



open architecture

Vanke pavilion, Guangzhou, China

In a country where air pollution can be so toxic that many people deem it necessary to put on a face mask before venturing outdoors, eco-consciousness is a mind-set that architects are increasingly adopting. One firm's founding partners, Li Hu and Huang Weijing, developed Hex Sys reusable building modules as a way to stem the flow of materials to the junkyard after the country's ubiquitous temporary structures are dismantled. With a commission for a real estate developer's promotional center, Li and Huang chose to highlight the system by constructing a 7,000-square-foot showcase.

Traditional Chinese wooden structures and the Pavilion La Courbe in Zurich were references. Ease of assembly and suitability for a wide variety of programs and climate conditions were major factors. "The main structural components are preassembled steel members," Li explains. "The building envelope is made of aluminum panels, and insulated glass units are also preassembled and interchangeable to be installed on-site with minimal labor." When the 430-square-foot hexagons are combined, they can therefore form open, semi-enclosed, and closed spaces. The concave roof funnels rainwater into a central pipe that doubles as a support column. Walls can be clad in virtually any material that's outdoor-friendly. —Rebecca Lo

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BEST of year
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