

0136	Shenzhen, Guangdong, China	Dafen Art Museum	Urbanus Architecture and Design	2007 CUL
0137	T'aipei, Taiwan	Ant Farm House	xrange	2006 RES



0136 Dafen Art Museum is a cultural building sitting at the junction between the town of Dafen, a new middle-class residential district, and a school campus. The town is home to a large group of painters who produce pirated great master paintings and generic artworks, many of which end up in hotel rooms around the world. The area is becoming a tourist attraction, with thousands of visitors every year coming to purchase facsimile paintings. Urbanus, a firm with studios in Shenzhen and Beijing, was selected following a competition to design

an arts centre which celebrates Dafen's unique local specialty. This is not a museum in the traditional sense of the word, a consideration central to the architectural design. Dafen is divided into three levels. Level one is an open space with the only obstruction being column supports for the upper two levels. The space is similar to that of a hawker market, because the area is for local artisans to sell and promote their work. On the second level is 8,000 m² (86,111 sq ft) of gallery space. A ceremonial staircase leads from the adjacent public plaza directly

to level two, allowing visitors to bypass the frenetic commercialism on level one. At the top of the building is a collection of open spaces for community use and punctured courtyard skylights which provide natural light for the galleries below. The building's facade is made of an inexpensive concrete with rectilinear shapes carved into the structure. The museum encompasses most of the site area, sitting flat and shallow in contrast to the relative verticality of the surrounding architecture. The architects intentionally designed it in this way to enable its footprint to cover as much

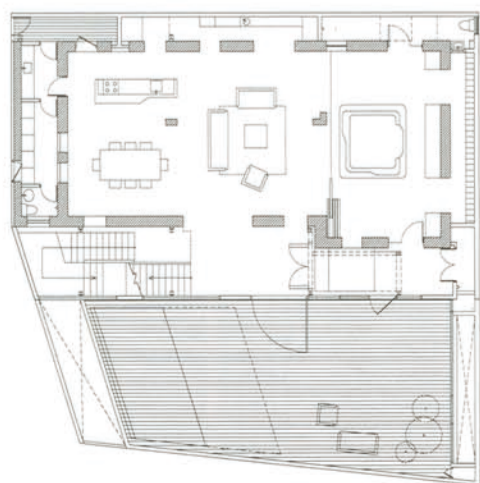
of the site as possible, allowing the building to provide a pedestrian route between the village, school and apartment complex. The museum also contains public access spaces and pedestrian bridges to the school and the apartments.

- 1 Building in context
- 2 Facade detail
- 3 Main entrance facade
- 4 Stairs to level two
- 5 Section through building
- 6 Site plan

Client
Confidential
Area
17,000 m²/182,99 sq ft
Cost
US\$19,940,000
Coordinates
22.6117 114.1336



0137 This project is a renovation of a pre-existing house in a dense residential neighbourhood near T'aipei. Adjacent to a national park, possibilities for extensive new construction were limited. In addition, the existing granite block house, dating from the 1950s, could not be demolished. The project comprises a new layer of living space occupying the distance between the exterior stone wall of the old house and the limits of its eaves. This layer varies in width from 0.8 to 1.8 m (2.6 to 6 ft) but maintains a constant 7 m (22.75 ft) height. Programmatic elements inserted include a pantry, bar, study, library, kennel and bathrooms. These narrow vertical spaces sometimes interlock in section, recalling the space inside an ant farm. The new layer also made it necessary to find new uses for the stone facade of the old structure. Pre-existing doors, windows and air-conditioner openings, no longer thresholds, became interior elements. They were turned into cubbyholes and doorways between rooms, or were overlapped with new glazed elements. Structurally, the addition comprises two steel box frames attached to the front and back of the pre-existing house. These provide lateral support for stone walls previously at risk of seismic instability. Exterior walls are finished in locally made paint and the exterior glazing is of grey tempered glass, making it difficult during the daytime to distinguish between the opaque and transparent finishes concealing the structure inside.



- 1 West facade
- 2 View of deck with skylight and sliding roof
- 3 Interior space between old and new exterior walls
- 4 Detail of windows on west facade
- 5 Ground-floor plan

Client
Confidential
Area
500 m²/5,382 sq ft
Cost
US\$400,000
Coordinates
25.1344 121.5322

