Ali Rahim and Hina Jamelle of Contemporary Architecture Practice NY SH win international competition to develop Lijia Smart Park Innovation Center West District. Chongqing. China

The brush stroke shapes a masterplan with art, technology and nature.

New York, October 1, 2021—Contemporary Architecture Practice [CAP], a New York- and Shanghai-based firm founded by Ali Rahim and Hina Jamelle, has been selected to design Lijia Smart Park Innovation Center West District, a 510,830 square-meter development in Chongqing, China. The project comprises two sites adjacent to Hongyazhai ecological park and surrounding Hongya Reservoir. The invited competition brief called for a master plan focused on 'ecology and innovation and led by the intelligence of big data'. Rahim and Jamelle's winning vision for the Lijia Smart Park Masterplan brings together nature, morphology, calligraphy, big data and cutting-edge aesthetics in the shape of an urban icon that is a smart city. The masterplan consists of 13 buildings on a plinth that connects all the buildings together into an iconic form. It includes a Big Data Museum, 8 office towers and 4 research and development buildings. The project increases economic viability through an interconnected design that respects the site. It aims to contribute towards making a better life in the digital economy by activating an inspired new urban experience.

Chongqing is a subtropical city with a beautiful natural location set among dramatic mountains and at the intersection of the Yangtze and Jialing rivers. CAP made this a central feature of its master plan. The site of the project is a microcosm of Chongqing with its steep hills and large topographic drop to Hongyazhai Park. To connect the two entries to the site that are furthest apart, Rahim and Jamelle created a new nature zone spanning from east to west. This green connection is important to the cohesion of the overall master plan--containing landscape features with hard and soft surfaces, seating areas, plazas that establish an impactful urban experience for all the people who work and visit the area.

The morphology of the project responds to the dense gridded city to the north and the park to the south. Along the north edge are eight gridded high-rise office towers that undulate in plan and section. The south side consists of interconnected terraced buildings and landscapes that respond to the soft edge of the lake and Hongyazhai Park beyond. These terraced buildings are home to start-ups and incubators. All buildings have green roofs and/ or terraces that allow nature to coexist with architecture while contributing towards an ecological environment. Water drainage is carefully managed and the lake is used as a retention pond to enable the grounds to work as a sponge.

The form of the project was inspired by Chinese calligraphy and landscape painting. Chinese landscape painting and the artistry of calligraphy allow the project to develop a sense of place that has meaning nationally and globally. Calligraphy is a timeless art that requires technique and crosses cultural thresholds. Rahim and Jamelle use calligraphy to highlight a three-dimensional continuity between the site and the buildings, The calligraphic lines on the master plan traverse, turn, pause, lift, press and outline. Calligraphy also shapes the form of the Big Data Museum, the office towers and the tower indentations.

The Big Data Museum is the fulcrum of the master plan. The project's calligraphy gathers and intensifies to form the building's façade and fenestration and carves a roof punctuated by skylights that bring natural light into the voids of the museum. A bridge connects the museum to the adjacent building site and participates in the continuity of the entire master plan.

Big Data Museum-SMART CITY

The 20,000-square-meter Big Data Museum is the "brain" of the site. It sits on top of a retail loop and is highlighted by the gathering of people. The museum connects all the big data-driven loops throughout the site including smart mobility, smart utility, and smart infrastructure. These smart systems link the museum to each building, street, and plaza with a constant flow of information.

The smart systems include autonomous vehicles moving in conjunction with traffic level planning and traffic flow statistics. These battery-powered vehicles will travel throughout the site in four loops at three different levels, connected by 5G technology and interfaced by cell phones. A connection between information and material is realized, contributing towards a vibrant experience.

The museum's cultural programs will include interactive galleries, immersive digital experiences, automated drone performances, and a permanent collection of digital art pieces and data displays. A separate entrance to the auditorium will provide access after business hours and extend the cultural activity on the site.

The Lijia master plan project brings together morphology, nature, calligraphy, big data, smart-city technologies and cutting-edge aesthetics to shape an urban icon. The design will contribute towards making a better life for all the people who work and visit the project by activating an inspired new urban experience for Chongqing, China. Construction will begin in 2022.

CLIENT: The client is the Chongqing Liangjian New Area Group.,Ltd.

ABOUT CAP: Founded in 1999, Contemporary Architecture Practice [CAP] is known for futuristic designs using digital techniques and the latest technologies for the design and manufacturing of architecture. Projects include commissions by The Museum of Modern Art [New York]; Reebok Shanghai, Lijia Smart Park, Chongqing, Wenjin Hotels, Beijing, NJCTTQ Pharmaceuticals, Nanjing, AMEC Technologies, Nanchang [China]; Samsung, Seoul [South Korea]; and IWI Orthodontics Clinic, Tokyo [Japan].

Contemporary Architecture Practice's projects have been exhibited extensively at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the London, Beijing, and Shanghai Biennales; and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, among others. They also have been featured in more than 250 major publications around the world. Co-Directors Rahim and Jamelle have won the Architectural Record Design Vanguard Award and were featured in Phaidon's 10x10x2 as one of the world's top 100 emerging architects. Their project, IWI Orthodontics in Tokyo, Japan was featured in Phaidon's ROOM 100 as one of the most creative interior design projects of the century, and they have been featured in 50 Under 50 Innovators of the 21st Century.