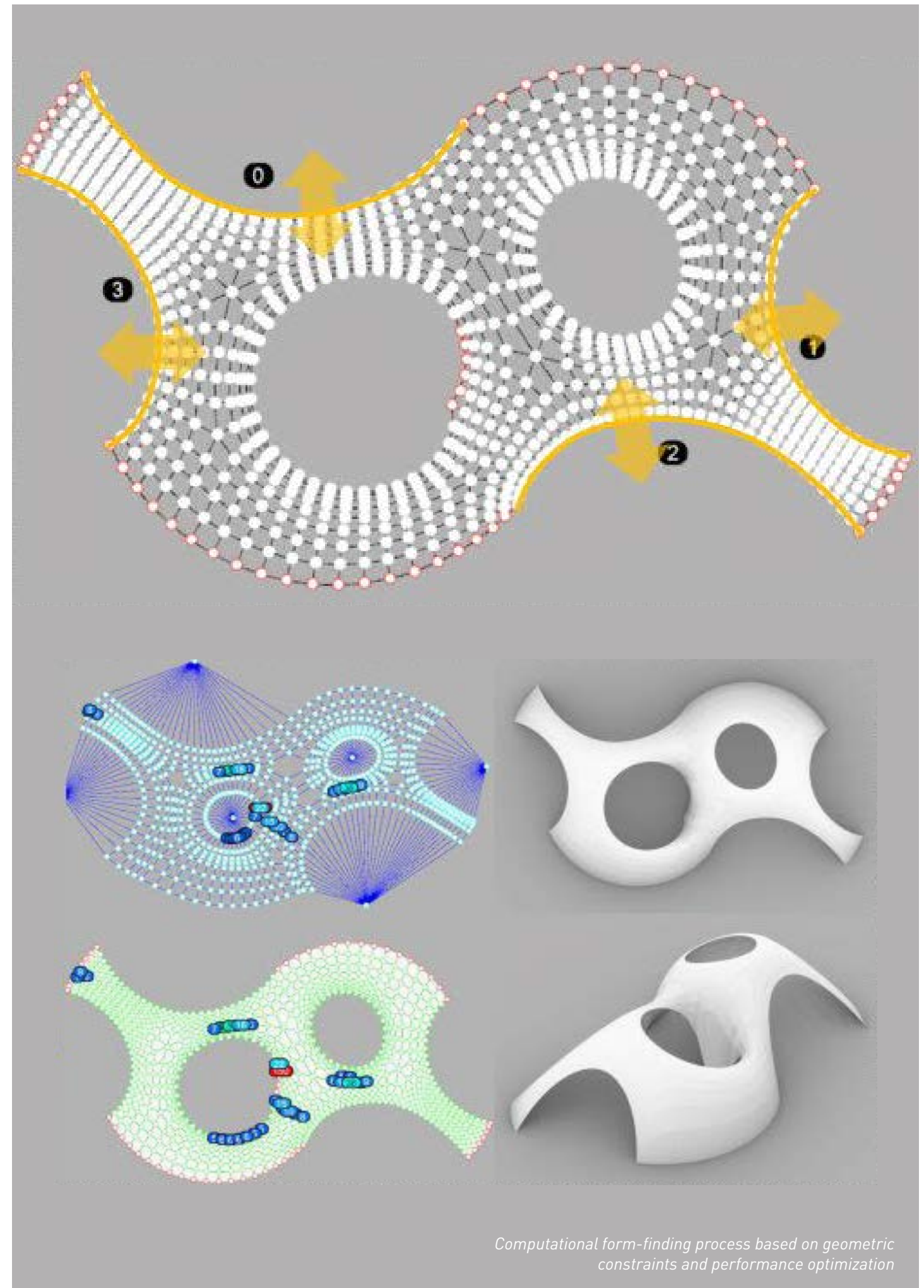
A critical innovation of the project lies in its digital fabrication and construction strategy. The ice shell was discretized into 121

prefabricated ice components, each precisely fabricated and assembled on site. Despite working under extremely low temperatures, millimeter-level accuracy was achieved through digitally simulated fabrication paths and controlled assembly procedures.

Beyond its technical achievements, the project reflects a broader concern shared by young architects working in climate-specific contexts: how architecture can engage local environmental conditions while contributing to sustainability goals.

By treating ice as a recyclable, ultra-low-carbon building material and embedding environmental performance directly into the design logic, the project proposes a new paradigm for temporary architecture in cold regions.

For young architects, this work suggests that innovation does not necessarily depend on new materials, but on new ways of organizing knowledge, data, and construction processes. Ice shell architecture here becomes not only a technical experiment, but also a reflection on how computational design can align aesthetic expression, environmental responsibility, and regional culture within contemporary architectural practice.



*Computational form-finding process based on geometric constraints and performance optimization*





# Screens and Spaces

## The Phenomenon of The Cyber Cafe

*The dimly lit interiors of the Havelock gaming center*



Shahdia Jamaldeen  
SLIA, Sri Lanka

The phenomena that is the Internet has made its presence known under different capacities and influences in shaping generations - by expanding each cohort's access to information, communication exchanges, learning and economics while also posing new and unexplored challenges such as cyber bullying, the circulation of x-rated material and cyber crime. Each generation has its own identity and resonance with the Internet; both in its methods of usage and shaping of socio-cultural landmarks. So much so, that the imminent threat and scare of Y2K or the "millenium bug" - a potential global cyber and societal crash predicted due to a programming system error culminating on the cusp of the millennium or "00" - created an entire generational movement in cultural trends, fashion aesthetics, media programming and retrofuturistic or synthetic design.

Architecture has not been immune to the evolving notions of technological advancements and its practices. As with all significant cultural and social movements, the built space continued to reflect these advancements in

terms of new typologies and communal environments. Of the many theories of architecture that have evolved and retrofitted its principles accordingly, urbanist and post-modern political geographer Edward Soja's Theory of Third Space derived from Henri Lefebvre's Lived Spaces, Foucault's Heterotopias and Bell Hooks' positionings, is an interesting overlay to examine further.

Soja stated that macro and micro urban spatial comprehension went beyond simply analysing its physical attributes but also included examining its social, political and cultural aspects, overlaid with the study of the community's perceived reality, mental picturing and lived experiences. This holistic overview of spatial study was structured into first, second and third space paradigms - with this article concentrating on the concept of Third Space. Soja maintained that the notion of Third Space was a highly dynamic and perpetual state of space that included perceptions of both physical and mental spheres - essentially 'Lived Space'.

**"It is a space of complete radical openness, free from the conflicts of race, gender, class, sexuality, age, country, religion, nature, empire, and colonialism."**



# Internet cafe typologies helped reinforce the infant concept of ergonomics further in Sri Lankan design culture.

In simpler terms, Third Space refers to highly social gathering spaces and urban environments that are distinctly separate from primary typologies such as home, office or school. These include publicly accessible spaces- examples such as community centers, squares, halls, plazas, parks, restaurants and cafes and libraries - all which foster and maintain functions that allow users to stay on or continue usage for long periods of time effectively and efficiently. This also includes provision of amenities such as ergonomic seating, balanced temperature control and of course, internet access. These intermediate spaces are most often open to all walks of life regardless of social status, class or ethnicity and aim to cultivate a sense of belonging and community well-being.

Similarly, spaces related and borne from the need for cyber-related activities and social movements spawned as VR areas, coworking spaces, gaming centers, hybrid public spaces, fulfillment spaces and the titular Internet or Cyber cafes. While philosophers and

theorists such as Habermas and Laurier state that the physical public spheres were imperative for primary social engagement, rational interaction and healthy dialogue, the rise of technology has vastly changed this narrative. Cybercafes and gaming centers managed to turn communication and idea exchange on its head and created a new Third Space - one located in the endless and infinite expanse of The Internet. Akin to a set of Matrioshka dolls, the limited physical space of a cyber cafe held within it, portals that led to a boundless realm held steady by a series of twittering and flashing modems; portals nestled within another.

