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Crossing Landscape and Architecture: Embodiment of A-Perspectival Space in Wang Shu's Oblique Drawings

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate Wang Shu has experimented with renewing vernacular architectural vocabularies by reinterpreting traditional Chinese landscape paintings and gardens. However, the role of Wang's design drawings in his architectural undertakings remains largely underexplored. By analysing Wang's handmade design drawings, this paper examines how the architect bridges the gap between traditional landscape painting, which is often considered to be the epitome of Chinese modes of spatial perception, and the modern oblique projection method, which is a technique that is based on the Cartesian coordinate system.

First, through a literature review, this paper frames a salient aspect of Wang's appreciation of the traditional Chinese landscape painting, namely the genre's a-perspectival treatment of pictorial space. For Wang, the landscape painting embodies a culture-bound mode of "seeing," which resorts to neither the illusionary perspective nor Cartesian metric space. Second, through case studies, this paper analyses the key aspects of Wang's landscape painting-informed a-perspectival oblique drawings and his drawings' critical implications. In his design for the Tengtou Pavilion (Shanghai, 2009-10), Wang creates nonrepresentational, immeasurable spaces with inconsistent projection fragments to evoke intended phenomenally boundless depth and transforms the technique into a collage device to prompt an architecture-landscape parallelism. In his sketch for the Lingyin Temple teahouse complex (Hangzhou, 2008-20), Wang doubles the modes of oblique drawing to attune the landscape painting and architectural projection and transform nature into built forms.

By drawing on Wang's case, this paper offers insights into how the standardised oblique drawing method can afford culturally grounded a-

perspectival uses and how such critical adaptations could assist the architect to move across the ontological border between architecture and landscape.

A-Perspectival Landscape Painting and Perspectival Oblique Drawing

Linear perspective is a specific mathematically codified projection technique and “symbolic form” of worldview that is rooted in European logocentric epistemology and an assumption of sovereign subjectivity.¹ The perspectival window gives an illusionary view of the world, which is outside the petrified viewer’s immediate presence. Linear perspective is also said to have anticipated the Cartesian notion of space-in-itself, whereby space is conceived as an “infinite, isotropic, and homogeneous” continuum that is “independent of all time, matter, and motion.”² In a critical sense, an alternative a-perspectival mode of space conception requires a paradigmatic break with the homogeneous continuity of metric space and perceives the space not as a self-sufficient abstract coordinate but a lived phenomenon that emerges with embodied human experiences.

The history of oblique drawing illustrates the technique’s entanglements with perspectival ideologies. Modern oblique drawing, whereby parallel projectors intersect with the pictorial plane at non-right angles, is a subtype of rationalised parallel projection. Despite the empirical uses of prototype oblique drawings in ancient civilisations, the oblique drawing method was only mathematically codified at the end of the eighteenth century by Gaspard Monge, William Farish and other mathematicians and technicians.³ European military architects and engineers favoured oblique drawing owing to its objective representation with metric accuracy, which perspective distortion failed to provide. At the turn of the twentieth century, the avant-garde (e.g., El Lissitzky, Theo van Doesburg and many others) was primarily interested in the oblique drawing method’s a-perspectival potentials, that is its dimensional reversibility and indeterminacy regarding the viewer’s relationship with the pictorial field.⁴ Stan Allen implied that perspectival ideologies remain detectable in the avant-garde’s historical oblique drawings, where “the model of space in depth persists.”⁵ Recently, Adam Jasper theorised that parallel projection in general is a “meta-perspective fulfilling the goal of a complete spatial continuum,” especially in digital media wherein the living environment is reduced to data.⁶

Wang Shu is a major proponent of the recent discourse on the revival of Chinese picturesque tradition. For Wang, the traditional Chinese landscape painting epitomises “a different way of seeing” in the sense that the genre is not a window through which to gaze but a realm inviting “you [to] really enter it [the painting].”⁷ The landscape painting’s participatory mode of perception is closely linked to the painting’s pictorial method of structuring “the spatial depths of the mountains” without geometric unity.⁸ The long history of the Chinese landscape painting or *Shanshui Hua*, which means the paintings of the mountains and rivers, dates back to the fourth century, and these paintings reached their peak during the Song Dynasty (Northern Song [960-1127 AD] and Southern Song [1127-1279 AD]) when the natural landscape became a dominant subject in Chinese visual arts. Although Wang never uses the neologism “a-perspectival” when discussing landscape paintings, certain commonly observed features that Wang frequently discusses in his own essays – such as the painting’s participatory mode of perception; nonrepresentational elements; visual and cultural flatness; and incorporation of bodily movement, time, and multifocality when structuring pictorial depth – reflect the art genre’s most recognisable a-perspectival characteristics. Some of these features are revisited in a subsequent analysis of Wang’s design drawings. For now, it is sufficient to briefly outline Wang’s general stance and key points.

