

“AN ARCHITECTURE WITHIN AN ARCHITECTURE,
BORN FROM A PHOTOGRAPH”

elle decor italia; June 2021

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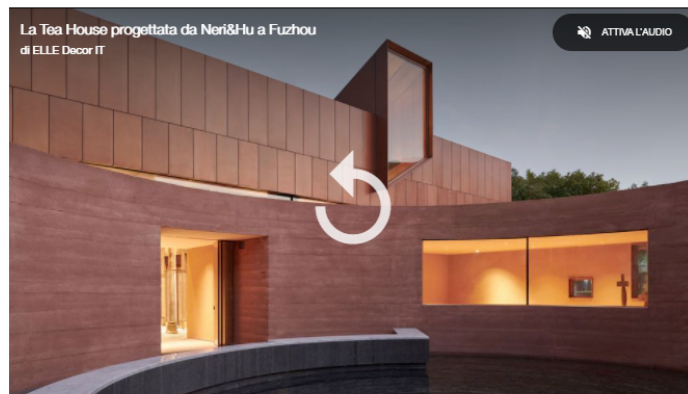
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ABBONATI NEWSLETTER

AN ARCHITECTURE WITHIN AN ARCHITECTURE, BORN FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

In Fuzhou, China, work comes to a close on the Teahouse by Neri&Hu, designed by examining the local tradition through a photo taken 150 years ago

By CIRO MARCO MUSELLA 30/06/2021



The year was 1871, and the city Fuzhou, now the capital of China's Fujian province, had come under the lens of John Thomson, a young Scottish photographer presenting Western audiences with their first glimpses into the Far East through iconic snapshots. Taking 80 photos over 250 kilometers along the Min River, Thomson shed light on the area through the album "Foochow and the River Min", with only 10 of the original 46 copies surviving. Among the images of the Chinese city burned into the minds of photographers (but not only), is that entitled "The Island Pagoda", which has also served as the inspiration for the latest project by the architects at Neri&Hu.

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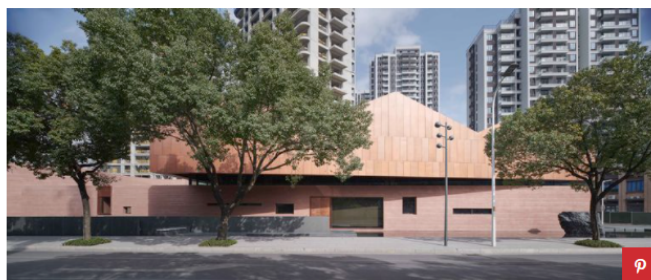
The Tea House, designed by Neri&Hu in Fuzhou
Hao Chen

For **Lyndon Neri and Rossana Hu**, that “Island Pagoda”, or rather the Jinshan Temple situated on an island and surrounded by the shimmering waters of the Wulongiang River, has become the main reference point for an architecture that’s both timeless and tethered to tradition. It’s these two characteristics, in fact, that have long distinguished the projects to emerge from the Chinese studio founded in 2004, and which we find once more here at the **Tea House of Fuzhou**.

The building, conceived as a home perched atop a rock, captures the original temple’s monumentality, marked by the surrounding water enclosure. Here, it’s contextualized in the city center with a concrete perimeter wall that also becomes a support for the overhead covering in copper, proposing the line of the religious building’s rooftop in a contemporary key.

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The project is composed of two main elements: an introverted, walled body isolating interiors from the external urban context, and a sloping roof that recalls that of the Jinshan Temple.
Hao Chen