Cybercafes were conceived as part of the initiative to bridge the digital divide through cost-effective customized spaces to help communities to familiarize themselves with the internet; through a mixture of physical, social and virtual elements. In Sri Lanka, the first introduction to cyber cafes aimed to offer web access in a relaxed environment including refreshments and an informal

setting. In 1996, Colombo saw the opening of two key spaces; The Cyber Cafe at 211 at Union Place and The Surf Board Internet Cafe, Galadari Hotel. 211 at Union place was conceived by Mrs Ratten Abdul Hussein, a bold move reinforced by her background in Computer Science obtained in Britain - which saw its own introduction to this specific typology merely two years back in 1994. Abdul Hussein saw the need to capitalize on keeping up with the times along with Sri Lanka's own budding interest in the Internet to begin one of the first functioning cafes in tandem with two other partners. Since its opening in March 1996 the cafe saw a swell of more than 200 visitors- all curious to explore the online realm. The Surfboard was formalized through a corporate venture between the Galadari Hotel and Lanka Internet Services Ltd, and was headed by Vaseeharan Nesiah who stated that "The Concept of Cyber is not something easily understood in Sri Lanka, so we decided to call ourselves 'Surf Board' instead of Cyber Cafe because using the Internet is known as surfing,"

The novelty of these functioning cyber portals held both fascination and function towards a growing clientele that began to see the merit in cross-boundary resource accessibility and modern communication methods.

The spatial layout of both cafes were modelled on the standard experience of eateries, with the machines set against the wall boundaries of the compact setting. At Surfboard, the layout was more coupled; with the machines clustered together allowing for groups of web surfers to gather together while engaging with the internet. The requirement for privacy during this point was far less, compared to the higher need for undisturbed usage to come later on - also pointing towards a dangerous rise and creativity in cyber crime and hacking. In terms of spatial design related to 211, Union Place, "The interior, like the other cybercafes around the world, is a cross between a cafe and a computer room. The carpets are a beautiful royal blue, and a vivid painting by Sri Lankan painter Sita Joseph de Saram dominates one

wall. There are computers set up all around the room against the walls and in one corner, you get a bar of Swedish pine which has a coffee machine and soft drinks machine."

David Brettell, computer teacher at Overseas School of Colombo in 1996 claimed "The cybercafes are really a good thing because they allow people who can't afford their own computer or their own Internet connection to surf the Internet. I just hope that these are places with a relaxing and friendly atmosphere and good comfy chairs and tables. You know it's very difficult to work well at a computer when you've got to sit on straight backed chairs or at tables which are too high!".

In order to stay relevant while tapping into other avenues of cyber culture, most internet cafes began converting their major functions to house online and software-based gaming. Similar to the spatial nature and design orientation of betting centers, the newly-converted gaming cafes sought to create dimly lit, neon-laced, 24 hour access within shuttered and



Cyber Cafe 211 at Union place



The Surf Board Cafe, Galadari Hotel The Sunday Times, 1996 Archives





Wandering PJB | Sunrise Internet Cafe - Negombo Sri Lanka

The Cyber Cafe highlighted the importance and necessity of third spaces steeped in relevance connected to mirroring growing technological advancements and socio-cultural evolutions. While Sri Lanka tapped into the cyberculture game early on, we still see a lack in infrastructure and specific technogathering spaces that could help a growing sector of students, professionals, ability-compromised groups and self-employed individuals progress healthily. This was brought into stark notice during the Pandemic, when students in remote areas were unable to access stable connections, while their urban counterparts exhibited compromised interpersonal and social skills due to their singular reliance for interaction via the internet.

While our lives are now vastly represented through our online avatars, we can now begin to appreciate the vital role that Internet Cafes played at a certain point in our growth. It is a truly incredible phenomenon to have begun our cyber lives at 64kb

speeds and now be indifferent towards downloading gigabytes worth of content onto terabyte capacities of memory. It seems important that we do not forget the humble beginnings of the world wide web in Sri Lanka - while making sure to always hold on to the significant importance of physical interactions and relationships amplified through sensitively structured third spaces. It only helps strengthen the conviction that Architecture will also remain as relevant and indispensable as a strong internet connection.



Prof. Induruwa, known as the Father of Sri Lankan Internet, demonstrating personal computers to then UGC Chairman Prof Kalpage during the opening of the Computer Lab at the University of Moratuwa in 1983

“With the advent of the Cyber Cafe, we hope to encourage more and more people to get on-line and enjoy the benefits of the Communication Age while not sacrificing the help and sociability that come with the human touch.” — Mrs Abdul Hussein





# From Inherited Wetness to Collective Ground



Md. Shafiul Azam Shamim  
IAB, Bangladesh



Me with the Exhibition at the Sharjah Architecture Triennale 2019.  
Photo by : Asif Salman

I come from a land that is constantly negotiating with water. In the Bengal Delta, land is not inherited as permanence. It is inherited as uncertainty. River erosion shaped my family long before it shaped my profession. Homes were lost, boundaries dissolved, and displacement became cyclical rather than exceptional. Climate vulnerability was not an abstract condition for us; it was lived, remembered, and passed down.

This inheritance formed the foundation of my architectural journey.

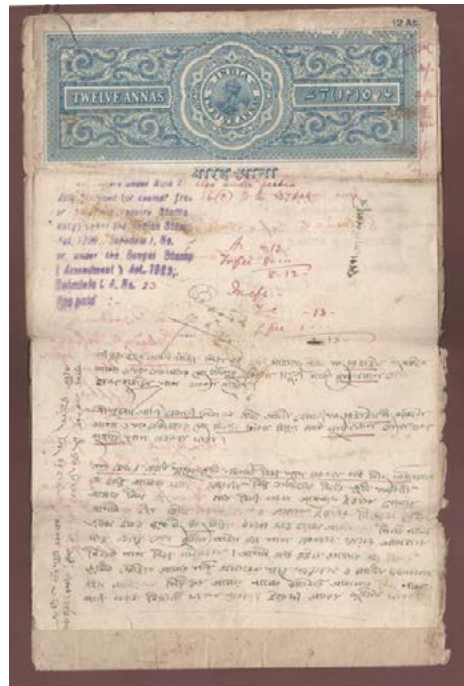
Architecture entered my life not as a pursuit of form, but as a way to understand loss—how people rebuild identity when geography refuses to stay still. As I trained and practiced, it became increasingly clear that conventional architectural frameworks were inadequate to

address the layered realities of climate-affected communities. What was needed was a way to make invisible histories visible, and personal memory legible as shared knowledge.

This inquiry took its first public and spatial form through Inheriting Wetness, presented as part of the Sharjah Architecture Triennial 2019, curated and executed by Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA).

The concept of Inheriting Wetness emerged from my own research into land loss in the Bengal Delta—not as a singular disaster, but as a condition inherited across generations. The exhibition physically translated river erosion into space, material, and narrative, allowing audiences to experience land loss not as statistics, but as embodied history.





*Deeds for Gazi'r Char belonging to Shafiul Azam Shamim's family. The 'land' does not physically exist. But the deeds and inheritance passed three different political, geographic and administrative boundaries.*  
 Source: Shafiul Azam Shamim

*Positioning the mouza map corresponding to the land deeds on the current Google satellite view shows most of the land as nonexistent.*  
 Source: MTA and Shafiul Azam Shamim (mouza map)



At its core was my own family's story. Through interviews, ancestral accounts, and lived documentation, the lives of my grandparents and earlier generations were presented as a micro-history of the delta itself. What had once been private memory became collective evidence. The exhibition revealed how displacement is transmitted through soil, water, and time—how vulnerability itself can be inherited.

