

**The Pinch Library  
and Community  
Centre**

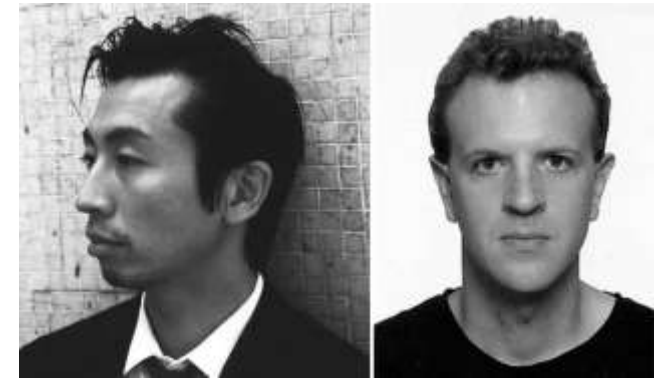
In the village of Shuanghe, Yunnan, China, the curved gable roof topping the Pinch, a public library and community center, is a hybrid of forms and functions. The wood surface acts as a pedestrian ramp, playground, and seating for people-watching in the neighboring plaza below. It is also a symbol of the rural village's rise over adversity.

In September 2012, a series of earthquakes struck the southwestern China province, killing more than 80 people and destroying thousands of buildings, including the school and nearly every residence in Shuanghe. As part of its recovery efforts, the government developed a plaza in the heart of the village.



Olivier Ottevaere and John Lin, who are respectively an assistant and an associate professor of architecture at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), secured a grant from HKU to design and construct the 80-square-meter (861-square-foot) Pinch. Olivier Ottevaere and John Lin are colleagues at The University of Hong Kong. They have collaborated on a series of timber structures which have been built with students as post-earthquake revitalization projects in Yunnan Province, China. The three projects: The Pinch, The Sweep and The Warp have explored the intersection of wood construction techniques and participatory processes in a highly contextual approach.

Olivier Ottevaere is an architect whose interest in Architecture is driven by a hybrid approach between physical experiments and geometrical organizations. Integration of active structural principles, properties of materials and procedures of construction prompt the design pursue at the onset of each of his projects. John Lin is a director of Rural Urban Framework (RUF), a non-profit research and design organization dedicated to developing sustainable prototypes for rapidly urbanizing areas. His approach combines research into the large scale processes of urbanization and integration of local construction practices with contemporary technology.



## **Location**

**Shuanghe village, Yunnan province, China**

## **Design**

**Olivier Ottevaere and John Lin / the university of Hong Kong**

## **Construction**

**Kunming Dianmuju Shangmao Company**

## **Construction dates**

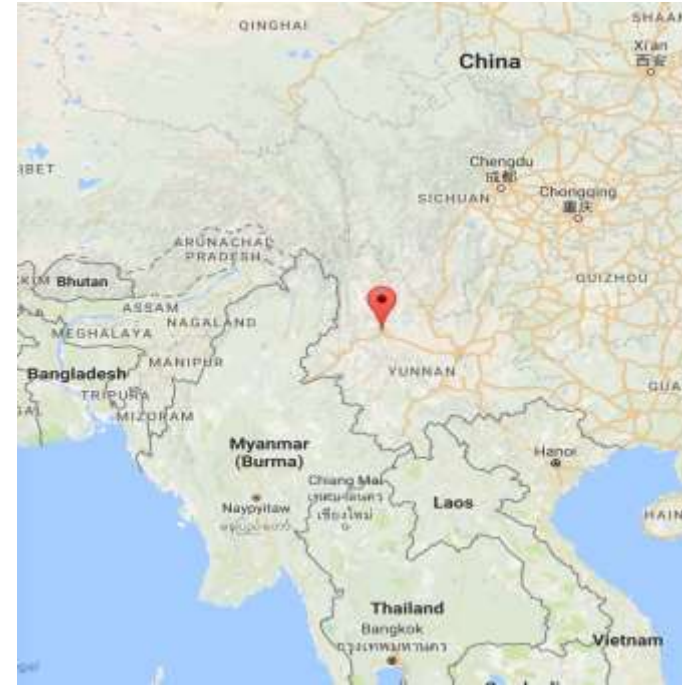
**September 2012 – April 2014**

## **Size**

**80 sqm**

**Yúnnán (云南) is the most diverse province in all China both in its extraordinary mix of people and in the splendour of its. That combination of superlative sights and many different ethnic groups has made Yunnan the trendiest destination for China's exploding domestic tourist industry.**

**More than half of the country's minority groups reside here, providing a glimpse into China's hugely varied mix of humanity. Then there is the eye-catching contrasts of the land itself – dense jungle sliced by the Mekong River in the far south, soul-recharging glimpses of the sun over rice terraces in the southern regions, and snow-capped mountains as you edge towards Tibet. With everything from laid-back villages and spa resorts, to mountain treks and excellent cycling routes, Yúnnán appeals to all tastes. The roads are much better than they once were, so getting around is a breeze, but you'll need time to see it all – whatever time you've set aside for Yúnnán, double it.**



An earthquake that occurred South-western of China in September 2012 killed over 80 people and destroyed many building as well as schools and all residence. As a recovery scheme, the government developed a plaza.

