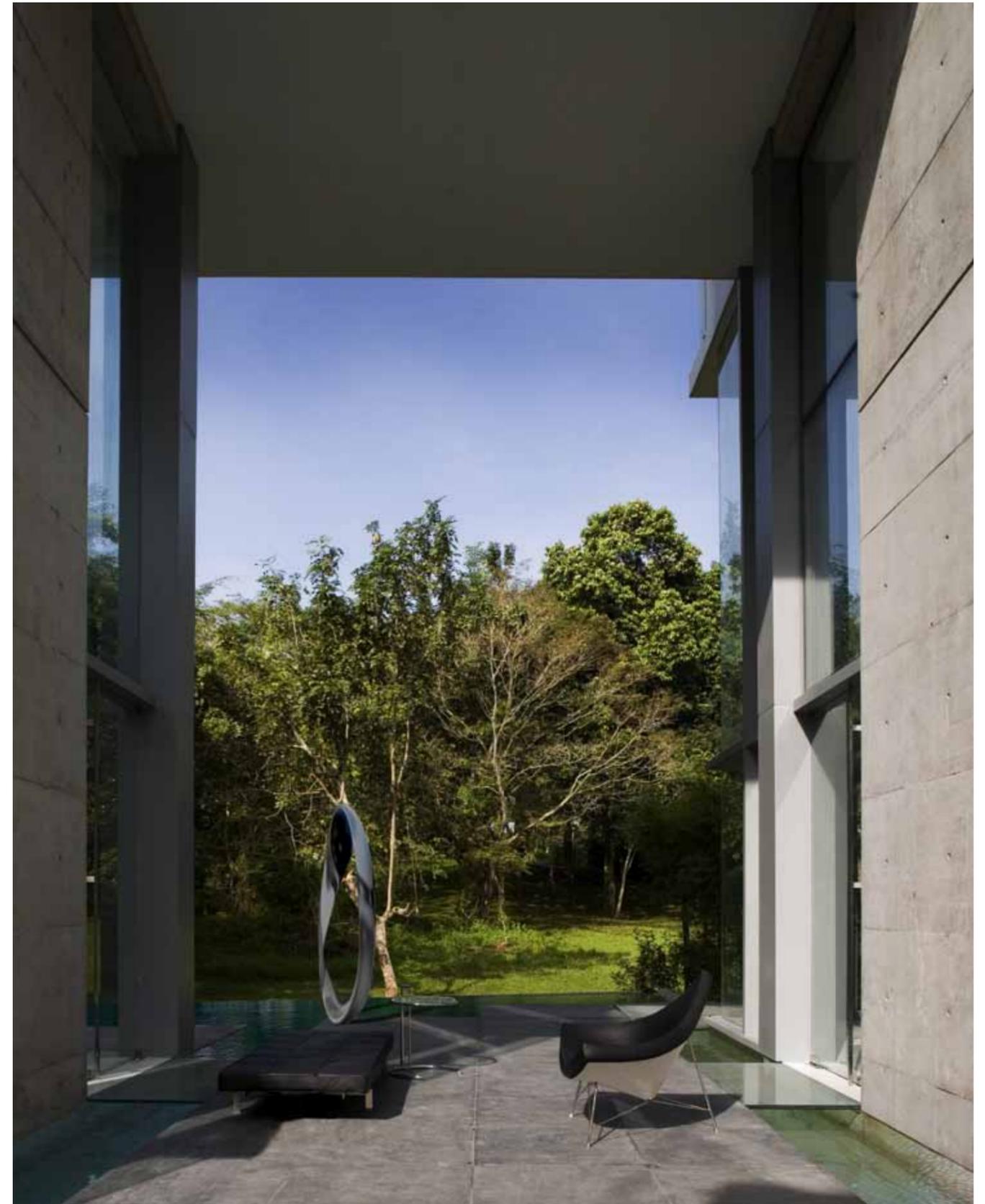


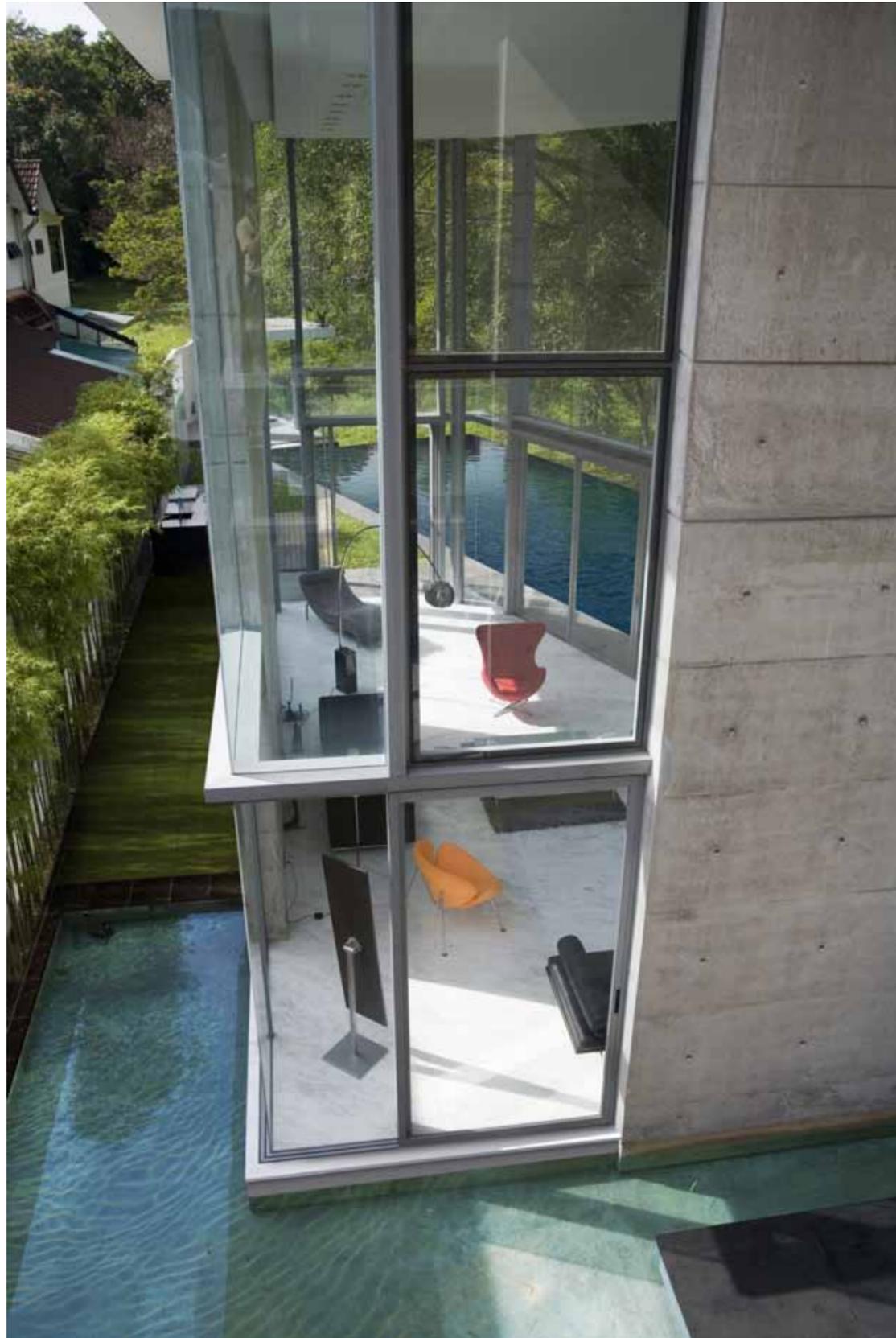
Internal *Affair*



A home is a shelter from the elements that provides privacy and, to a degree, seclusion from the outside world inside its four walls. A room with a view most definitely needs a window, or by turning the concept inside out, the walls can become a view if entirely made from silicate glass: The Glass House is the home of urbane architect Desmond