This moment marked a critical shift for me. I recognized that

my personal history was not exceptional; it was representative. And if architecture could hold these stories, it could also become a tool for repair, not only physical, but social and ethical.

From this realization emerged FACE – Foundation for Architecture and Community Equity. FACE was founded as a platform to work with climate-affected people rather than for them. Grounded in dignity, collaboration, and long-term engagement. As a founding

member and Director of Grants and Finance, I have been involved from the very beginning, shaping both its operational structure and its values. In many ways, I entered FACE not only as an architect, but also as a case study—someone whose life had already been shaped by erosion, displacement, and adaptation.

One of FACE's most significant engagements was the implementation of Khudibari, designed by Marina Tabassum

Architects (MTA). The project resonated deeply with my own journey. Conceived as a modular, adaptable dwelling for displaced communities, Khudibari was not merely a house, it was a system of resilience.

FACE implemented the project with the same intention that had guided its founding: to ensure architecture remained responsive to lived realities. Working closely with communities, we treated the house not as a finished object, but



*The First implementation of Khudibari Made at my ancestor's land at Gazi's char as pilot project.*  
 Photo by : Asif Salman

as an evolving structure, capable of moving, transforming, and belonging again. In this process, architecture became an act of listening.

As FACE's work expanded, so did its collective impact. What began as a response to my own inherited vulnerability grew into collaboration with over 100 individuals and families, each carrying their own histories of climate displacement. Through these engagements, we did not simply document lives,

we became part of them. FACE transformed into a shared platform where architectural practice, lived experience, and community agency converged.

It was through this collective journey that FACE received recognition from the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The award acknowledged not an individual achievement, but a body of work rooted in equity, participation, and climate consciousness. It affirmed that architecture shaped by lived





experience and ethical collaboration can resonate far beyond its immediate context.

Today, my journey continues through FACE, across riverine, coastal, and marginalized landscapes where land remains fragile and futures uncertain. From Inheriting Wetness to Khudibari, from personal loss to collective action, the work remains guided by a single belief: That architecture gains its deepest meaning when it carries memory, restores dignity, and helps people reclaim ground—even when the ground itself refuses to stay.



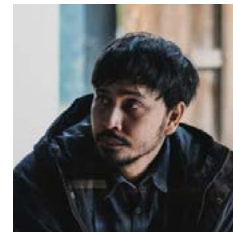


# PROJECTS



# Tao Ban Raya

## A Living Legacy in Wood



Wisnu Wardhana  
IAI, Indonesia

In the vibrant urban fabric of Makassar, Indonesia, INS Studio's Tao Bun Raya emerges as a compelling example of architecture rooted in local culture, sustainable practice, and creative reuse. Completed in 2024, the project transforms traditional architecture heritage into contemporary cafe that speaks to both community identity and environmental responsibility.

The innovation has secured international acclaim by being named among the winners at the prestigious 2025 Seoul Design Award, that emphasizes on design's real world impact, promoting solutions that are socially relevant, environmentally responsible, and culturally resonant.

The salvaged timber from dismantled Bugis-Makassar stilt houses is not merely recycled; it is re-contextualised. Each column, beam, stair tread, and floorboard retains its original dimensions, textures, and imperfections, allowing traces of past lives to remain visible.

This approach reframes sustainability as memory

preservation. The building becomes a vessel of accumulated histories, where architectural elements carry both structural and narrative weight. Such an honest material ethic aligns strongly with Seoul Design Award's emphasis on design that respects existing resources while extending their life meaningfully, rather than erasing them for novelty.

The stilt house typology is translated into contemporary spatial system that responds to climate, site permeability, and human movement. Elevated volumes reduce heat gain and material footprint, while open ground planes allow air flow, water absorption, and social activity to coexist.

INS Studio's engagement with local carpenters ensure that craft knowledge is not sidelined but elevated within contemporary practice. This collaboration reinforces architecture as a social act. The building supports local skills, sustain livelihoods, and strengthens cultural agency.

Recipient of



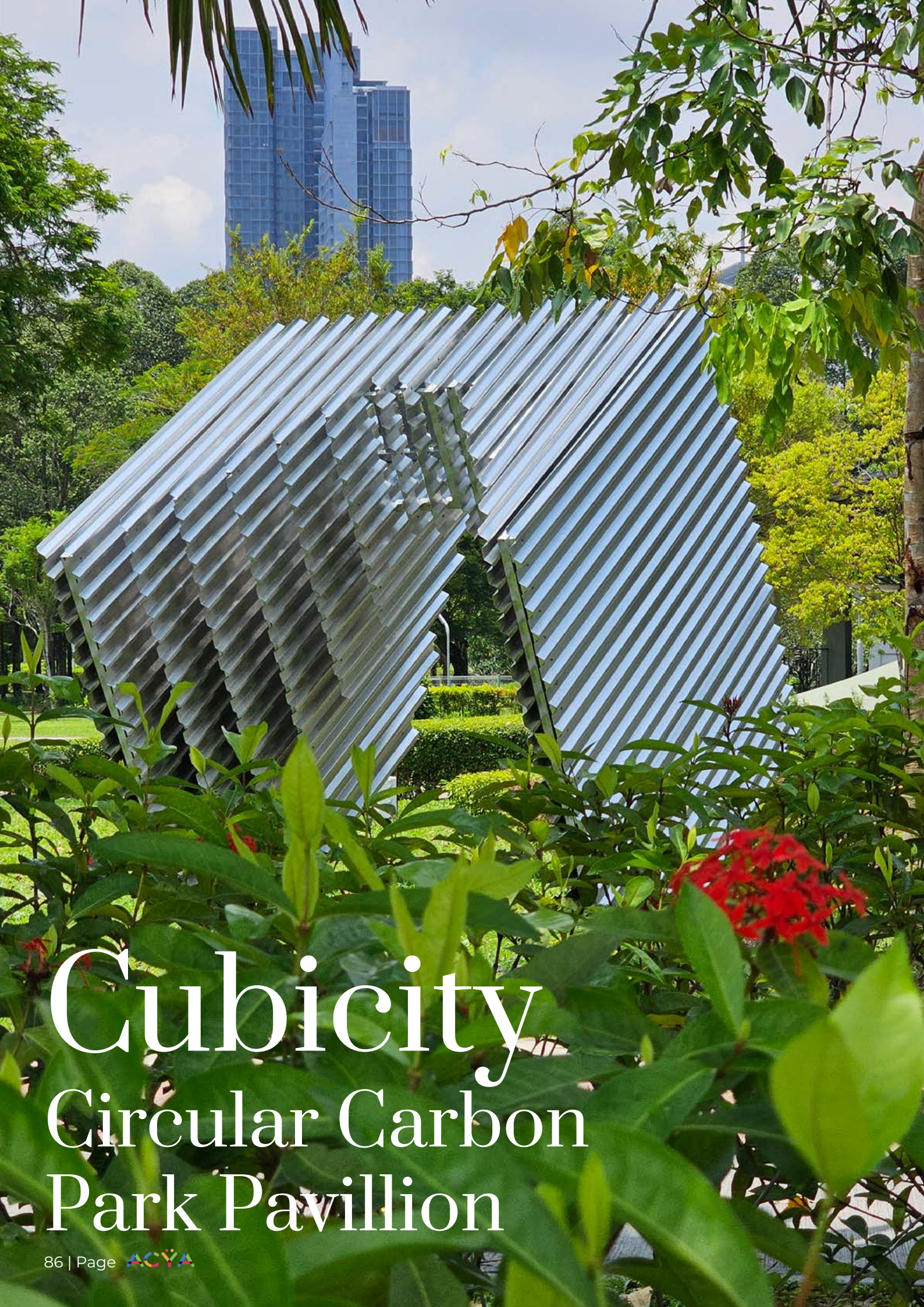


While Tao Bun Raya is modest in scale and programme, it demonstrates how everyday architecture can carry global relevance. The project addresses universal issues: waste reduction, climate responsiveness, cultural erosion and the need for meaningful public spaces. Yet it does so through a distinctly local lens.

