

Read the Passion of Yesterday from the Exterior Indifference

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During the renovation of Shanghai Museum of Glass (SHMOG) buildings, all the former industrial buildings—glass kiln workshops with their unique spatial outlook were carefully joined and renovated into the museum, a “space where you can live and experience.” This renovation was designed by Logon Architecture Design. Chief designer Frank Krueger’s words below will help us understand how they enable people to “read the passion of yesterday from the exterior indifference” with their architectural design.

I hear that Logon did a research of several glass museums around the world. What are the differences between SHMOG and these museum?

As of now we have concluded two types of museums. The former has a single function of exhibition while the second is multifunctional—integrating exhibition, live show, food, cafe, road shows, shops and public space. It may take just 20 minutes to finish your tour in the former but a whole afternoon to tour the latter. Therefore the second type of museum is especially attractive to a

family with kids because it combines education with pleasure. Visitors may watch the interesting hot glassmaking live show at SHMOG. A powerful enabler of this dream, Logon's design provides visitors with more interactive experiences. Moreover, unlike other glass museums, SHMOG is a relatively small building located in a dense industrial region. Therefore its exterior should be more eye-catching. The U-shaped glass imported from Germany was processed with sandblasting and coating to speak the words of glass. When it was lit up in the nights, it sparkles with a unique glamor.

What's the biggest challenge during the design?

The biggest challenge in the project is how to successfully combine new buildings with old ones. We added a new structure to the former building to fulfill the SHMOG's need for space. The integration and clashes between the old and the new may result in some unexpected issues that are beyond our plans. Logon has to react to these changes fast.

SHMOG was renovated from a glass plant. So how did you inherit the old local culture and integrate it in the new space?

While implementing a renovation project, you must pay due respect to the former style of the building and blend your new design with the old planning in harmony. We seek to exhibit the contrast between old buildings and new ones in this project. While retaining the features of the old building, we add a new modernist structure. What we finally arrived at is a vigorous integration of old and new buildings. We are firmly convinced that such integration will leave an impression of great novelty on visitors.

On the glass exterior of SHMOG there are many words related to glass. Can you explain the conception of design?

Because this museum is far from the downtown area, we were determined at the beginning of the project that there should be a clear mark that differentiates SHMOG from other neighboring buildings and engage greater attention. While implementing this conception, we planned to erect a landmark building with a clear theme on the open square so SHMOG will be spotted at the first sight. Therefore at last we chose glass as the material for the exterior. In the day, this building looks like a huge obsidian; in the night, words that were written in multiple languages and inscribed in the exterior will be lit up by LED lights. This impressive design will attract more visitors to SHMOG.

How did you try to balance the relationship between the museum and its visitors in this project?

We had to improve the current situation of the space to make it suitable for a museum. First, we had to redesign the space to provide better convenience for access into the premises of the museum. Second, better recognition was enabled at the entrance to the main hall, and the visiting route inside was optimized. Moreover, we prepared space for leisure and chatting of visitors with the intent of creating a pleasant space inside.