

Spring 2020

Hut Annandale: Humblest Dwelling

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Artist name: Ruiqi Zhu

Title: Annandale Hut: Humblest Dwelling

Material: Bamboo Skewers, Hot glue, Paper, Ink

Date:5/12/2020



Artist Statement

Lots of us have a dream deep down in the heart: to get away from the congested cities and live in a hut in nature. French poet Jean Wahl once wrote: The frothing of the hedges I keep deep inside me. In my project, I explored this dream and constructed a group of architectural structures by hand for those potential hermits. Studying at Bard College, I have found this region is a place with a great hermit culture. With the picturesque scene of nature and the location near the New York Metropolitan area, here the mid-Hudson Valley has

attracted lots of artists and scholars to live. It reminds me of my hometown, a small Chinese city named Zhenjiang locates next to one of China's ancient capitals – Nanking. In history, lots of literati have chosen to escape to Zhenjiang from life in the capital and created great masterpieces during their life as hermits. I believe currently in this era of congestion; people should also give themselves a separate space from the ocean of the noise and have a think of the life of a conceptual recluse.

In response to the culture of hermit, I have imagined a hut, which is the place the



in a faded print or a small pavilion in a huge Chinese landscape painting. Without giving any physical walls to the structure, I hope this space is open to the world and the time. The openness together with the big roof and flying eaves have given the structure the imagery of airy and weightless. For the form of the structure, I have combined the refined elements from the traditional Eastern architecture and art and the expressive big curves to make the structure both have Baroque visual tension and a gentle and ethereal quality like an Eastern freehand brushwork.

In the material selection, I have chosen bamboos as the building material. As a plant, bamboo has the beauty of lightness and rectitude and its imagery has been widely used in Eastern art. In addition, the individual construction of the bamboo architecture explores the potentiality of the nontectonic architectures. At the time when high-tech and expensive architectures become the absolute mainstream, this kind of low-tech, cheap but sustainable architecture should be valued as well.



hermits can get closest to the world and the dream of the poem. This hut became the main structure of the project. A roof, a beam together with several pillars and eaves have made a humblest architecture. The simplicity of the hut makes it into an archetype of the architecture as well as a minimal universe. In Eastern languages' vocabulary, the etymology of the word "universe" (Yu-Zhou) is coming from architecture. Yu means eaves and Zhou means beams. A space under the roof is our first recognized individual space separated from the world and it represents our most primitive understanding of a universe.

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard has made a conceptual connection between house and universe in his book *The Poetics of Space* as well. He said "At whatever dialectical pole the dreamer stands, whether in the house or the universe, the dialectics become dynamic. House and space are not merely two juxtaposed elements of space. In the reign of the imagination, they awaken daydreams in each other, that are opposed." Besides the inherited cosmic quality of the simplest hut, I also want this space to have a poetic quality which could make it transcend the geometrical space and be the space for spirits, like a wooden hut