In short, Tao Bun Raya represents values-driven architecture—where sustainability, culture, and social responsibility are inseparable. INS Studio's project demonstrates that meaningful design is not defined by scale or spectacle, but by how thoughtfully it negotiates the relationship between past and present, people and place, and resources and responsibility.



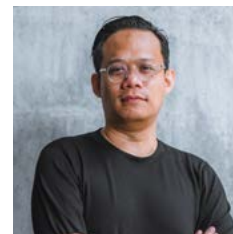




# Cubicity

## Circular Carbon

### Park Pavillion



Qhawarizmi Norhisham  
PAM, Malaysia

The cube shape is a significant representation of the Third Dimension as it establishes the creation of Space. This pavilion is designed by Qhawarizmi Architect, named Cubicity for its obvious shape and location in the heart of the city. Crafted from ribbed aluminium panels containing 90% recycled content, the pavilion will be recycled again for future applications. Its temporal nature ensures easy disassembly for recycling, aligning with the principles of a circular economy where every component is repurposed or recycled at the end of its life.

The pavilion serves as an optical instrument to appreciate the natural layers of landscape and its surrounding. A series of fins blur the boundaries between the interior and exterior. Its central void

is carefully calibrated to frame the visitor's gaze towards the Petronas Twin Towers.

The aluminium's natural shine, untouched by paint or finish, act as a shimmering veil reflecting the parks panorama, celebrating the inherent beauty of raw materials in the park. Shadow from nearby trees dance on the surface of the panels, suggesting that the fourth dimension (Time) is part of the design.











# Ola Hale

## Hawaiian Oasis in the Urban Fabric



Chio Wen Tian  
SIA, Singapore

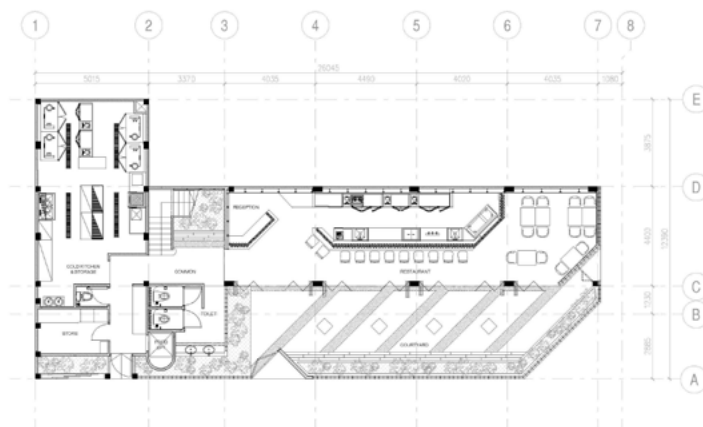
The key design strategy for this adaptive reuse is to amalgamate the first floor and create a courtyard fronting the café formed by circular breeze block and off-form concrete wall. This boundary wall extends to the front and folds open to orientate the front entrance directly to Tan Dinh Church across the street, inviting passersby into this lush courtyard from the buzzing Hai Ba Trung street.

Upon entering the oasis and stepping into the building, users are greeted with an array of teal linen ceilings created by three different details inspired by the movement and intensities of the Hawaiian waters, “Ebbs”, “Tides”, and “Waves” across all levels and

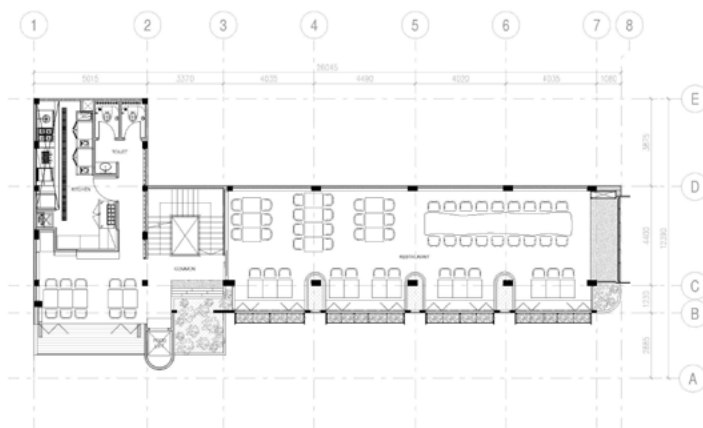
corresponding to the different activities across the building - cafe, restaurant, bar. Each detail is meticulously crafted and integrated into the space to evoke the natural rhythms and energies of the sea, transforming the environment into a dynamic landscape that mirrors the fluidity and beauty of Hawaiian waters. To complement the iconic Tan Dinh Church, multiple vantage points are crafted to offer the best views for users such as the frameless glass window at the front of the second-floor restaurant while on the third floor and the rooftop, spaces are strategically laid out to offer expansive and unimpeded vista of the church.



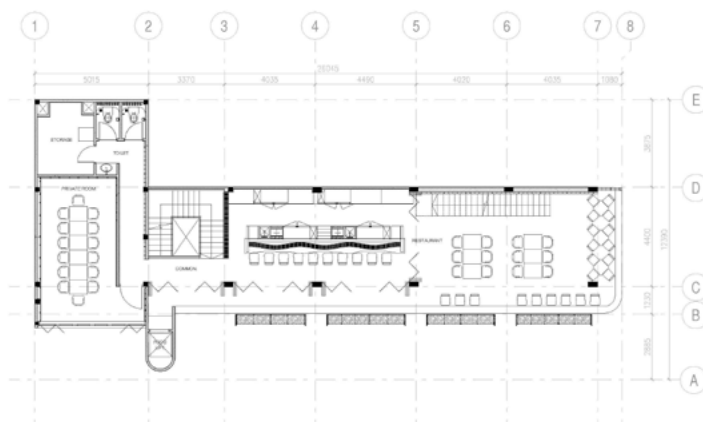




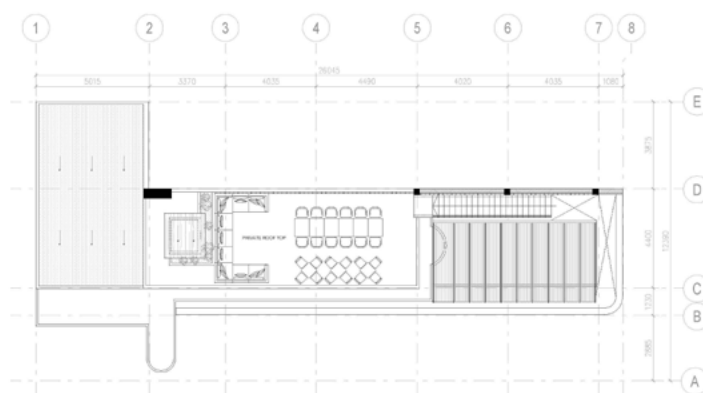
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Roof Floor

