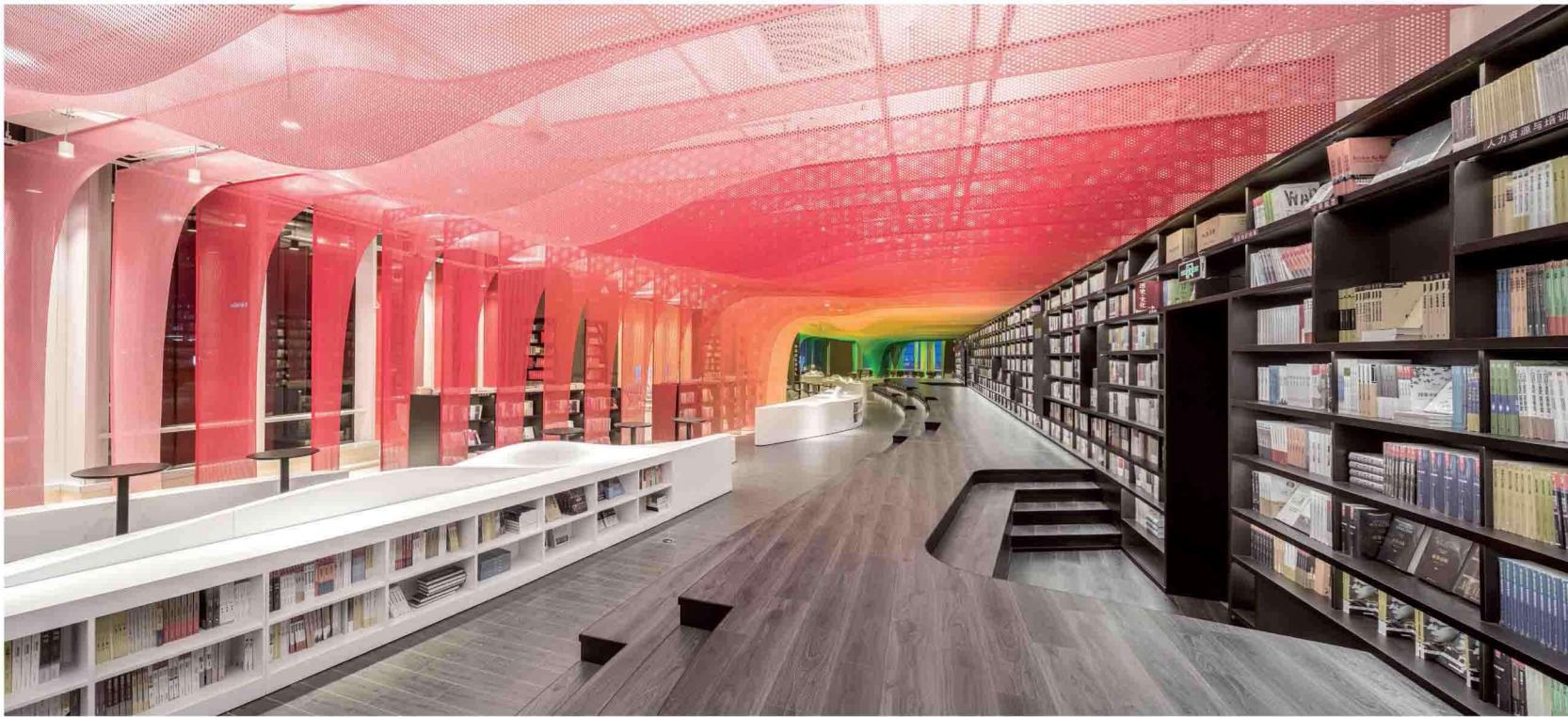


ZHONGSHU BOOKSTORE

Suzhou, China,

Design: Wutopia Lab
 Opening date: July 2017
 Store size: 1,380 sq m



Designed by Yu Ting, founder of Shanghai-based Wutopia Lab, Zhongshu Bookstore in Suzhou, China is the newest store from the brand since its first site opened five years ago. The store is divided into four main zones and several sub-divided zones. Aiming to create a colourful new world by using symbolism, the architect gave a unique character to each of the four zones.