Wang belongs to the generation of Chinese architects exposed to the Western discourses on the so-called crisis of representation, whereby the traditional theory of mimesis (in the Greek sense), which regards representation as the secondary imitation of an a priori transcendental reality, is disputed. From Cubism to Russian Constructivism, Wang is well aware of Western modernist paintings’ revolutionary break with mimesis and its associated perspective illusionism, as he notes that such paintings are “not reproducing reality” but “create a genuinely real object.”⁹ Wang adopts this critical antimimetic attitude in his reading of the Chinese landscape painting, which is rooted in an entirely non-Western epistemological and aesthetic tradition through which the ontological disparity between the transcendently real and concrete experience is unknown.¹⁰

Wang asserts that the landscape painting is a “mythic machine of real reality” in the sense that the genre is never a mere realist representation of nature’s appearances but attempts to embody “the experience of travelling amidst real landscapes of natural beauty.”¹¹ Ancient landscape painters reinvented the two-dimensional pictorial surface, whose spatiotemporal coherence arises with viewers’ mental meanderings inside the

optically and geometrically incoherent image. It follows that the painting's pictorial depth is not a geometrically prescribed dimension but is perceived as a phenomenon experienced through time and the viewer's imaginary motion.¹² Moreover, the landscape painting champions a nonhierarchical part-whole relationship, where the pictorial whole is not structured by pre-given geometric uniformity but grows out of local segments' lived interactions.¹³ In addition, the painting is culturally flat, as it embodies a nonanthropocentric ethical value whereby the natural and artificial are considered equal.¹⁴

Arguably, Wang's points are in line with the mainstream discourses of the cross-cultural studies of Chinese landscape painting and philosophy, which compare the Chinese art form's deep-lying cosmological thoughts, modes of perception, aesthetic criteria and compositional characteristics with those defining the tradition of European Renaissance paintings. It is a historical fact that linear perspective, along with Euclidean geometry, remained unknown to Chinese painters until the late sixteenth century (through Jesuit missionaries) and that the perspective technique was never favoured.¹⁵ Art historian John Hay called the pictorial field in traditional Song Dynasty paintings "algebraic space" (in contrast to Renaissance paintings' geometric space). Through algebraic space, spatial depth is additively constructed from compartmentalised sections and "tensions between opposing organisational schemata" are part of the paintings' effects.¹⁶

In light of the above discussions, this paper posits that the traditional landscape painting's a-perspectival sensitivities, which are highlighted by Wang and his own architectural drawings, which often take the form of modern oblique drawings, are potentially incompatible. The following analysis of Wang's handmade design drawings focuses specifically on how he navigates the identified paradigmatic gap by distorting the rationalised oblique projection in multiple ways.

Tengtou Pavilion: Collage Oblique

In 2009, the Amateur Architecture Studio, which was cofounded by Wang and Lu Wenyu, was commissioned to design the 2010 Shanghai Expo exhibition pavilion for the village of Tengtou, Zhejiang. "A picturesque house," as Wang calls the pavilion, aims to offer an architecturally mediated sensation of spatial depth. On the restricted site (50 metres long and 15 metres wide), the architects attempted to create an effect of "ever-deeper space" by inviting the visitor to circumnavigate a series of densely aligned self-similar building layers (Figure 1).¹⁷ The intended spatial boundlessness in

the design went hand in hand with Wang’s staged drawing procedure, which he describes in his essay titled “The Field of Vision on Section [sic]” as “start[ing] drawing from sections.” Wang explains:

For me, the seemingly unthought cartographic formats – plan, elevation, section, and the before-after order of producing them – decide, in a fundamental way, whether we are reckoning on architecture.¹⁸

Wang’s starting-drawing-from-sections imperative brings into question the privilege granted to the architectural ground plan as a primary order giver. According to Wang, in traditional gardens and paintings, the spatial coherence emerges from “mutual correspondences and interdependences of the [local] sections” rather than being predetermined by an overarching order.¹⁹ This inversed part-whole relationship is also recalled in Wang’s adaptation of oblique drawing, which is used as an assembling device to create aggregate pictorial depth.