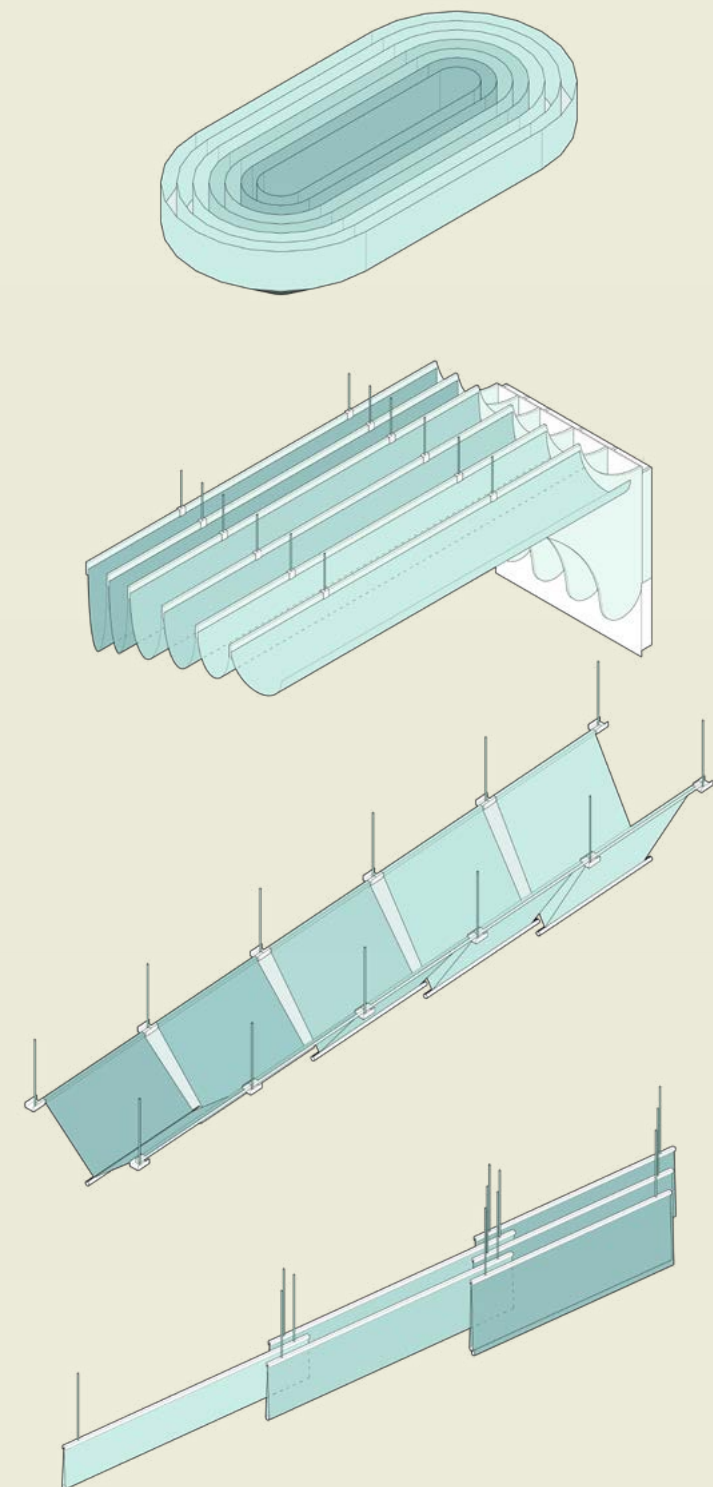


As a deliberate respond to its urban context which is devoid of plants and greenery, plants are added on facade planters which are mounted on wooden lookalike fins aligned to the existing external columns of the old residential block, giving it its new green facade while preserving its original Southern Vietnamese modernist architecture.

OLA Hale Restaurant and Bar demonstrates the promising potential and possibilities of adaptive re-use in Ho Chi Minh City while preserving its charm and is envisioned to be trailblazer in the transformation of Hai Ba Trung street.







Third Floor Ceiling

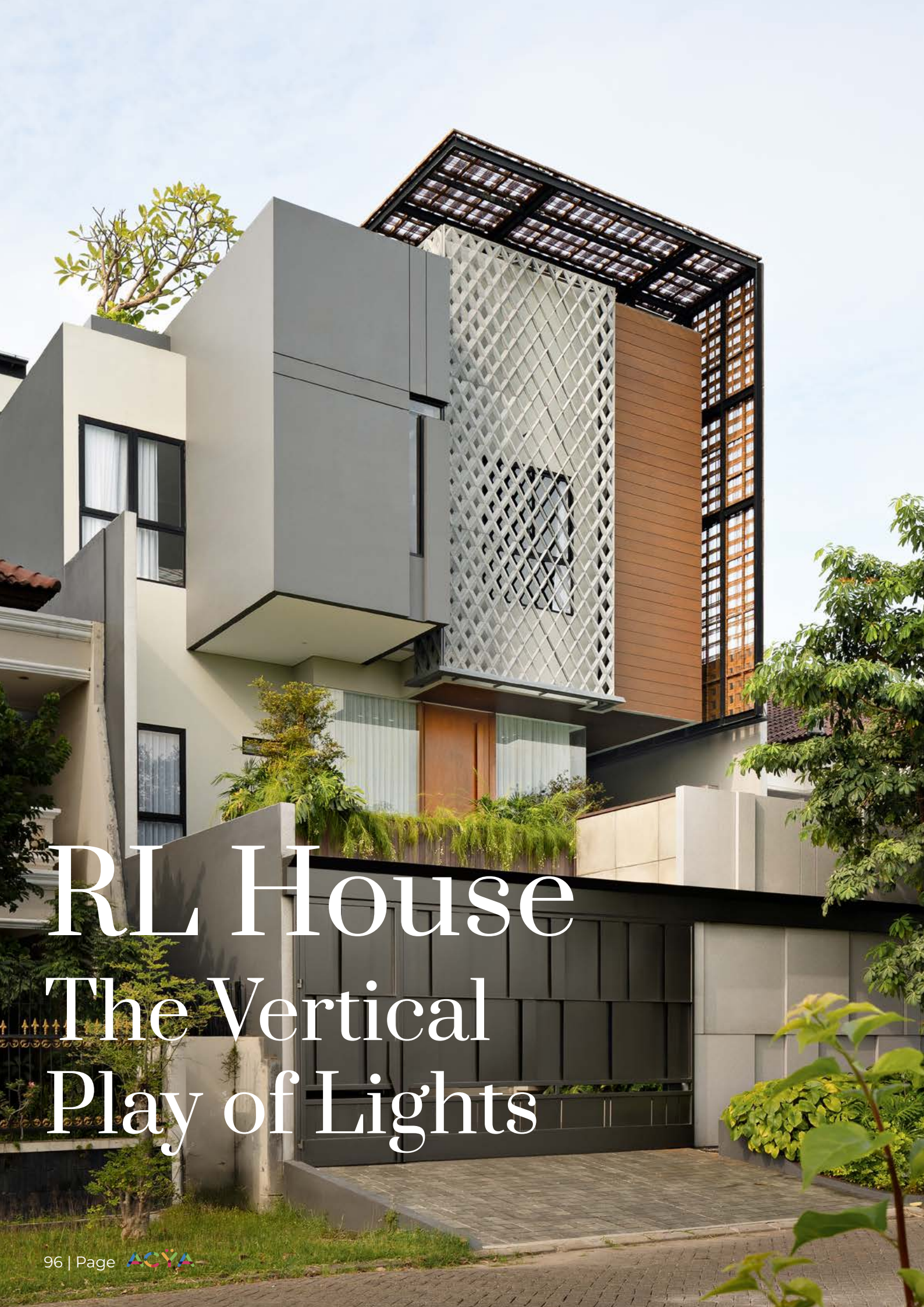
Second Floor Ceiling

First Floor Ceiling

Ground Floor Ceiling







# RL House

## The Vertical Play of Lights



Denny Setiawan  
IAI, Indonesia

RL House is a private residence located within an established and upscale residential enclave. The project focuses on how a vertically arranged home can articulate privacy, openness, and material exploration within a refined domestic environment. Rather than being driven by spatial constraints, the design emphasizes clarity of organization and quality of experience, allowing each space to function comfortably while remaining connected as part of a cohesive whole.

