Wal-Chong Museum is not a work of architecture but a translation into a built landscape of the work of contemporary Korean artist Lee Wal-Chong. The much discussed theme of the boundaries between art and architecture and the collaboration between artists and architects, finds in this work an answer as simple as it is effective. After many years of research, merging our work with the context within which we build, this work represents an important milestone that has confirmed to us, on a practical level, how abandoning the dogma often associated with the practice of architecture is a way to enter into a new expressive world, related more to the senses than to ideology. Architecture is the bridge between the DNA of a place and its future and serves to transmit the emotions through the senses of man. The Wal Chong Museum, for which we have served as the instruments for the sensibilities of the artist, is born out of the fertile land of Jeju and expresses its heritage and soul. The architect is asked to prepare the physical mass. Its form was created as if carved out by the natural elements of the island, as if it were lain exposed for centuries to its wind and its waters. This work becomes the representation of a solid and painted space of the island world of Jeju and of its history, evoking the ancestral energies of volcanic eruptions out in the middle of the sea. This project was conceived of and explored as a modelled form, sculptural and gestural forms that are afforded harmony through a precise geometry. Initially revealing a reclining female figure overlooking the ocean, it ultimately reaches a synthesis within which we find the aspirations and inspirations of the artist working in tandem with natural elements. Just like a block of clay from which the artist can carve out, shape and paint; the building, together with the sculpture garden, becomes part of the artist’s work. Wal-Chong, in his on-site daily life, finds a way has gone by that he has not worked alongside the builders has shaped every detail according to his extraordinary sensibility related to his world. He has created a sculpture on a landscape scale. He has recreated the wonderful world of his art using all the elements available to him. He chooses natural elements such as the flowers and the trees and considers not only their form and colour but also the insects and the songs of the birds that live and fly among them. All these elements are found in the work of the artist, but this time they are transformed into a landscape to be enjoyed and physically experienced through the senses. The work of Wal-Chong is focused on representing the context of his island. It reproduces the simplicity and richness of island life and its proud and humble soul.

Photography: Park YoungChae
The project is the landmark HQ of the new ‘Jansen Campus’ and is the result of two years of extraordinary collaboration between the architects and the clients.

The building, a striking new addition to the skyline, is the link between the industrial area and the old town and takes its triangular forms from the traditional pitched roofs of Oberriet. The project integrates innovative technologies and includes new details and materials not yet used in architecture - the façade system, for example, is ‘TAPS’, activated by the structural shell of the building.

One of Jansen’s main objectives for the project is to make the Campus a creative and engaging place for all their employees. The building’s work spaces are open plan, with each employee having their own custom designed workstation. (Many furniture pieces have been custom designed and made for the project and stand alongside the chosen brands of Alias and Cappellini).

All spaces look out across the Rheintal and the geometry of the building means that visitors and employees alike are offered unexpected glimpses sliced out of the landscape.

The landscaped park surrounding the building includes 80 trees, 35 different species representative of those of the region. The project also sees the beginning of the Jansen Art collection, containing works by international contemporary artists.