

Project: Water Museum

Team: junya.ishigami+associates

Size: 20220 m²

Location: CHINA, RIZHAO



Feature:

Project - Unveiled as a concept in 2016, this 1km-long art museum hovering over a lake in Rizhao, China manifests architect Junya Ishigami's poetic vision for a building that blurs the boundaries between architecture and nature. Aspiring to create a more equal relationship between construction and the vast environment of China, Ishigami stretches the narrow footprint across the entire expansive lake, enabling the structure to "gently touch the water surface."

Rejecting isolated, defensive architecture, the design embraces the surroundings, pulling them inside. The museum's glass-infused colonnade sinks into the lake while the rippling roof floats above like a ribbon. The spectator moves through a dreamlike landscape, with glass openings framing views and letting in breezes. Sections morph from broad floors for exhibits to narrow landstrips bounded by water.

This sensuous interplay between water and sky, light and surface aims to conjure a novel sense of nature within the building - a "friendly new natural environment." Ishigami seeks to uplift the human spirit by dissolving old dichotomies. The long, low curves respond to the languid topography, a counterpoint to the alienation of contemporary Chinese buildings. Alighting gently on the water without disrupting the horizon, the museum integrates harmoniously into the terrain.

Design Team - Founded in Tokyo in 2004 by Junya Ishigami, junya.ishigami+associates has emerged as one of the most innovative and visionary architectural firms in Japan. Ishigami gained international acclaim following the completion of the Kanagawa Institute of Technology's KAIT Workshop in 2007, winning the Architectural Institute of Japan Prize in

2009. Further success followed, including the Golden Lion at the 2010 Venice Architecture Biennale. Ishigami's experimental and nature-inspired approach dissolves boundaries between architecture, landscape, and environment. Projects range from conceptual installations to buildings that integrate seamlessly with their surroundings, guided by a drive to expand possibilities. With a focus on tranquility, simplicity and transparency, Ishigami envisions an architecture where life unfolds according to organic principles. Major projects include the House of Peace in Copenhagen (2014), the Church in the Valley in China (2016), and the Serpentine Pavilion in London (2019). The firm's boundary-pushing explorations make it a worthy recipient of the prestigious Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts in 2023.