From the exterior, RL House presents an architectural expression that is both bold and explorative. The massing is articulated through stacked volumes, clearly defined planes,

and carefully carved voids, resulting in a facade that feels dynamic yet composed. This explorative quality is most evident in the selection and combination of materials, reflecting the character of the client—young, curious, and open to innovation. A lighttone secondary skin in the form of lattice screens defines the front facade, acting simultaneously as a visual filter, a climatic device, and a layer of privacy. Complementing this are panels of synthetic rattan and fiber cement boards with a timber-like appearance. These materials were selected for their durability, low-maintenance qualities, and ability to age gracefully, ensuring long-term performance without compromising architectural intent.







The spatial organization begins at the ground floor, which is fully dedicated to service and support functions. This zoning strategy establishes a clear separation between service activities and the primary living spaces. By positioning the main living level above, daily operations on the ground floor can function independently, reinforcing privacy and minimizing unnecessary encounters between service circulation and the homeowners' activities. A prominent front staircase becomes the principal point of arrival, guiding residents and guests directly to the main entrance on the first floor.

The first floor serves as the public heart of the house. Family living, dining, and the clean kitchen are arranged within an open-plan configuration that encourages

interaction and visual continuity. Generous openings and internal voids allow natural light and cross-ventilation to permeate the interior. A swimming pool is positioned toward the front side of this level, adjacent to the main living space, functioning as both a visual focal point and an extension of daily activities. Toward the rear, a more intimate garden accommodates a secondary pond, introducing a quieter atmosphere that balances the openness of the public areas. A guest bedroom is also located on this level, carefully integrated to maintain privacy while remaining accessible.

Ascending to the second floor, the house transitions into a more private realm. The master bedroom is oriented toward a side void that introduces daylight, ventilation, and a green visual corridor.

Windows from both the master bedroom and bathroom open toward vertical planting along this void, creating a calm and sheltered environment while enhancing environmental performance.

The children's bedroom adopts a mezzanine configuration, where the lower level accommodates sleeping and wardrobe functions, and the upper level is designated for studying and working. This sectional approach maximizes vertical space and supports flexibility as the occupants' needs evolve.

Vertical circulation is treated as a key architectural element throughout RL House. The staircase is conceived not merely as a connector, but as an experiential space shaped by light and shadow. Sunlight filtered through the lattice

screens animates the stairwell over the course of the day, while the custom-designed railing introduces a layer of precision and craftsmanship. Its slender proportions and detailing require careful execution, reinforcing the project's attention to architectural detail. In parallel, a lift connects all levels up to the rooftop, ensuring accessibility and long-term adaptability.

The rooftop completes the vertical sequence of spaces as an understated open-air extension of the house. Timber decking and integrated planting create a relaxed setting for informal use, while maintaining visual and material continuity with the rest of the building. Natural ventilation and controlled exposure to sunlight ensure comfort without overstatement.

Overall, RL House represents an architectural exploration rooted in clarity, comfort, and material experimentation. Through its layered spatial organization, deliberate separation of public and private realms, and careful attention to detail—from facade articulation to interior circulation—the house becomes a refined domestic environment that reflects the lifestyle, aspirations, and evolving needs of its inhabitants.









# ACYA 26/27

## ASIAN CONGRESS OF ARCHITECTS INCHEON, SOUTH KOREA



# MYCARE HQ Office



Firadaus Khazis  
PAM, Malaysia

The MYCARE HQ Office in Sungai Besi is a 16,000 sqft facility that positions design as a tool of service, empathy, and resilience. Occupying a four-storey dual-lot building, this institutional headquarters for a humanitarian NGO was realized with a limited budget, compelling the team to embrace recycled materials, salvaged furniture, and raw finishes as part of its architectural DNA.

compassion. As an institutional office, the project rejects luxury in favor of intention, proving that architecture can be deeply impactful without excess. The HQ demonstrates how imperfection, when elevated, becomes symbolic strength; how spaces, when strategically programmed, serve both operational agility and emotional restoration.

## Design Narrative

The concept is anchored in remembrance. Exposed, fragmented brick walls form “living memory walls,” symbolizing the hardship faced in conflict zones. These scars, preserved within the architecture, evoke reflection and gratitude while resisting the pursuit of polish. Patinated surfaces, mismatched furniture, and found objects create an atmosphere of layered authenticity, an honest translation of the frugality and endurance of the communities MYCARE supports.

## Embodiment of Values

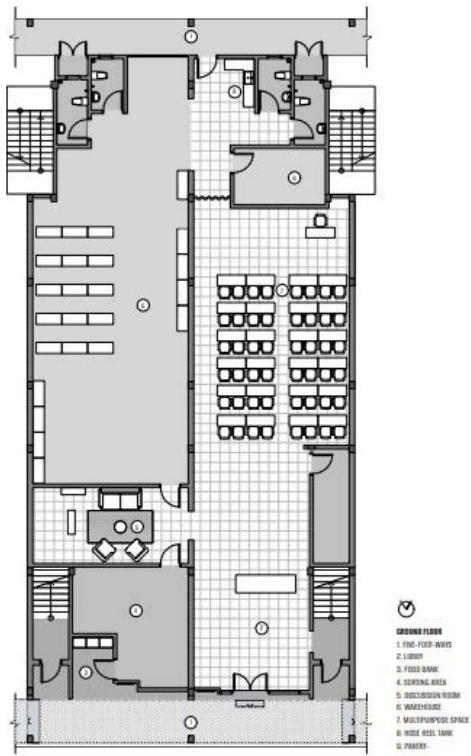
Every design decision reinforces MYCARE’s humanitarian mission; mobilizing resources, cultivating resilience, and acting with

## A Workplace with Purpose

The MYCARE HQ Office in Sungai Besi is not merely an office but a physical manifesto of humanitarian architecture. It honors memory, sustains operations, nurtures caregivers, and projects an identity rooted in empathy and service. It is a quiet yet profound example of how design, guided by values, becomes a force for good.