Figure 1. Interior spatial layers (left) and exterior prismatic envelope (right) of the Tengtou Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2010 (photograph courtesy of Yige Yinghua).

Boundless Depth

Wang’s published drawings for the Tengtou Pavilion contain three stages of work: sectional sketches, section-oblique drawings, and an overall view collage. With twelve sectional sketches, the architect proposes dividing the building’s north-south longitudinal axis (46.9 metres) into a series of self-similar layers (Figure 2). Based on the sectional sketches, Wang proceeds to draw eleven obliques to further study the intermediate floors between these vertical planes (Figure 3).

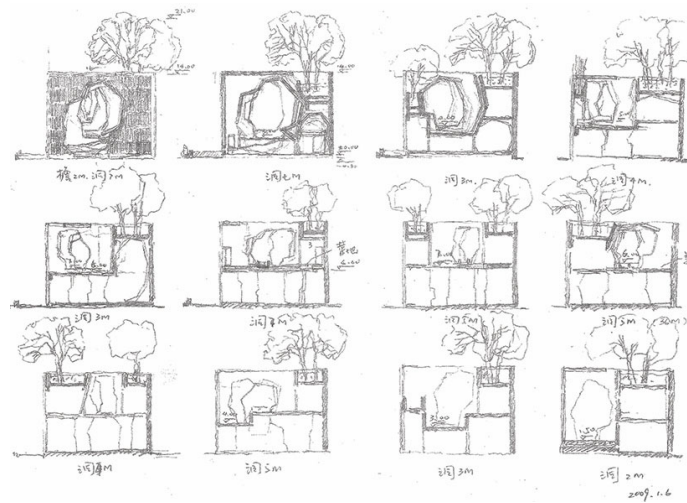


Figure 2. Wang Shu, Twelve sectional sketches for the Tengtou Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2009 (A4 printer paper; pencil; sketches courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio).

Wang’s oblique drawings combine notations and graphics. The numerical notations indicate “the number of times of cutting out the architectural layers and their actual measurements.”²⁰ In this technical representation, the pavilion’s longitudinal axis is studied as a metrically controlled sequence comprising a number of successive units, of which 3.3 metres is used as the basic module. In addition, Wang’s section-oblique drawings meticulously delineate the topological attributes of the floors spreading across the sectional planes, such as the subtle changes in elevation levels, semi-interior corridors, ramps, a short bridge and planting trays. Tensions between the metric measurements and visual depictions are in play. By closely examining the eleven section-oblique drawings in Figure 3, one observes that their diagonal recessions are not drawn to a consistent scale. For example, in Oblique 3, 3.3 metres and 6.6 metres are drawn as almost equal lengths. This visual equivalence of different lengths is also true when Obliques 2, 3, and 4 are compared (Figure 4). In Obliques 6 and 7, 6.6 metres appears to be nearly identical to 13.2 metres (Figure 5). Notwithstanding, all of the frontal sections are drawn to the same scale. These repeated inconsistencies suggest that, in Wang’s section-oblique drawings, the shifts in scaling when depicting spatial recession may not be careless errors.

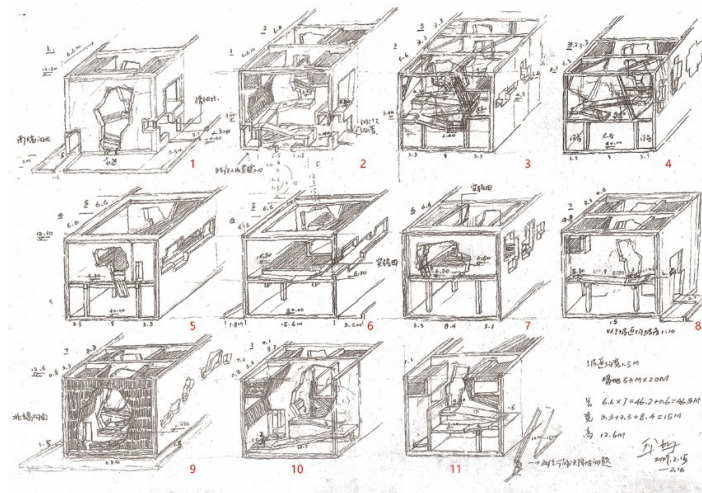


Figure 3. Wang Shu, Eleven oblique drawings for the Tengtou Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2009 (A3 printer paper; pencil; drawings courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio), with each oblique drawing being labelled with numbers in parentheses for the purposes of the author's analysis.

