



DISAPPEARING GARDEN

Posted on October 4, 2023 by martabuges



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Disappearing Garden

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The project is located in the historical street block of Damaojiao in the southeast of Datong Ancient City, transforming a vacant and abandoned site into a public space full of historical memories. The project has given rise to a unique cultural space and art exhibition. By understanding the history of the site and presenting it with a new interpretation, a series of fragmented old objects related to events in the transformation of the ancient city are displayed from a new perspective. The combination and use of new materials generates a unique spatial feeling, emphasizing the overlap of history and the present. In this commemorative contemporary cultural and artistic space, people can participate in interactive activities while triggering a reflection about the past and the future.



The project is located at the entrance of Damao Corner. There are a large number of traditional residential buildings inside the block, with a relatively complete historical style. On the west side is the Daming East Street where the Datong Guan Di Temple is located, and the north side is adjacent to the Weibei Research Institute. The site has been abandoned for many years, but it is a rare public

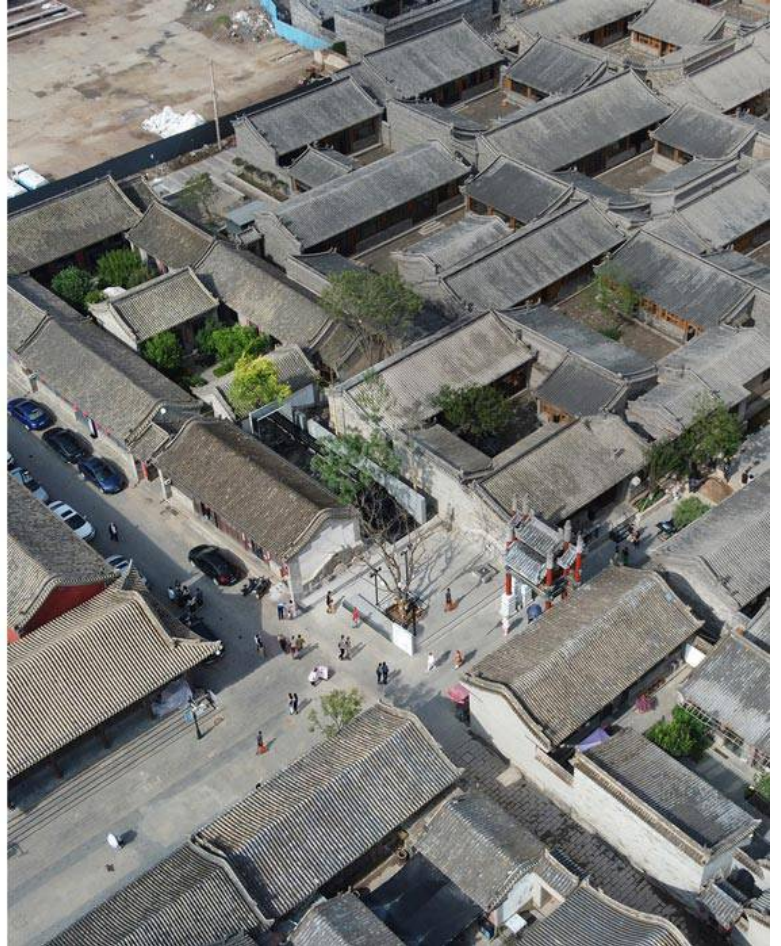
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space left open during the transformation of the ancient city's historic blocks.



