

cubes

INDESIGN

*MICROSOFT SINGAPORE
OFFICE BY HBO+EMTB*

*ZARCH COLLABORATIVES
CONSIDERS THE
SINGAPORE IDENTITY*

*VILLA S BY LINGHAO
ARCHITECTS*

*HERMAN MILLER SHOP-
IN-SHOP BY P.A.C.*

The Galen Retrofit

*FORMWERKZ ARCHITECTS CHALLENGES THE ARCHETYPAL
OFFICE LOBBY IN A PILOT PROJECT BY ASCENDAS*



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AUG/SEP 2012 | S\$8.00



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GOLDEN KEY PROPERTIES AGENCY

←
SMOOTH FLOWS:
The faceted nature of the exterior form continues within starting from the reception

→
MUTED TONES:
The interior palette is left minimal so as not to distract from the energetic forms and surfaces

“The analogy of the mountain surrounded by a lake is a key element of classic Chinese landscaping. It creates a sense of serenity and amplifies the surrounding. While you enter the building from a relatively low lobby area, the space opens up towards the water surface, which reflects the landscape around it,” describes Clostermann. “[Furthermore], the softness of the water balances the hardness and the edges of the stone.”

This contrast is likewise echoed in the building’s interior, which has been dressed by Hong Kong-based *One Plus Partnership* as an abstracted tableau of mountains and valleys. Here, craggy walls twist across the space, tessellated, metal-trimmed wall features spring from the walls and shiny, faceted furniture stand on tiptoe across the floor. In the zigzags of the floor patterns, the slants of the wall cladding and the snaking staircases shadowed by cavernous surfaces, the sense of movement and energy is palpable.



“THE PROJECT WAS SEEN MORE AS A LANDSCAPING PROJECT WHERE THE VOLUMES ARE FOLDED OUT OF THE GROUND RATHER THAN PLACED ON TOP OF IT.”



Designers *Ajax Law Ling Kit* and *Virginia Lung* share that no matter where visitors position themselves, they will feel “embraced by ‘hills’ – exactly like the city itself”. Both the manmade and natural – the mountains and the city – inspired the controlled material palette of grey colour, marble and champagne metal trimming, the last of which expresses minerals found in the environment.

Conversely, a luminous light cloud dances above. “The numerous strings of LED chandeliers [evoke] the dreamy mood of the rainy Great Southwest. [This] softness forms a contrast with the strong and bulky atmosphere of the ‘hilly’ theme,” ruminates Law.

The designers also describe them as “celestial showers” that present visitors with “a trip to the galaxy”, henceforth personifying the interior as a microcosm of our world. “[Between] the ‘sky’ and the ‘ground’, among the ‘mountains’ and the ‘valley’, everything portrays the spiritual and robust sight of the mountainous Chongqing city.”

Given that both the architect and interior designers looked to the same source for inspiration, it’s not surprising that the inside and outside are well integrated. What is surprising though is how, for all its complexity, the building was completed in record time. “From the first sketch to the opening [of the clubhouse], there were not more than six months to design something buildable in a short time that is iconic yet functional,” Clostermann shares.

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DREAMY MOOD OF
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SOUTHWEST...”

→
FORMAL GESTURE:
*Walls instead of doors peel
open leading to reveal
staircases*