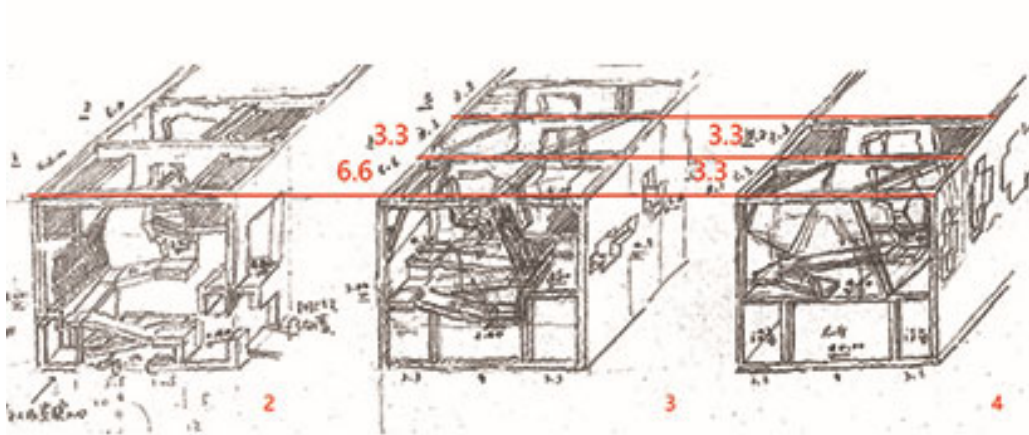


Figure 4. Comparisons of diagonal extrusions across Wang's oblique drawings (Obliques 2, 3, and 4).

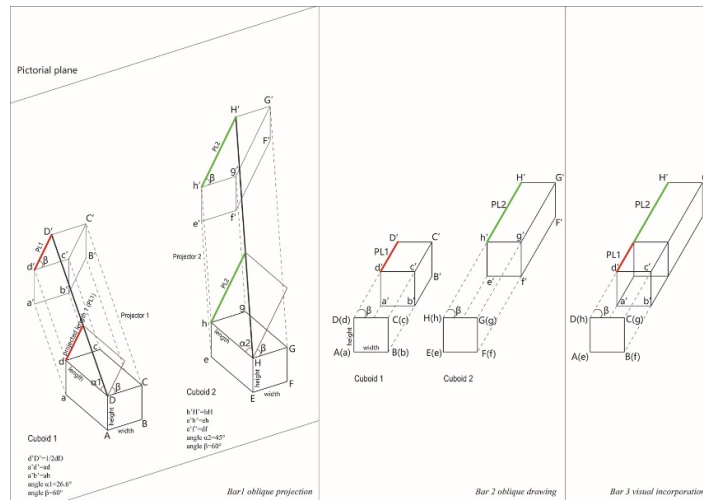


Diagram 1. Synthesis of inconsistent projected lengths
(Drawing by Xin Jin).

In Figure 3, Wang uses the oblique method in a collagelike manner, even though the “seam” or visual rupture signifying grafting work is disguised. On the one hand, each individual oblique fragment remains faithful to the oblique system and represents illusory spatial recession on a two-dimensional surface. On the other hand, Wang dismantles the linear recessional axis of the oblique system and constructs additive virtual spaces with the intervals between the individual obliques. These virtual spaces are immeasurable, abstract and shallow, as they are not modelled on spatial recession but constructed from the discontinuities between fragmentary images. There is an inversed image-space hierarchy at work in Wang’s oblique drawings. The two-dimensional images are not merely mimetic representations of the three-dimensional space but become the condition of perceiving the abstract virtual spaces. The drawings meticulously delineate the architectonic details of the building sections’ floors, whose intricacies invite the viewers’ vicarious strolls through the episodically laid architectural scenes.²¹ Nevertheless, the virtual spaces beyond the geometric coordinate prevent the depicted floors from being integrated into a single homogeneous ground plane. Wang’s treatment of uncommon grounds is more than simply a conceptual game; it helps to provide a sense of phenomenal boundlessness central to the pavilion design. Wang’s starting-from-section strategy and collage oblique drawings play a part in abolishing the prerogative of the plan and criticising the tyranny of metric space over spatial sensation.