"Although the government provided an open plaza for the reconstruction, we wanted to help introduce a program which would activate the site. By adding the library, we have created an important public and communal facility in the village," the architect explained.

As the library is placed in the mountain village in the South West of China, the library and the immediate spaces provide a great opportunity as a meeting place for residents as well as a playground, and seating for people-watching in the neighbouring plaza below. It is also a memorial of the tragic earthquake that killed many lives and destroyed buildings.

The aesthetics of the library features a waved roof that greets locals and children to play, read and admire the view from the roof top looking down at the surrounding valley and the new basketball court.



Located approximately 13 feet below than the village's primary elevation, the plaza has a concrete retaining wall that Ottevaere and Lin repurpose as a bearing wall for the Pinch. The wall also lets the Pinch's 123-square-meter (1,324-square-foot) roof become an accessible pedestrian bridge. The surface's gentle slope allows people to descend down into the plaza.



Inside, rows of books sit on shelves made from interlocking timber frames, which are suspended from the ceiling and hover just above the floor.

During the first site visit, the houses remained incomplete and the plaza was a large empty site. In response, the HKU sponsored a design/build project to activate the communal space. The Pinch library situates itself along 4 meter tall retaining wall along the periphery of the plaza, bringing the two levels with a habitable roof that doubles as a playing surface for children or a passage down to the plaza's ground level. Children can clamber onto the curved roof of this community library in China, which architects John Lin and Olivier Ottevaere designed for an earthquake-damaged village in Yunnan Province. "Villages in China often prioritise building houses over community spaces and community programs, even though it is an important aspect of village life".



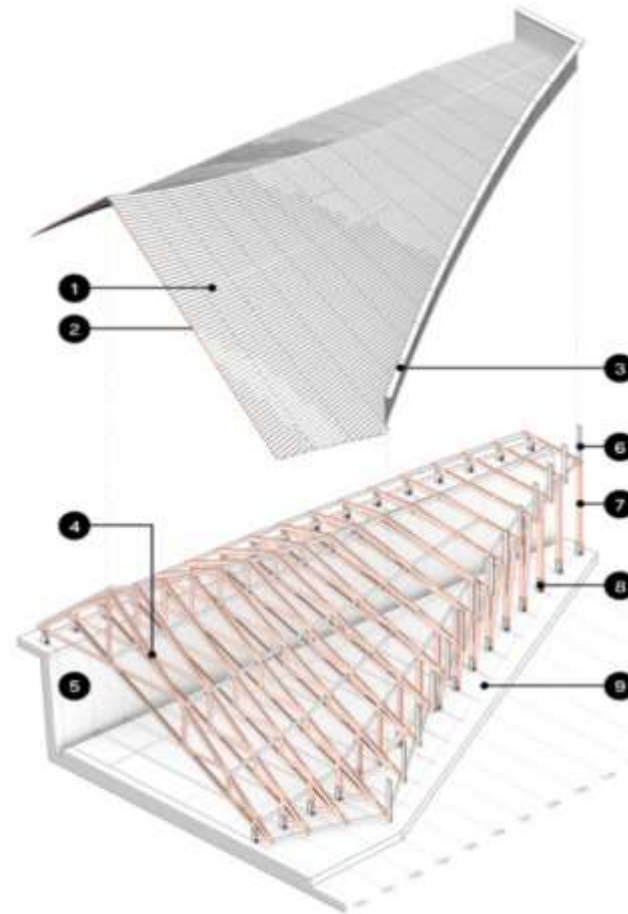


Situated in the mountain village of Shuanghe in south-west China, the library and surrounding plaza offers a meeting place for local residents, as well as a space where children can play and read. "Although the government provided an open plaza for the reconstruction, we wanted to help introduce a program which would activate the site.



A series of slightly different wooden trusses developed in collaboration with a local timber manufacturer span over the space defining a compound curved roof that not only provides the walking surface but also terminates in a peak- a symbol of the reconstruction efforts underway. the frames are then covered in a layer of aluminum waterproofing and clad with timber decking. the interior benefits from the unique properties of the trusses to suspend bookshelves above the ground as they maintain the feel of a continuous open space that progressively morphs into a new form.

