



## ARAVIA DESIGN LTD

# Creatively Redefining the Concept of Space

After gaining valuable experience in Africa and China, CHAN CHING KAN brings a bevy of fresh ideas, smart design and an innovative approach to his clients through his firm ARAVIA DESIGN LTD.

**D**uring the few years in my mentor's company, I was lucky enough to take part in the design and execution of more than 10 mixed-use developments in China with experience ranging from furniture design to a city for a million, says Chan Chin Kan, Director of one of Asia's most promising design firms, Aravia Design Ltd.

"Due to development constraints, I joined a private developer as an in-house project director and design director for projects in East Africa and worked with hotel management companies such as Sheraton, Marriott and Wyndham. During the 2 years stationed in Africa, I managed the construction work as well as marketing. The experience as a board member in a development company also allowed me exposure to the financial part of project development," Kan says.

### Inspired to Create

"Inspired by my mentor, I enjoy sharing knowledge and design thinking, which also makes me a lecturer in Chinese University of Hong Kong and Makerere University in Uganda. As a local Hong Kong raised in squatter town, communal life has always been my key to design. Architecture is more about people than buildings to me. I'm interested in how design can make people and society better. Having working abroad for almost 10 years, I felt it was time to go back to my city and devote myself to making our own city a better place, for the people and for the city's future," says Kan.

### China Experience

Kan was lucky enough to take part in the construction industry during the last



**Chan Ching Kan: "The concept of work and living place has changed forever. Our challenge is to accept the times and go with the tide."**

10 years when construction was blooming, of when most of his time was spent in China. The China market gave me access to rare opportunities, like the time I was working on several mixed used development when I just came back from London at the age of 22. It is a very rare opportunity for an architect and designer at a very young age to engage and even lead such a large scale project. The chance allowed me to grow immensely in very short time. Today, our company focuses on China in terms of large scale projects (which impact social life) and interior work (which impact end users directly) in Hong Kong."

"We see ourselves as a more passive designer. We listen to customers' needs, ask intelligent questions and focus on how our design input can help to grow their business. Design to us is more like a consequence of the needs and how we turn it into an art that people will enjoy."

### Unique as YOU Are!

"I realize how much operation mat-

ters from the experience of designing shopping centers and branded hotels. Every single project is totally new to us. We design by understanding their business and operations. We think more about the impression and long term business of our clients, for example sometimes a restaurant has fabulous food and beverages, then you see the storage lay out randomly at the corner or the washroom that is unbearably small - the back is always as important as the front."

"It's the unexpected that makes life interesting. We are just a surfer in the ocean and you can't fight against the wave but work along with it."

"We partner with other designers and other professions to expand our vision and create opportunities. We are developing different markets by research. The APPS have changed the way we live and the way we consume. The concept



of work and living place has changed forever. Our challenge is to accept the times and go with the tide. When you are sailing amidst the ocean, there is no way to return. You just have to be faithful with your crew and believe that 'we will get there. Our job is to believe and make belief," concludes Kan. ■

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