Architecture-Landscape Parallelism

In the material world, the interior of the Tengtou Pavilion ends at its outer walls. Nevertheless, Wang’s virtual construction of depth, which is marked by his

nonrepresentational – and thus a-perspectival – sensitivities, continues further in the pictorial domain. In the overall view drawing for the project, Wang’s previously disguised assembling work evolves into his demonstrative collage of architectural drawing and landscape painting (Figure 6). Wang once called collage “the secret of our traditional landscape painting,” and he often adopts a stylised photomontage strategy, which is similar to that of the English artist David Hockney’s “joiners,” as a means of site survey.²² In Figure 6, Wang combines the eleven oblique drawings as readymade blocks into variants of the constructed Tengtou Pavilion and further combines these variants to form a village-scale compound. Furthermore, the drawing of the village is juxtaposed with a collage reworking of the handscroll *Painting of a Country Retreat* (*Shanzhuang Tu*; 28.9 x 364.6 centimetres in its original size) after the Northern Song master Li Gonglin (1049-1106 AD). In particular, Wang selects two sections of *A Country Retreat* and collages the cut-outs left and right. He explains that his collage “delineate[s] an overall view of the new village, which comprises meticulous constructions preserving the diversity of lifeworld.”²³ It is worth noting that Wang’s kaleidoscopic overall view is achieved through the enlarged pictorial scope and, perhaps more importantly, the inclusion of the fragmentary images’ qualitative differences.



Figure 6. Wang Shu and Wang Ning, an overall view drawing for the Tengtou Pavilion scheme, 2010 (digital collage, courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio).

In linear perspective, a single scaling system regulates the sizes of all depicted objects. However, Wang notes that, in *A Country Retreat*, there is neither a consistent scaling nor a stationary vision but rather that “the distance in his [the painter’s] depiction is changing” and that the distinctions between distant and close views are visually blurred

in their continual flow. Wang remarks that, in *A Country Retreat*, a “site map”-like distant view of the mountains “in a 1:2000 scale” merges with the close views of landscape sceneries “in a scale of 1:100” (see the middle-left part of the reworked painting in Figure 6).²⁴ It is worth noting that, in Wang’s adaptation of the painting, the sequential flux of the distant and close views becomes the views’ collage juxtaposition. In fact, Wang’s reworking of *A Country Retreat* constructs a new bifocal structure, which is absent from the original painting, comprising left-right and distant-close views.

This new left-right bifocal structure is consistent with the up-down side parallelism of the images of architecture and landscape. First, the bifocal structure in Wang’s reworking of *A Country Retreat* invalidates a reading of the adapted painting as a stable pictorial background, since the painting as a whole is neither a compositionally nor a spatially integrated image at all. Rather than as a conventional background, Wang adapts *A Country Retreat* to serve as a model of imaging, whose collage logic is already reflected in Wang’s own oblique drawings of the envisioned village. The absurd oversizing of *A Country Retreat*’s sceneries in relation to the village scene reinforces the identified architecture-landscape parallelism. This overproportioning treatment allows the painting cut-outs to be perceived as independent visual narratives, whose excessive pictorial details remain indifferent to the established architectural context.

Second, the loose parallelism of the images of architecture and mountains is connected through the agency of time and narrative. In *A Country Retreat*, the same literati figures appear several times in different sceneries. The figures’ reappearances allude to their virtual processes of roaming the landscape sceneries through time. The painting’s already existing temporal threads are further prolonged as the literati figures in the mountainous landscape walk into Wang’s architecture (Figure 6). The peripatetic figures’ invisible paths function as place binders that stitch the built and mountainous scenes together. The depth of the mountain and village, which is experienced through the unfolding of time, defies the reductionist idea that regards the architecture-landscape relationship as a mere visual composition (Figure 6). The loose architecture-landscape parallelism in Wang’s collage can be considered an externalisation of the inherent parallelism structuring the oblique drawing, whereby no privileged centrality would be pre-established. Wang’s collage parallelism also foregrounds his polemical discourse that insists on a “mutual understanding and harmonious relationship between humanity and nature.”²⁵ For Wang, landscape is not a passive background

against which studio-designed buildings can be placed, with or without posterior modification, but an “interlocutor” with which architecture comes into being.