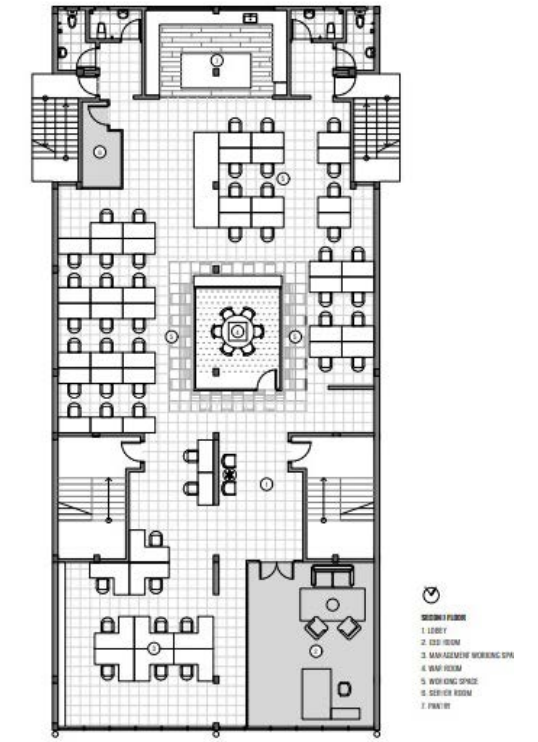
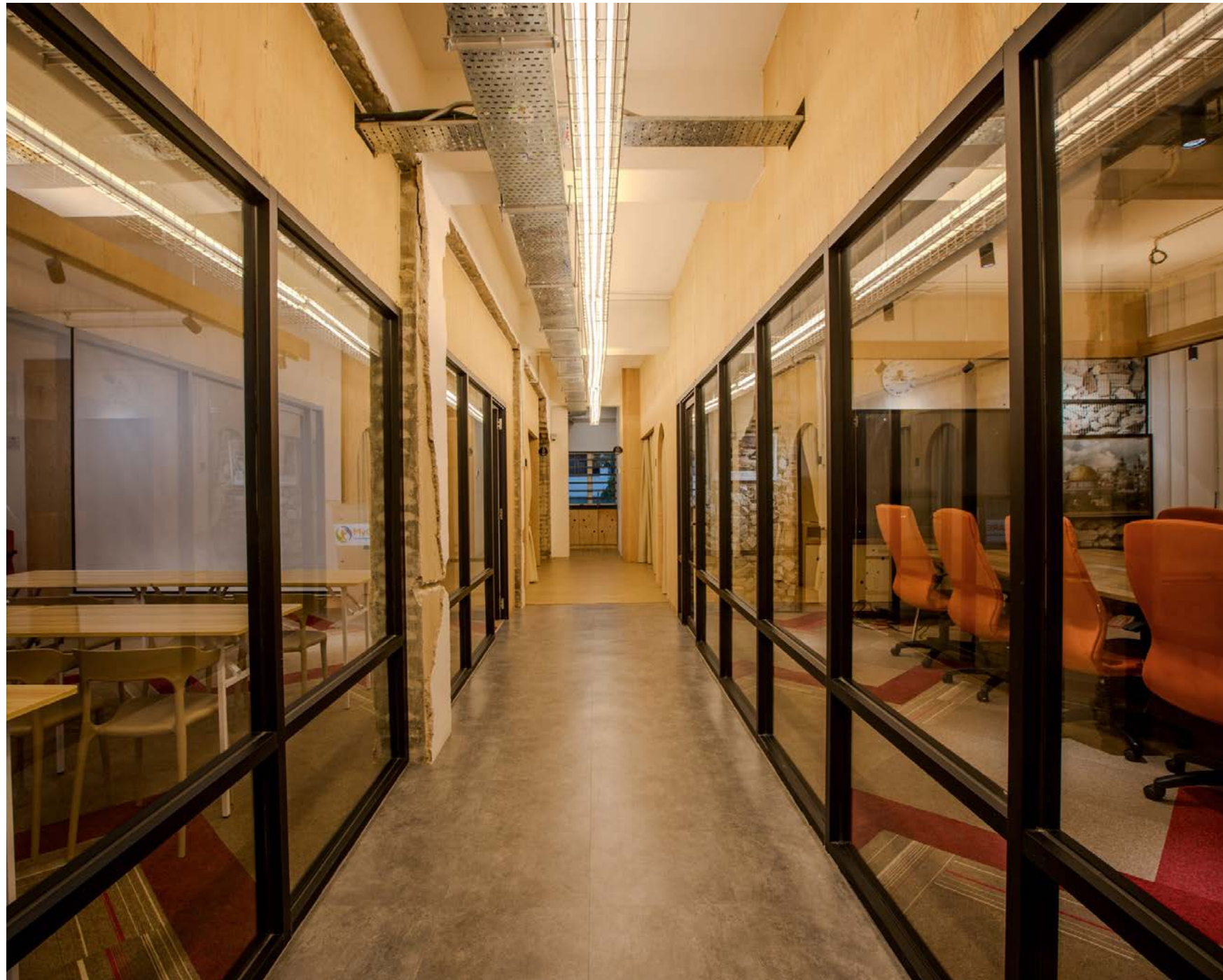






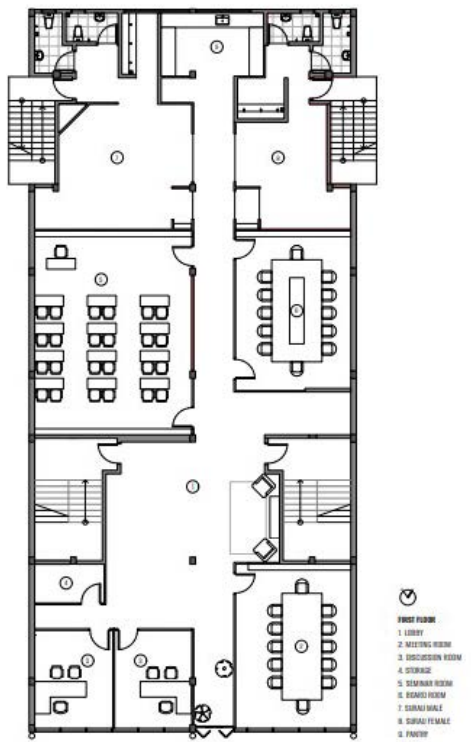
### Ground Floor

Configured as a multipurpose activity space, supporting MYCARE's role as both an operational and community-focused institution.



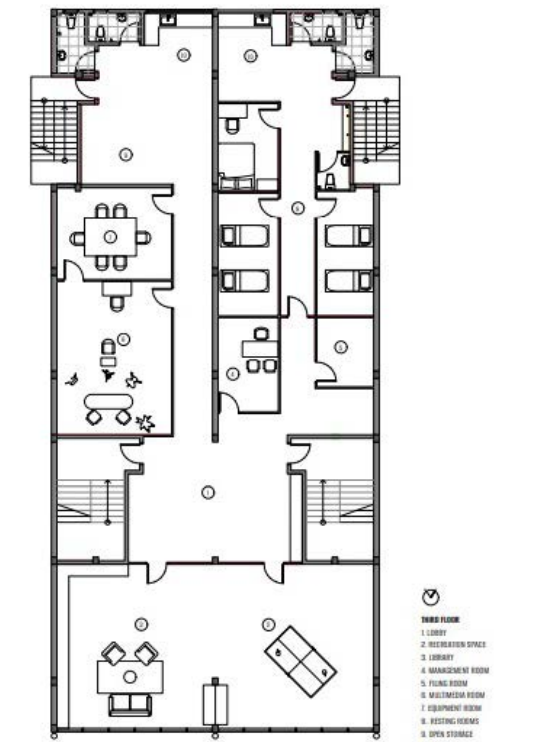
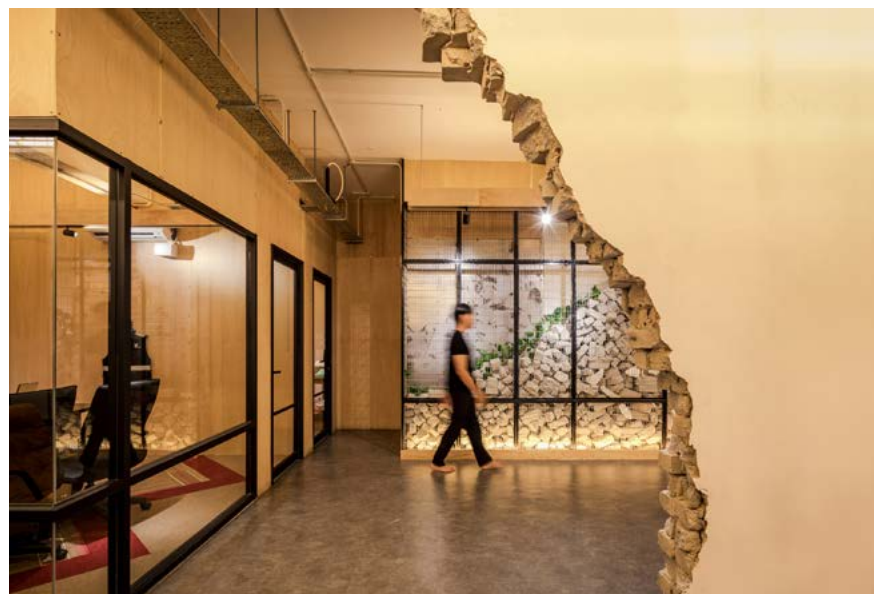
### Level 2

The operational HQ, designed for collaboration and efficiency within a compact, light-filled setting.



### Level 1

Reprogrammed into rentable seminar and meeting spaces, ensuring sustainable income while encouraging community interface.



### Top Floor

Dedicated to staff wellbeing, reflecting MYCARE's "care-for-the-carer" philosophy.