Tan, founder of Mirage International, in Singapore, and its beauty as well as fluidity is totally transparent.

STORY BY Dewald Haynes PHOTO BY Mirage International Doc.





INTERNAL AFFAIRS
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

— Know for its well priced bottles from the bar, Wilshire is becoming a favorite in the area —

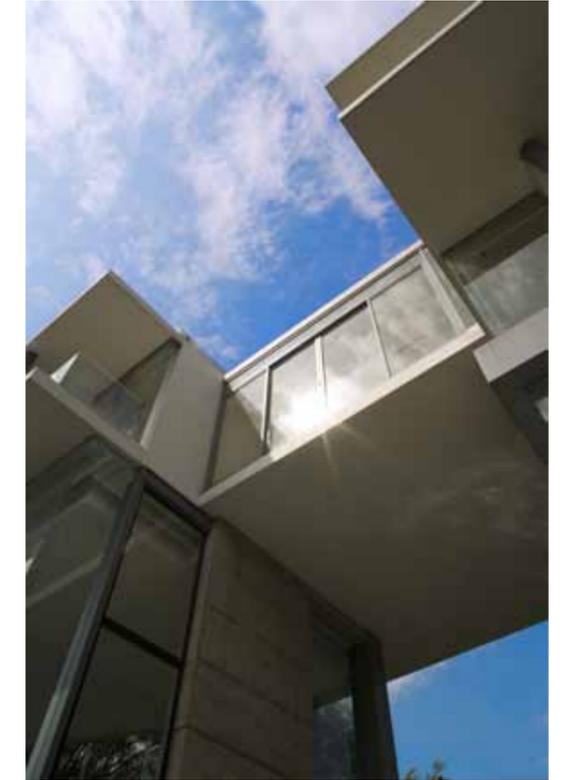
— Cronuts, the pastry combination of croissants and donut —