Lingyin Teahouse: Architecturalising Landscape through Drawing the Obliques

In the design for the Lingyin Teahouse in Hangzhou (2008-20), Wang’s a-perspectival uses of the oblique method, which models depth without recourse to unified axial recession, play a part in bridging the gap between landscape painting and architectural drawing, as well as architecturalising the mountain topology as architectonic forms. Almost at the same time as the Amateur Architecture Studio was working on the Tengtou Pavilion, the Zen Buddhist monks of Lingyin Temple, which was established in 328 AD, commissioned the studio to design a new teahouse complex housing areas for religious mediation and recreational activities (Figure 7). The teahouse complex design involves Wang’s long-term landform design motif “architecture as a mountain,” which recapitulates his efforts to translate the artistic image of the mountain in traditional paintings into architectural organisational strategies and formal vocabularies. Wang’s metaphorical motif also implies an inwardly layered structure wherein the architecture is conceptualised as a world within a world. Wang explains that “to regard a building as a mountain is to regard the building as a world.”²⁶ Regarding the teahouse, the motif “architecture as a mountain” is more than a personal approach and is endowed with strategic significance. Owing to the site’s historical sensitivities, the main tea hall and pagoda had to be designed in an ancient style, a demand that conflicts with Wang’s refusal to directly emulate tradition. Wang’s strategy involves “adding on [*sic*] a ‘landscape’” to ancient-style buildings.²⁷ On the site, the added landscape takes the form of an L-shaped area of artificial mountain, or what Wang calls “Taihu rock houses,” along the courtyard’s east and north walls. Having been experimented on in several previous projects (e.g., the urban renovation of the Southern Song Imperial Street in Hangzhou [2007-09; Figure 8]), the landscape-architecture hybrid form of Taihu rock house takes direct inspiration from the ornamental limestones quarried from Lake Tai, which one routinely encounters in traditional gardens and paintings. In Wang’s preliminary sketch, the artificial mountain comprises five interlocking “rocks,” which are actually multistorey pavilions with irregular concrete wraps that simulate the jagged contours of natural stones.

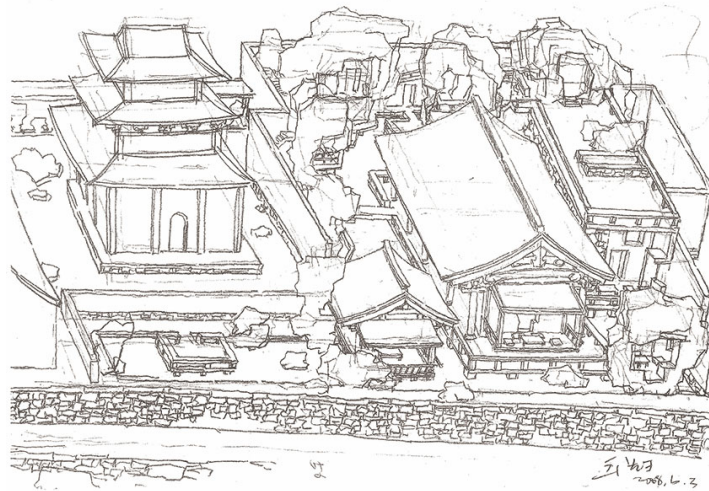


Figure 7. Wang Shu, preliminary sketch showing an aerial view oblique drawing for the teahouse complex at Lingyin Temple, Hangzhou, 2008 (A3 printer paper; pencil; sketch courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio).



Figure 8. The Taihu rock houses in the Southern Song Imperial Street renovation project, Hangzhou, 2007-09 (Photograph by Xin Jin).

Despite the rock houses' figurative symbolism, Wang also seeks to translate the landscape painting's a-perspectival mode of structuring “the spatial depths of the mountains” into architectural organisation, which is discernible in his aerial view oblique drawing for the teahouse project (Figure 7). Initially appearing formulaic, Wang's visualisation of the artificial mountain follows the “deep distance” (*shen yuan*) formula, which is a composition type of the structural schema known as “the three distances” (*san yuan*). In *The Lofty Message of Forests and Streams (Linqun Gaozhi)*, the Northern Song painter and theoretician Guo Xi (active 1070 to after 1123 AD), who was among the first to theorise how to structure the mountain's pictorial depth, elaborated that:

mountains have three types of distance. Looking up to the mountain's peak from its foot is called the high distance. From in front of the mountain spying past it to beyond is called deep distance. Gazing from a nearby mountain at those more distant is called the level distance.²⁸