'The new "Zhongshuge" needed to figure out how to stand out. For us, we wanted to do a new bookstore to go beyond our old work: the very first "Zhongshuge" bookstore in Songjiang,' says Ting. The client needed four different functions in the bookstore. We used symbolism by giving a unique character to each zone - The Sanctuary of Crystal for new arrivals; The Cave of Fireflies for recommendations; The Xanadu of Rainbows for a reading room; The Castle of Innocence for children's books.'

At the start of the customer journey is The Sanctuary of Crystal, a space full of books and nothing else. The latest arrivals are arranged on pre-fabricated,

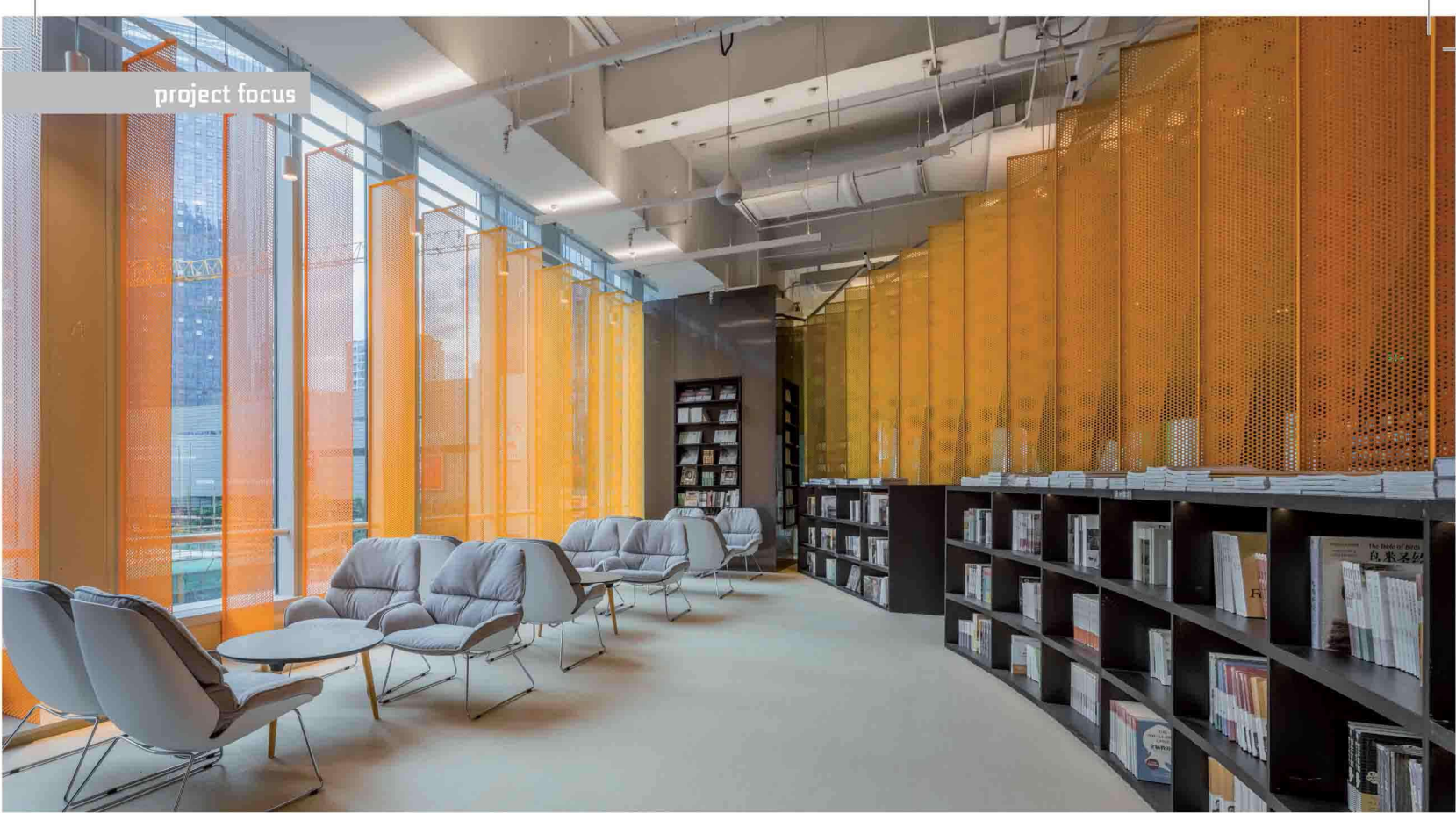
transparent, acrylic shelves, outstanding the presence of the books. Using glass bricks, mirrors and acrylic. The Sanctuary of Crystal is a shining white space, luring customers into the heart of the store.

