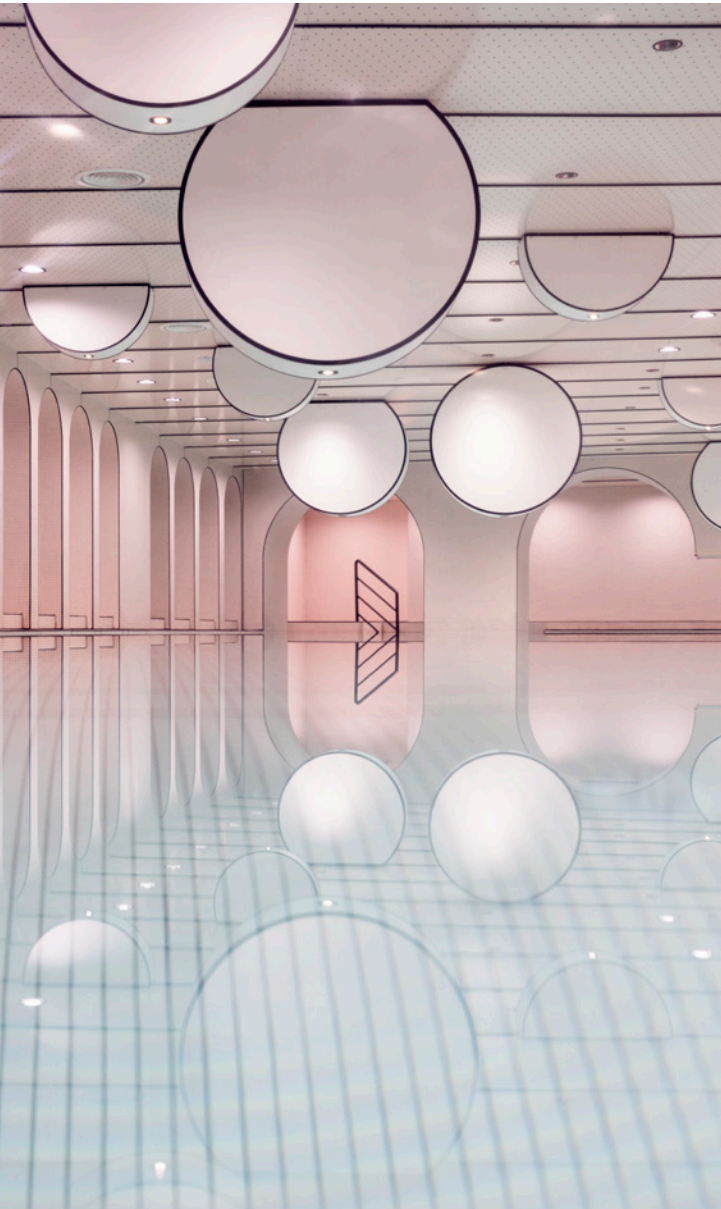


# A Parent-Child Wonderland

LOONG SWIM CLUB  
SUZHOU, CHINA

The Loong Swim Club in the garden-filled city of Suzhou is a sports center where wellness involves fantasy—and a really fantastic pool.



Designed by Chinese architect Li Xiang, Loong Swim Club is a far cry from the fluorescent-lit, chlorine-filled atmosphere of most youth sports pools. Instead, Xiang let her imagination run wild—creating an aesthetic that speaks to a child's heightened sense of wonder and imagination. Rather than stick to traditional “kid-friendly” style codes, Xiang played with high-design touches and spatial gymnastics to fashion a magical world that balances areas for instruction and training with those for casual parent interaction and family hangouts. Going to the pool on Saturday has never been so much fun.

Xiang already has a reputation for dreaming up otherworldly interiors—her Zhongshuge Bookstore in Chongqing, China, is a surreal maze of mirrors and staircases. Here, she lined the pool in pink tiles and illuminated the space with circular lights that hover overhead, like droplets of condensation. The water is heated to a pleasant 32°C (90°F), making it easy for young swimmers to acclimate (lessons are offered for infants and children up to six years old).

Beyond the changing area, there is a reading room—with couches shaped like huge, curved waves that have bookshelves built into their sides. If you want a bite to eat, the restaurant is an *Alice in Wonderland*-like space with fragmented eggshells that kids can play on while the grown-ups sip tea (that is the dream, anyway). Even the baby-changing lounge is joyful, with pastel hung lamps and a polka dotted ceiling. You might change a diaper just for the thrill of it.

And to encourage family bonding (or prevent the panic of separation anxiety), the walkway around the pool has glass windows and comfy seats so parents and children can see each other, creating a two-way interaction. If swimming is a sport you never outgrow, Xiang has the right idea in getting little ones off to a good start. Make wellness fun, and you will practice it for life.



← Designed by Chinese architect Li Xiang, the swim club's pool is lined in pink tiles and illuminated with circular lights that hover overhead like droplets of water.

↑ The club has fairytale-like spaces for relaxation, including a restaurant with giant, fragmented eggshells where children can play.