As Guo specified, the “idea of deep distance is of repeated layering.”²⁹ With the deep distance technique, space is not represented as a continuous volumetric expansion but “obscured depth captured in a picture that was only partially perceived.”³⁰ This type of painterly opacity in the deep distance scheme is different from perspective, which comes from the Latin verb *perspicere*, which means “to see through.” The important role of the three distances schema in shaping architecturally mediated space perception in projects such as the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art, Phase II (2004-08), and the Fuyang Cultural Complex, which was completed in 2017, has been repeatedly affirmed by Wang and explored recently by David Leatherbarrow.³¹ Writing to explain his design inspiration for the Tile Mountain Guesthouse (2010-13), Wang references the middle section of the hanging scroll *Landscape After Huanghe Sanjiao* (*Huanghe Sanjiao Tu*) by Ming Dynasty painter Xie Shichen (1487 to after 1567 AD; Figure 9).³² In the painting's middle section, the ground plane is almost completely eschewed. What is visually displayed are mainly the overlaps of congesting scenes that allude to invisible depth behind. Wang contends that this type of artistically charged concealment is Chinese painters' quintessential means to evoke the experience of “viewing a mountain inside a mountain.”³³



Figure 9. Xie Shichen, *Landscape After Huanghe Sanjiao*, Ming Dynasty (Left: hanging scroll; ink on paper; 58.9 x 31.2 centimetres; Nanjing Museum, Nanjing; Right: the middle section of the painting).

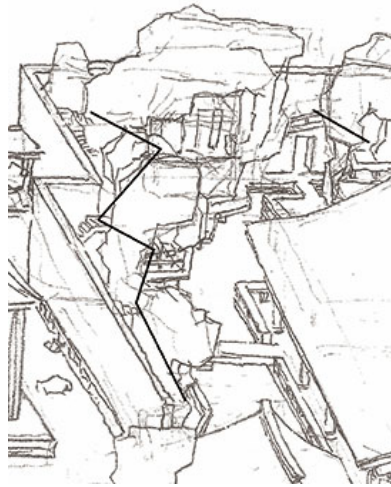


Figure 10. Detail, the aerial view oblique drawing for the Lingyin Teahouse.

The idea of evoking depth through concealment is in Wang's preliminary sketch of the artificial mountain at the Lingyin Teahouse. Unlike with the continuous receding lines when representing the volumetric expansion of the tea hall and Buddhist pagoda, Wang arranges mutual occlusions of depicted scenes, such as the rock houses, outdoor steps, grottoes, water banks and flying passages, to evoke the artificial mountain's depth (Figure 7). Here, Wang utilises occlusion, density and congestion as expressive devices through which multiple threads reciprocally penetrate and fragmentise one another. The winding path and water bank disappear and reappear, which evokes hidden passages connecting a number of places for drinking tea. The result is that remote correspondences and disrupted threads between scenes replace visually revealed continuity as depth cues. As the viewer's sight is constantly interrupted and distracted, the pictorial depth of the artificial mountain cannot simply be "read off" but must be reconstructed by the viewer when they closely attend to the arranged parallaxes of the elements in the drawing.

The co-presence of the two distinct ways of modelling depth (i.e., depth as occlusion and depth as recession) also doubles the monolithic oblique method. Unlike with the highly expressive painterly occlusion in traditional paintings such as *Landscape After Huanghe Sanjiao*, Wang handles overlaps in a rather patternised manner. Almost mechanically, he adds up the compartmentalised overlays of the front (water bank), the middle (rock profile) and the back (walking path) scenes towards the top of the picture's edge. Despite the rocks' varying sizes and profiles, each rock body in the middle of the tripartite pattern slopes slightly to the right side to shelter the front water

bank at the rock's foot and make it possible to glimpse beyond the rock to the paths behind. In turn, the rhythmic repetition of the tripartite pattern implies a number of serpent-like folding lines that guide viewers' perceptions of pictorial depth (highlighted in Figure 10). These local oblique lines are after-effects that do not submit to a single prescriptive diagonal axis that dominates the depictions of the building halls. Hence, in Wang's drawing, two subtly distinct yet mutually communicable modes of oblique coexist: first, the continuous axialised oblique recession, which represents depth, and, second, the locus-to-locus, orientation-changing oblique layering, which evokes sensations of depth.

