

Studio DOTCOF creates cave-like interior spaces for Shanghai beauty salon

Shanghai-based architecture and design practice Studio DOTCOF has created a series of cave-like interior spaces for a beauty salon in Shanghai, China.



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Called Natural Beauty Salon, the 170-square-metre beauty salon has been designed as a renovation project. The designers designed closed and intimate spaces various in size and materials, corresponding to developing levels of privacy.

"Our client owns a hair salon originally, located at a corner of a busy crossroad. For business reasons, the client wants to change this shop into a beauty salon," said Studio DOTCOF.

"It couldn't be better for a street frontage shop to be used as a hair salon, but the problem occurs if we want to change it into a beauty salon."

The salon serves female customers mainly. Besides selling skin-care products, it also helps customer to conduct skin tests and skin care treatments, thus the space requires a higher level of privacy, stated the designers.

"How to create an appropriate quiet, private, and relaxed environment, inside this busy street frontage space? It becomes the first priority challenge in our design."



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Benefitted by the ceiling height of the building, the studio firstly expanded the existing mezzanine area. A consulting room has been added adjacent to the reception area, thus the customer can use it for skin testing after they enter the shop. Furthermore, the roof of the consulting room becomes a communal lounge platform, for the people on the mezzanine to use.

The reception area is a "mountain cave" - tall, full of different openings and natural lights. The designers also designed some vertical wood battens to emphasis this tall spatial characteristic. People walk into this tall space by passing through a lower bulkhead from the street.

They then walk through a darker wood corridor, entering a "water tunnel cave", enclosing by creamy white travertine stones. This is the waiting area, people stay here shortly before or after entering the rooms for skin care. The floor slabs are designed as platforms floating on the water, the colour tone is kept extremely pure, and light is controlled to diffuse from different positions, such as the lower part of a wall, or back side of a seat.

The image of floating islands on the water, purified colour, and diffused lighting, calm people down, completely getting rid of the noise and fatigue outside. Then, walking through the waiting area corridor, people will arrive at individual rooms. Rooms are enclosed with real wood panels, warm and close.



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Rooms are the smallest "cave" in size, which is closest to human scale, just like clothes covering the skin, warm and light. Concealed cabinets are designed on the walls inside the room in order to store the skin care products and equipment.

These developing spaces are arranged along an intentionally folded and extended path, attempting to evoke some of people's deep body memories, which may come from the intimate atmosphere of the primitive cave-living experience.

"Real natural materials such as stone and wood are used for each space. Through the handling of space and materials, we hope to deliver a tranquil experience for the body and moods," added the designers.

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