

## Helz Studio

### Helen Wan

As a conceptual architect and interior designer, my brief was to design a modern & contemporary art studio, endeavouring to blur lines between commercial and leisure purposes. Setting specific design parameters, particularly in relations the location of Joe Batt's Arm in Fogo Island, Canada and inventive, irregular architectural forms, in conjunction to fostering sensations of uniqueness and architectural values of independence vs collaboration, assisted me in designing a balanced practical and aesthetical space. An inspirational allusion to the styles of Roman Vlasov, and Todd Saunders, the studio of Designs by Helz., largely characterised by innovative forms, space, and functions, is an architectural reflection appreciating the beauty of nature, and its intrinsic connections with man-made structures. The initial stages of the project evolved around my thorough exploration on how the design approaches of Roman Vlasov and Todd Saunders reflected their contemporary innovative attitudes towards architecture in the modern world – particularly resulting in my discovery of the value of assimilating the architectural design to its geographical context.

As such, tactile touch of lightweight natural materials including timber cladding and stone seating, visual lighting of both artificial and natural sources, meticulously refined lines to the sounds of the surrounding landscape, and juxtaposed cold and warm colour palette for the exterior and interior, all establishes an authentic identity for the architecture. Like Vlasov's 'Concept 77', and Saunders's 'Squish Studio', the values and visual harmony formed through these elements, further brings about an expressive personality of the architecture which triggers positive emotions on users as they are driven to connect with the stylistic atmosphere promoted both inside and outside the studio.

The initial conceptualisation of 3D quadrilateral forms with heavy visual weight and symmetry largely restricted the capacities to sophisticated design details as a means to deepen the sense of innovation and creative expression amongst the model design. Simplicity and practicality were major aspects of the design brief. However, sophisticated details would be highly effective in conveying the strong sense of creative expression of my studio. Therefore, I explored and explored whether simplicity and sophistication were compatible in a way which would still make the architecture practical and functional. My passion towards further exploring nature and biomorphic elements, ultimately drove me to understand that balancing angular lines and organic curves visually, could more effectively integrate built structures into natural environments.

This is equally beneficial in terms of forming balanced positive and negative space that emotionally guides users into the realm of peacefulness as they enter natural surroundings of comfort. In response, the angling of the cubic structures upon the two floors allude to the simple yet creative characteristics of geometrical shapes of Cubism architecture. The form-faceting nature of the cubist movement delivers great abstraction and sense of movement through sharp, clear lines that enable perspective viewing, paralleling with my design brief of creating unique arrangements of architectural forms.

As the addition of a spiral staircase supported the design principles of rhythm and flow that traversed the exterior outlines of the model, I ensured the success of this design aspect through briefly understanding real life architecture which has offered a similar sensory combination – specifically referencing to Frank Gehry's cubist Vitra Design Museum. Gehry's work responds to a mix of complexity in forms and simplicity in colours, echoing both angular and curved elements that enhances an ambitious design. By interpreting the conventions of my built design and connecting it to my background architectural knowledge of architects and their iconic works, I was able to strengthen my strong personal aesthetics towards abstract forms that would bring about a mix of unity, harmony, sense of flow and visual comfort. This approach furthered my perception on the definition of a good architecture, understanding that whilst architecture is a gift to the natural world, it is more so a form of connection that brings individuals and communities together as one.

Therefore, a good architecture is often a thoughtful testament to who you are as an individual, and the ways which you can emotionally associate yourself with the experiences, perceptions, and passions of others. My final refinements of mixed artificial and natural lighting that supports the rustic material fixtures illuminates the lush yet clean feel of my design, promoting a versatile atmosphere offering both great social interaction and self-tranquillity. Despite the simple structure of the both the exterior and interior, the consistent transition between solid concrete with glazing particularly upon walls and ceiling illustrates how space and privacy is approached.

I chose to instil one way mirror glass in the open floor-to-ceiling window in the bathroom, in approach to promote a secure, comfortable aesthetic for users. The blend between more so entertaining interior aspects including hanging plants, minimal furnishing suspended installations with the coastal nature of Joe Batt's Arm, oozes raw elegance and invites sensations that facilitate the wellness and inspirations of artistic users, whilst enhancing the Biophilia effect inside out. In the top floor studio gallery, inspired by The Medical Cosmetology Centre located in Hangzhou, China, designed by Among The Bamboos Design, the existence of an over floating lighting installation adds richness to the plain, communal exhibiting space that effortlessly brings together work and life. Ultimately, my art studio juxtaposes nature and man-SACE No. 916685F made rigidity of structure, whilst emphasising the rituals of life through increasing the aesthetic value of the model, in order to evoke optimistic, harmonious sensations within users.

The sunken collaboration space in the main studio is designed so that users immediately enter an intimate area of the interior, where they are then led up the stairs towards a bathroom characterised by oak timber panelling. A rectangular space dedicated to relaxation as well as a productive area on either side of the north and south face uses a consistent quadrilateral form to avoid excessive drama in the space, which would have interfered with the delicate and low-key interior impressions endeavoured. The finalised production of my concept design model is ultimately a successful testament to my initial research, conceptualisation, and ideation refinement stages.

Having met the design brief and exterior and interior parameters ranging from balanced proportion, space, and organic curves to intricate details such as creative furnishing that reinforce both the overall aesthetics and function, the studio demonstrates considerable originality and integrity to both its distinct style and the site location. Todd Saunders and Roman Vlasov has both significantly altered my perception on modern designs, and subsequently, driven me to reflect a highly expressive, versatile, and biomorphic architectural approach in my Designs by Helz. studio, a place where creative individuals can both visually and emotionally connect too.