↓
SHAPE EDGES:
*Custom designed
furniture takes on the
tessellated theme*

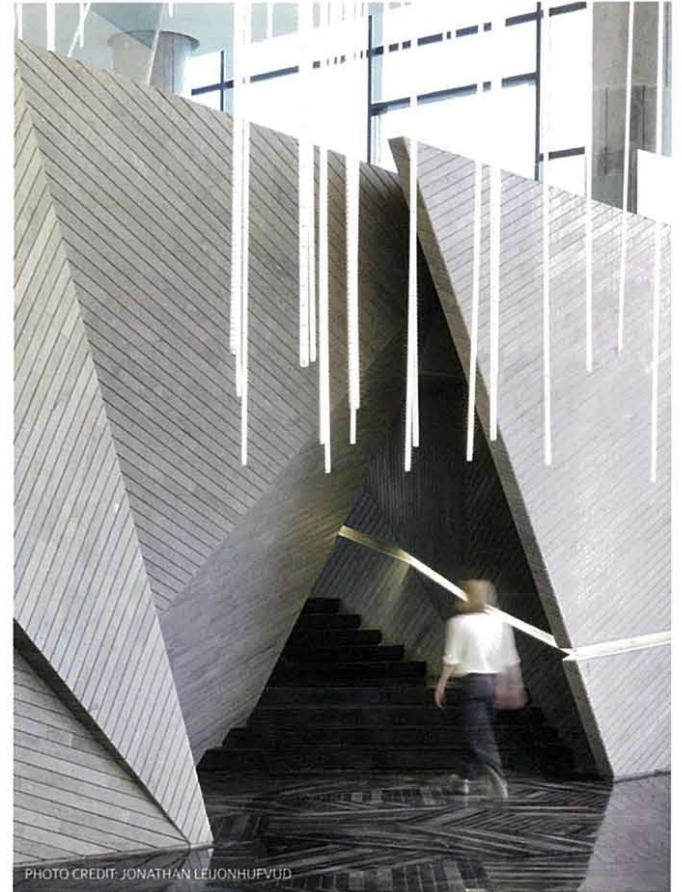


PHOTO CREDIT: JONATHAN LEIJONHJEUUD

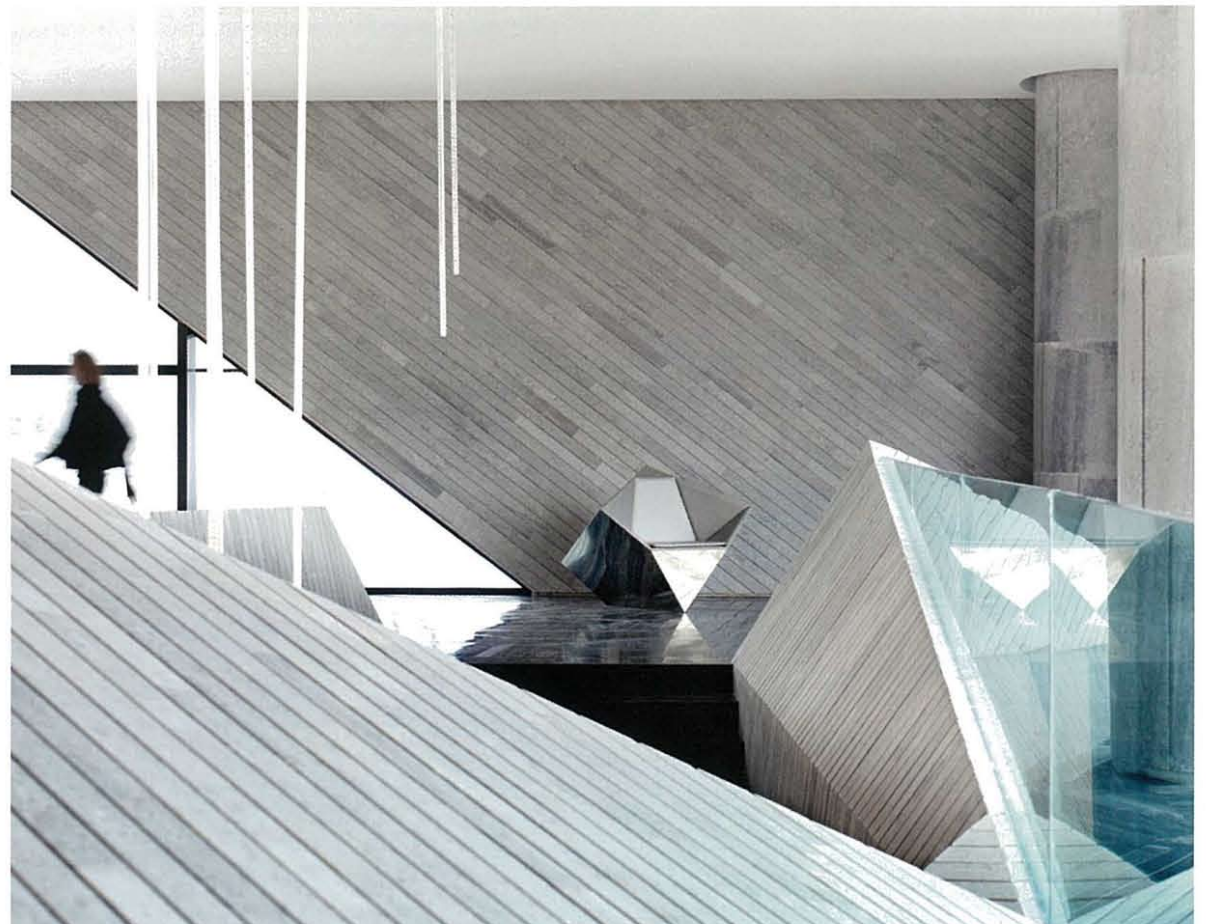




PHOTO CREDIT: AJAX LAW LING KIT, VIRGINIA LUNG

↑ **SNAKING THROUGH:**
The sinewy, cavernous staircases allude to large, impressive caves

An easier solution would have been to raze the challenging topography, then build over it. But for Spark Architects, the intention was always to work with, and not against, the conditions they were given.

The Singapore-based firm, which was started in 2008 by four former Alsop architects and has now expanded to include offices in Shanghai, Beijing and London, has always created spaces that engage, excite and inject a spark (pun fully intended) into its context: for its first project, it revived the Clarke Quay entertainment district with gargantuan blooms in rainbow hues; recently, it endowed Starhill Gallery in Kuala Lumpur with a face of jewelled rocks. Here, together with One Plus Partnership, it has worked a fine balance between a dazzling centrepiece and a subtle, respectful addition to nature. ♦ sparkarchitects.com

↓ FORTE NANSHAN

Client Forte
Architecture Firm Spark
Project Team Jan Felix Clostermann, Eldine Heep, Leonardo Micolta, Javen Ho
Civil and Structural Engineering Firm Chongqing Design Institute
Interior Design Firm One Plus Partnership Limited
Landscape Consultant Hassell (Hong Kong)

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Time to Complete 6 months

Total Floor Area 5,429sqm

Finishes External cladding is white textured granite stone. In interior, flooring and wall finishes are marble, Corian stone and metal trims