After the whiteness, The Cave of Fireflies is a darker tunnel connecting the main hall and the entrance. Customers will pick books here and follow the guide of fibre optics into the main reading area.

As the site is in a new district, all the buildings are in a modern style with large windows. 'We needed to create a fascinating street view to draw people in to step into the bookstore. Then we thought why not use a rainbow to draw people's attention?' says Ting.

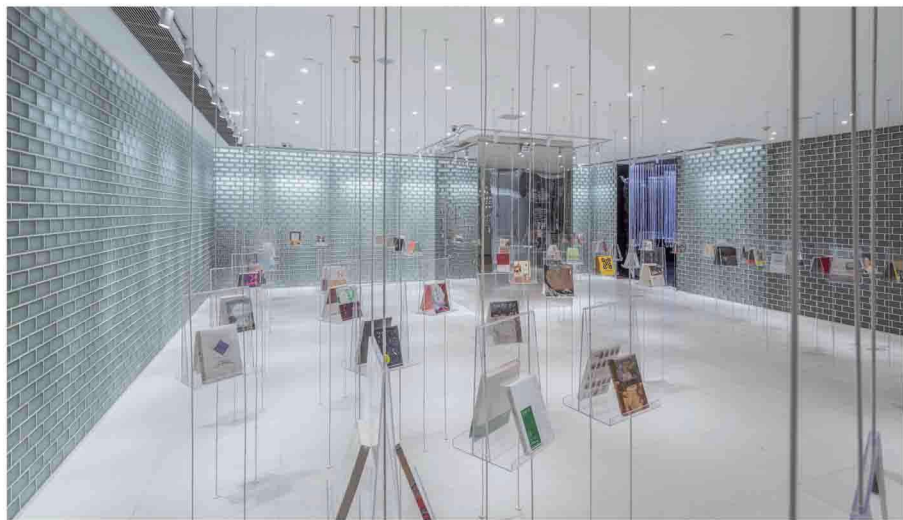
After a relatively narrow space, The Xanadu of Rainbows is a large and open space. Natural light pours into the space thanks to a series of large windows. Being the most prominent zone, The Xanadu of Rainbows provides a variety of experiences. Taking advantage of different heights of shelves, steps and tables, the architect created a hyper architecturised and >





abstracted landscape of cliffs, valleys, islands, rapids and oases. Thin, perforated, aluminum sheets in gradient colours are reminiscent of rainbows installed in the bookstore. These 1cm-thin panels divide zones of different functions, at the same time bringing a mysterious and vague atmosphere to the space.

At the very end of The Xanadu of Rainbows is the children's book area, surrounded by white ETFE walls. With the help of translucent ETFE, The Castle of Innocence is an inner world inside the bookstore. Many complex installments were added in the space, building a world where children can interact with each other and with the bookstore itself.



'WE THOUGHT, WHY NOT USE A RAINBOW TO DRAW PEOPLE'S ATTENTION?'

The perforated aluminum sheets that shape the windows play a huge part in the project. When half of the sheets were perforated, they lost the visual quality of shining metals. When multiple panels of different sizes and colours were fixed together, a veil is created. The distance between each set of panels is also of great importance. Some gaps between the panels are larger than others, thus creating spaces of different experiences. Again, with the almost translucent quality of the panels, the boundaries between each individual space is weakened. With the use of lighting, the colourful sheets can also be seen from outside, making the bookstore an inviting destination. **RF**

