

“Cutting-edge religious architecture around the world”

Wallpaper, Feb 2025

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ARCHITECTURE

## Cutting-edge religious architecture around the world

As we move further into the modern world, so do our religious and spiritual monuments. Here, we take a closer look at the projects that are at the forefront of religious architecture, highlighting future and recently completed structures that are leaving their mark on the collective memory of what a place of worship should look like in China, Brazil, Norway and beyond



(Image credit: Pedro Pegenaute.)

**Suzhou Chapel, China by Neri & Hu**

Completed 2016

Christianity has been in China since the 14th century, via Orthodox Russians and missionaries from Macau. It's a growing population – destined to become the world's largest – and in Jiangsu province, churches are rising to meet demand. However Neri & Hu's chapel, in the silk town of Suzhou, is hardly familiar as such. Celebrated for embracing modern silhouettes and industrial materials, the duo has designed an enigmatic sanctuary surrounded by the city's trademark canals.

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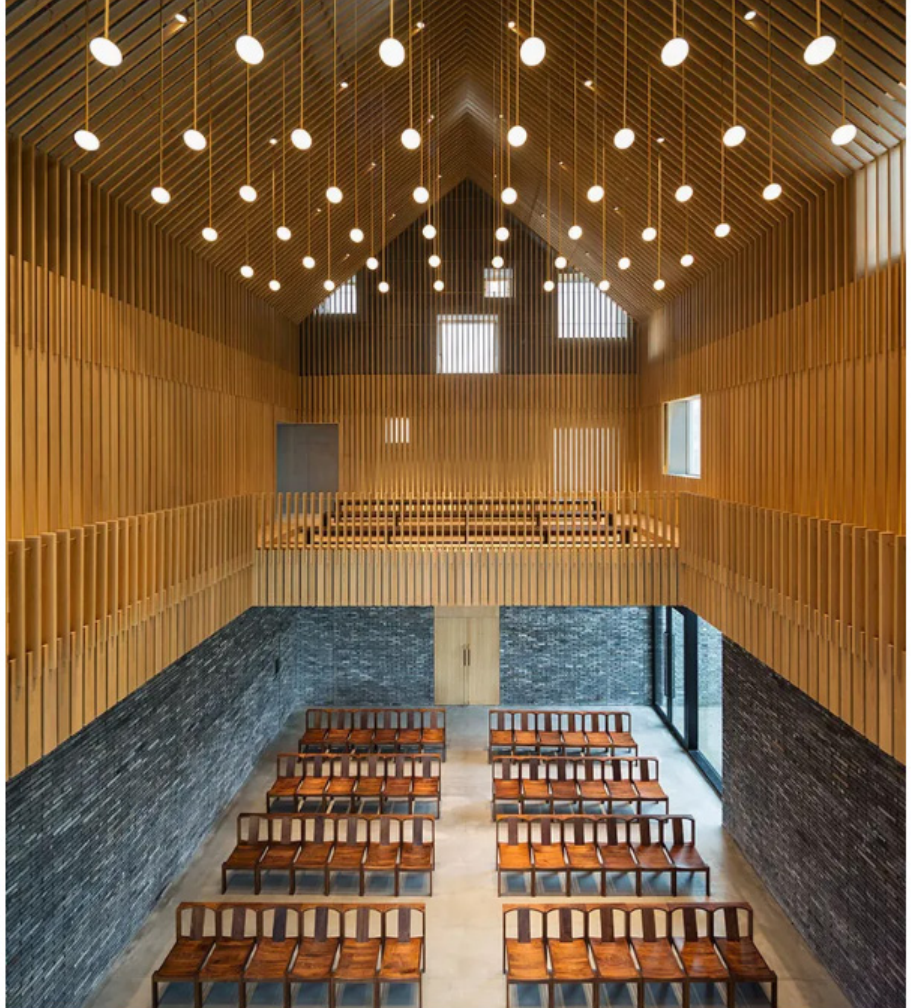
Visitors approach the white cube along labyrinthine walls of antique brick laid at perpendicular angles. The central ‘box’ is punctured with windows at all levels, trading views for natural light. Yet the designers have overlaid a scrim of perforated metal, which protects privacy during prayer and adds a sheen that allows interior light to glow through after dark.

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Inside, a 12m chapel with wood-slat panelling is furnished with custom wood pews and bronze-arm globe pendants. Concrete staircases lead to a deep wood mezzanine, for internal views, and a rooftop deck, for views across the waterways. Each are spiritual in their own right.