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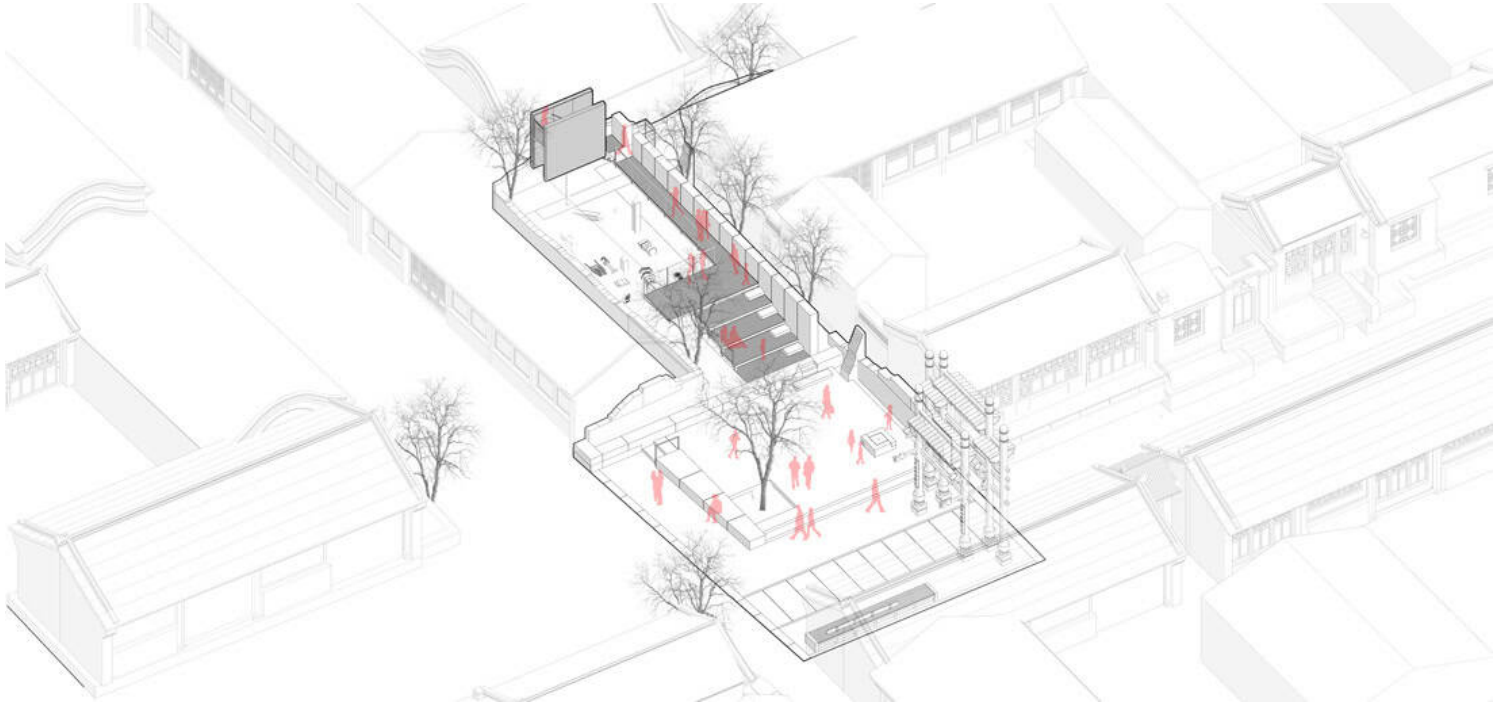
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The design concept originated from the designer's initial impressions of the site. Upon stepping into this neighborhood, the project's restoration work had already commenced, with scattered building materials and the once vibrant atmosphere now replaced by dilapidation. Every fragment of a wall, broken tile, and old object silently narrated the past life that once thrived here. Amidst this emotive experience, the designer's intent was to "leave something behind," which became the primary aspiration for the design. Each stone and old object was condensed, in the eyes of the designer, into precious cultural symbols, and the project became an attempt to transform them into landscape elements of value.

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The Vanished Garden

Public spaces should never lack human involvement, and the project sought to address how to infuse vitality into the interior courtyard space. The design embraced the concept of growth, organized from ground-level display spaces to an elevated visual corridor rising to 5.35 meters. The arrangement progressed from old to new materials, emphasizing the passage of time. The old objects that were collected and put on display were permanently preserved, but over the course of a century, they would gradually weather away and disappear. Here, they would slowly merge into the universe, becoming part of the river of history.

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The project consisted of four main parts: ground-level display spaces, a plaza, an elevated visual corridor, and an upper-level mirrored viewing platform. All materials for the ground-level display spaces were sourced from the site and handpicked by the designer to present historical traces. The water-themed plaza connects intimately with the corridor space, providing a gathering place for people. The corridor ascends step by step, forming a harmonious interaction with the plaza, allowing for performances and expressing reverence for life and culture.

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The corridor encloses a U-shaped space on the second level, engaging in a dialogue with the ground, inviting people to walk and pause, fostering better interaction between the old objects and the viewers. At the end of the circulation path, also the highest point of the site, the mirrored box “disappears” into the skyline, seamlessly blending into the surroundings. Ascending to the viewing platform, visitors can overlook the fifth façade of the ancient city, sparking contemplation: while distant memories may seem to vanish, they actually linger in the minds of the next generations.

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