Wang's dual-mode oblique drawing attunes the landscape painting and architectural drawing and plays a role in his translating of the mountain topology into the building morphology. This translation, which begins with drawing, brings forth Wang's radical domestication of the relationship between landscape and architecture, which is implied in his motif "architecture as a mountain." Wang does not confine the landscape-architecture correlation to a conventional figure-background or building-site composition but attempts to imprint this correlation inwardly onto the architectural form.³⁴ Regarding the Lingyin Teahouse, the aforementioned architecture-landscape parallelism manifests in a fuller form. The architect formulaically redraws the landscape using pencil and transforms it from a cultural reference into an internalised figure within the architectural drawing. In this sense, Wang's oblique drawing operates as a threshold through which the image of the mountain enters that of the architecture and a site wherein the act of architecturalising the mountain occurs.

Concluding Remarks

Wang's a-perspectival adaptations of oblique drawing manifest in multiple ways. In his sketches for the Tengtou Pavilion, non-representational virtual depth is constructed with the inconsistent projection images that mimetically represent three-dimensional spaces. In the overall view collage for the same project, the relational depth between the landscape and the architecture unfolds via bodily movements through time. Regarding the Lingyin Teahouse, spatial depth is evoked through organised parallaxes. Wang's a-perspectival oblique drawings bridge the gap between the culture-bound way of perceiving and constructing depth in the traditional landscape painting and the standardised architectural projection method. The collage and parallax logics, as Wang discerns them in the landscape painting, act as primary modes of imaging space. This methodical shift from space modelled on continuity to space modelled on discontinuity signals how Wang reconceptualises the changing border between

architecture and landscape. Through his a-perspectival oblique drawings, Wang illustrates an architecture-landscape parallelism that goes beyond conventional figure-background composition. Landscape is neither merely a tabula rasa that is to be occupied by artificial construction nor an exterior condition awaiting a design response but emerges from within the architectural form.

Acknowledgements

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- ¹⁸ Wang Shu, "Poumian de Shiye" [The Field of Vision on Section], *Shidai Jianzhu [Time+Architecture]*, no. 2 (2010): 86 (my translation).
- ¹⁹ Wang Shu, "Ziran Xingtai de Xushi yu Jihe – Ningbo Bowuguan Chuangzuo Bijì" [The Narration and Geometry of Natural Appearance: Notes On the Design of Ningbo Historical Museum], *Shidai Jianzhu [Time+Architecture]*, no. 3 (2009): 74 (my translation).
- ²⁰ Wang, "The Narration and Geometry of Natural Appearance," 74 (my translation).
- ²¹ When he closely attends to the drawn details, Wang notes, "I begin to walk into it [the pavilion]."
- ²² Wang, "Build a World to Resemble Nature," 199.
- ²³ Wang, "The Field of Vision on Section," 87 (my translation).

²⁴ Wang, “Build a World to Resemble Nature,” 194.

²⁵ Wang, “Build a World to Resemble Nature,” 180.

²⁶ Wang, “The Narrative of the Mountain,” 11.

²⁷ Aric Chen, “Tea House at Lingyin Buddhist Temple by Amateur Architecture Studio,” *Architectural Record*, August 4, 2020, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14753-tea-house-at-linyin-buddhist-temple-by-amateur-architecture-studio>.

²⁸ Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1985), 168-69 (the author has slightly modified the original translation).

²⁹ Bush and Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 169.

³⁰ Liu Linfan, “A Pictorial Vision of Space: Looking at Modern Architecture in China Through Landscape Painting,” PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2018, xxxi.

³¹ See, for example, Wang, “The Narrative of the Mountain,” 18-25; David Leatherbarrow, *Building Time: Architecture, Event, and Experience* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021): 123-48.

³² Wang Shu, “Inquiring the Hills from Beyond the Bank: An Aggregation of Diversified Architectural Typology” [Gean Wenshan – Yizhong Juji Fengfu Chayixing de Jianzhu Leixingxue], *Jianzhu Xuebao* [*Architectural Journal*], no. 1 (2014): 47.

³³ Wang, “Inquiring the Hills from Beyond the Bank,” 47 (my translation).

³⁴ For an elaboration on Wang’s strategy to reproduce the architecture-landscape correlation within the architectural form, see Xin Jin, “Flowing Boundaries: Wang Shu’s Experiments of Theoretical Writing and Architectural Design” [Liudong de Bianjie: Wang Shu de Lilun Xiezuo Shiyan yu Jianzhu Sheji], *Jianzhu Xuebao* [*Architectural Journal*], no. 5 (2022): 89-90.