Azlan Syarawi  
PAM, Malaysia

#KBBSTEAK TTDI channels the raw, rugged energy of a traditional steakhouse, and reinterprets it through a contemporary lens. The building's existing fabric is embraced here, with existing chipped walls left unpolished to reveal its history and texture.

Layered industrial metal grills and detailing sets a powerful, grounded tone. To soften and elevate the space, warm timber paneling with polished finishes is introduced alongside refined metal accents, glass, and lush landscaping. The resulting composition balances rawness with sophistication.

The restaurant unfolds vertically across three levels, each designed to offer a distinct dining experience. The ground floor places the open kitchen and glowing Josper grill at its core, offering fiery sensory connections beyond smokes and mirrors for attending guests.

A direct view of the dry-aging meat counter and beverage stations further creates a sense of anticipation. Upstairs, thoughtfully arranged seatings create a more composed setting, arranged to fragment sightlines and avoid an overly exposed ambience. The topmost floor offers three dining rooms that can be combined into a larger space, offering versatility for different occasions.

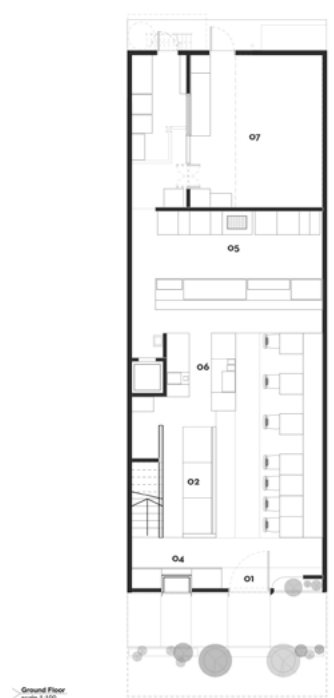
Throughout #KBBSTEAK TTDI, the combination of rough and smooth surfaces creates a grounded, carefully-crafted space. Casual interplay of textures and finishes highlights the building's raw character while supporting a comfortable, modern dining atmosphere.



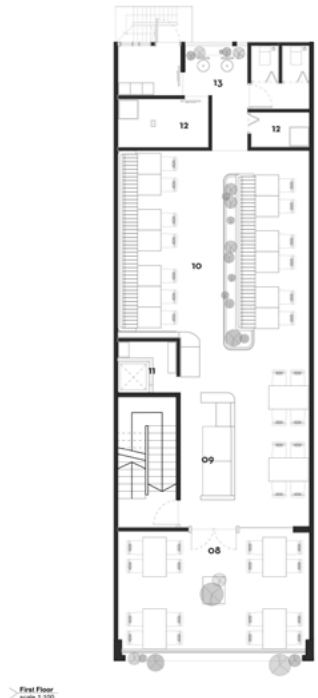
# #kbbsteak From Grit to Glow



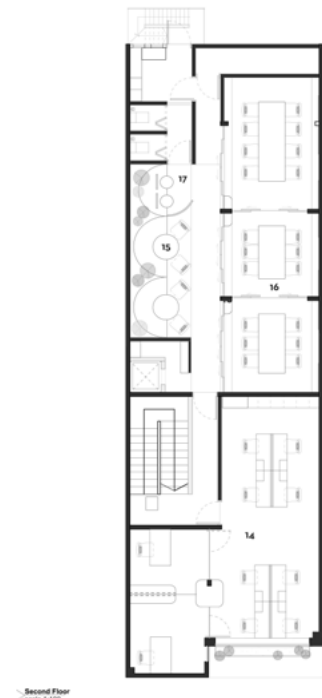




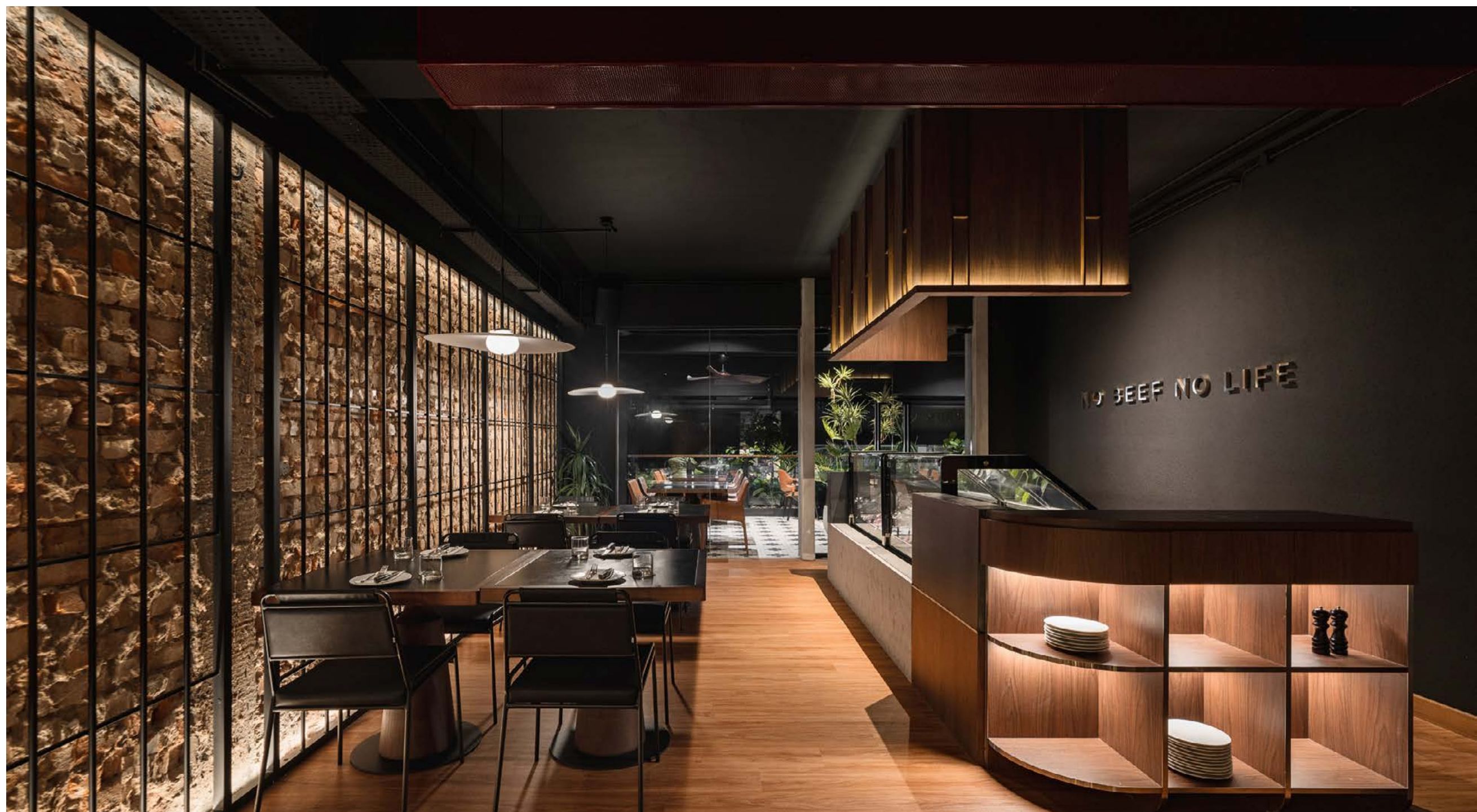
- 01 foyer
- 02 meat selection
- 03 bench dining area
- 04 dry apr
- 05 open kitchen
- 06 beverage area
- 07 back of house



- 08 outdoor dining area
- 09 meat selection area
- 10 general dining area
- 11 dumbwater
- 12 surau
- 13 handwash area



- 14 office
- 15 booth seats
- 16 private dining
- 17 handwash











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# ACYA

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new dawn  
new age

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