## Project E

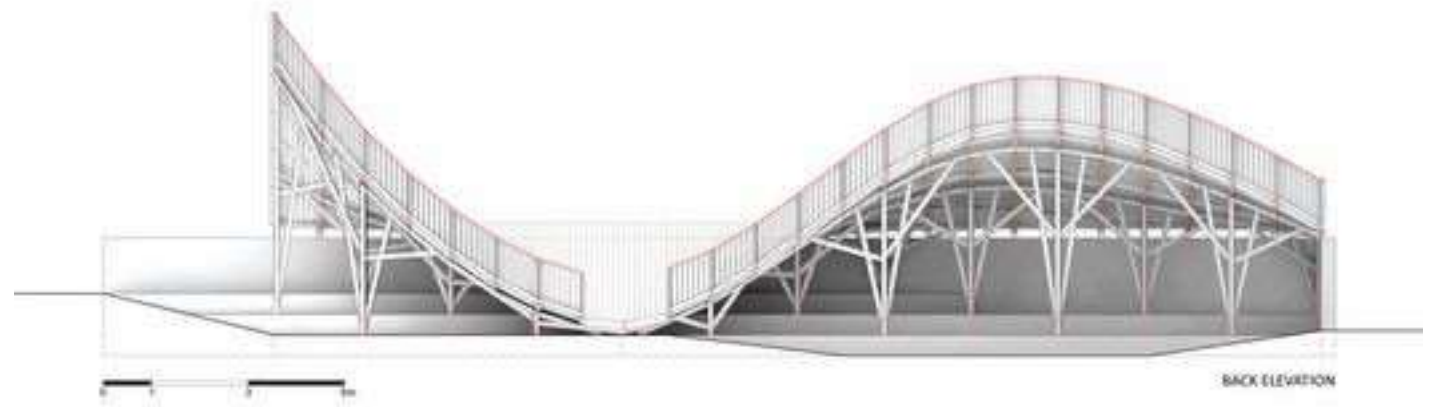
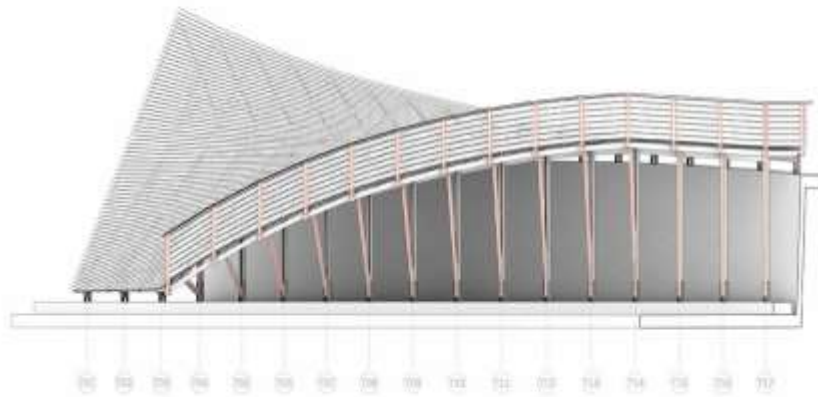
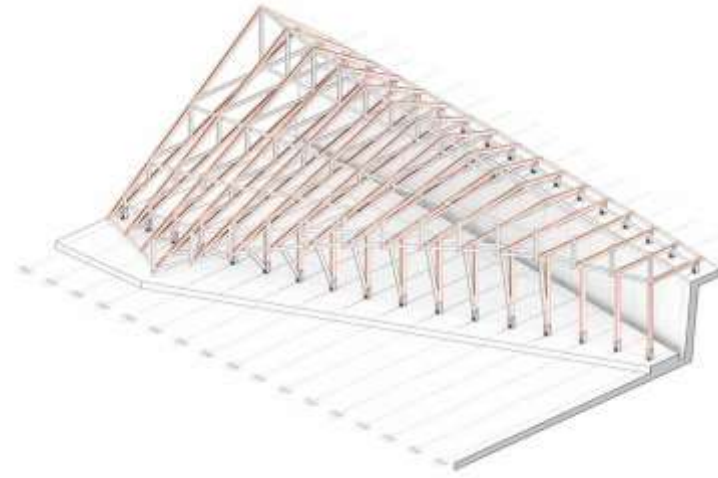


1. 4.3" x 1.3" x 16.4' wood boards (0.8" o.c.)
2. 3.3' x 6.6' aluminum sheets (not shown); silicone sealant in lap seams
3. 4.3" x 1.3" x 16.4' wood rails
4. 4.3" x 1.3" x 16.4' wood truss members connected by  $\varnothing$ 1cm stainless steel bolts
5. Concrete retaining wall
6. 3.6' tall wood post (3' o.c.)
7. Timber column (3' o.c.)
8. Stainless steel bracket
9. Concrete foundation

*Exploded axonometric*



**By adding the library, we have created an important public and communal facility in the village," he explained. The library features a twisted shape that bends out to meet an elevated stretch of pavement, allowing visitors to walk over the roof and look out towards a new basketball court.**



The project was selected for the Small Project of the Year Award at the 2014 World Architecture Festival as well as the coveted Best of the Best Trophy at the 2014 Architecture and Design Trophy Awards