THROUGH HIS DESIGN DESMOND CONSTANTLY explores the way architecture relates to its context and unavoidably becomes tangible. He believes that, more than anything else, architecture has the ability to ignite the senses and provide an arbitrary experience between oneself and nature through its affinity and proximity.

In the design of his private domain and weekend retreat, he provides proof of his ideology by implimenting simple yet significant strategies. The natural context of the site interlaces with the spatial requirements of this transparent three leveled structure. The carved out volumes created by the frame serve to add space and provide a retreat to house an extensive art collection inside the see-through house: A room with a view that is a view! The simple material palette of metal, glass and off-form concrete, define the architectural expression, while its modernity contrasts dramatically with the surrounding serene natural landscape. The strategic restrained use of materials however expresses the architecture in its most purest form, accentuating space and content as the priority focal points.

The house composes of two separated double-storey blocks connected by a sky bridge that



forms the third level. It appears as a continuous, longitudinal unit punctuated with voids and reflection with its clear, frame less glass façade. Separated by an entry forecourt, the two separate blocks define the gallery, dining, kitchen and music/guest room on the first level of the main block, and an entertainment room and study on the second, from the double-volume living space of the second block towards the rear of the 8,000sqft site. The third level is the private suite, which comprise a private master lounge and master-bedroom as well as large master-bathroom encased in full-height glass. On the roof is a garden and from this charming area one can re-engage with the surrounding landscape that gives the spatial experience of the house a subtle climax.

Fleeting and interchangeable, the façade alternates between the continuity of the natural surroundings on the reflection of its surface and the spaces it reveals through its transparency. The designs' duality does not merely sprung from the architectural shell alone, but interchanges between nature and shelter, solid and void, form and space, internally. Suspended in an affair between the interior and the exterior, the house, encased in air-conditioned for practical reasons, screens and filters the environment, separating yet allowing the embrace to occur. Nothing is static or permanent both on the

main feature THE GLASS HOUSE



architectural skin as well as the spatial qualities that occur within it. Changes in light affect the way the spaces are expressed, perceived and experienced. When night falls, the punctuated “voids” blend with the darkness of twilight, shrouding the house with a romantic ambiance.

Interior details, such as the cantilevered staircase, which leads one along an off-form concrete wall to the gallery and music room above, give a light and delicate feel to the space. Overall, the materials chosen are undeniably exquisite: Italian Bianco Staturio marble is used predominantly on the lower levels, while Maple timber flooring dominates the upper levels. Specially selected Phillip Stark and Antonio Citterio lights and bathroom fixtures are used against Travertino marble flooring to add to the elegant air of the interior space.

Instead of having the entrance to the house situated by the gate, Desmond takes guests on the “Arts Vista”, which is, effectively, a delayed processional route through a ramped pathway led by LED lights and surrounded by greenery and sculptures, before arriving at the dramatic double-volume entry forecourt resting lightly over a reflective infinity pool. Having exterior walls entirely out of glass provokes an internal affair with nature and art in a space with museum-like spatial tranquility. ¹⁰



INTERNAL AFFAIRS FROM TOP

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Know for its well priced bottles from the bar, Wilshire is becoming a favorite in the area
—
Cronuts, the pastry combination of croissants and donut

Project Data

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Project Name
The Glass House
Location
Seletar Area / Yio Chu Kang
Site Area
800 sq meter
Gross Floor Area
780 sq meter
Client / Owner
Desmond Tan
Architecture Consultant
Mirage International
Principal Designer
Desmond Tan
Interior Design Consultant
Mirage International
Interior Contractor
Tad International
Lighting Consultant
LPA Consultants
Landscape Consultant
Tierra Design
Mechanical & Electrical Consultant
PCA Consultants
Civil & Structural Consultant
PKP Consultants
Main Contractor
Tad International
Started
2009
Completed
2011