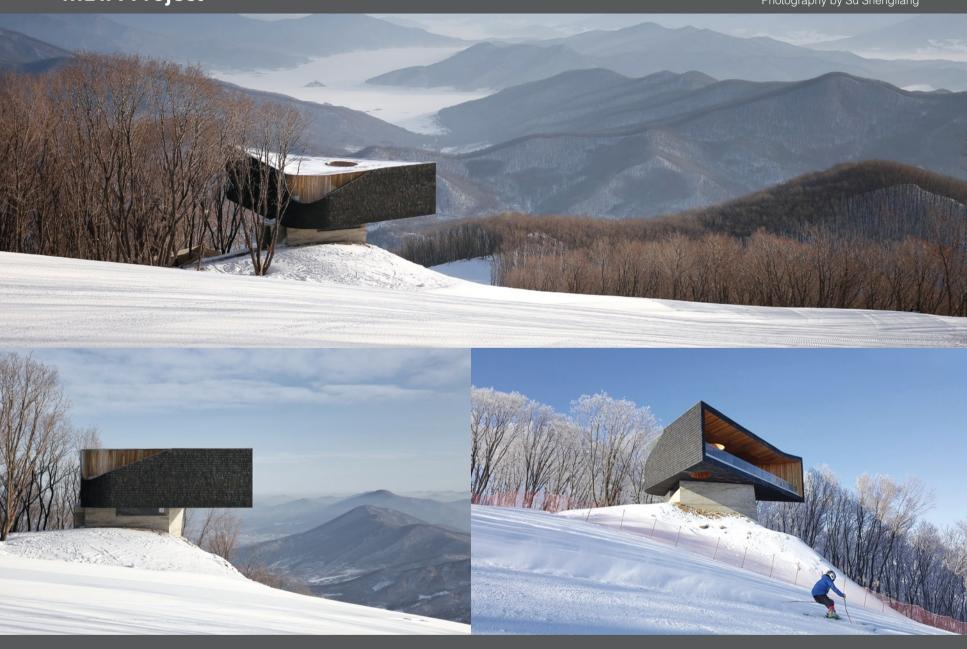


## TOPSIDE

## Stage of Forest

Jilin, Songhua Lake, China META-Project

Photography by Su Shengliang



Claiming an unsurpassed site high above Songhua Lake in China, this little building holds almost no programme other than to enhance – if that's even possible – appreciation of the vistas. It is a viewing platform, facing a truly sublime panorama of layered mountains stretching toward an infinite horizon, the lake nestled far below like an out-of-reach crystal. Skiers ply the snowy hillsides beside the building during winter, and in summer, the green slopes become a nature (and hiker's) paradise. Stage of Forest serves both.

META-Project spent plenty of time studying the site (tough work assignment!) to position the little building just so, minimising interruptions to the surrounding

natural beauty, not to mention ski runs. It thrusts out from a small clump of forest trees, in a bold cantilever set upon a concrete base. The form, which is vaguely triangular in shape, opens broadly toward the view, while curving sensuously at its 'back' point in a hint of what it momentarily obscures. The parti utilises two pieces: the concrete support base and the upper fan-shaped one, which is clad in attractive, charred shingles. Its roof rises up very slightly to one corner. The shingled skin peels back at the blind corner to unveil a glass aperture protecting a honey-toned timber surface. The two cantilevered front corners appear more dramatic from the rear, as if this wood creature were just taking off from its concrete nest.

