

SPECIAL
EDITION
HONG KONG

ONE STORY

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NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

Creating, evolving, seeing your dreams come true, being happy: a belief that nothing is impossible can bring about everything you imagine.

ARCHITECTURE

PplusP's first commission in Architecture Design was The Haimen Public Library. Funded through philanthropy, the resulting building is a living embodiment of the library as temple.

INTERIOR DESIGN



In its interior design, PplusP achieves the impossible: style with substance.

RETAIL

In the practice's design for Hong Kong grocery store U&B, joyous fruity orange infuses the space.

INTERVIEW

Wesley and co-design with re-knowned designers Kinney Chan and Enoch Hui devised a game of Tic-Tac-Toe as a fun twist to their delivery of a dramatic colour washed interior for Tat Ming Flooring.

TALENTS

The PplusP team, including architects, interior designers, and graphic artists, are appointed for their talent and passion for design.



ONE CITY HONG KONG



Opening essay by Lianne Hackett

As equations go, drive + passion + tenacity = nothing is impossible looks to be the definition of the creative talent that is Wesley Liu, but this is only the beginning. Dig deeper into the elements of this unique talent, extrapolate the coefficients, exponents, equal signs and constants and it becomes clear that the standard form of equation is not equal to defining him. Focus in on Wesley Liu and his watchwords *drive, passion and tenacity* and the definer needs to engage the radical: *passion* is the nth degree. As he made clear in his company name, for him it is about passionate designers and passionate people. He considers passion in his clients to be as important as passion in his design team.

Wesley Liu's creative approach runs completely counter to the old adage that it is impossible to have style and substance. His work achieves the impossible: style with substance. Alongside his mantra of constantly and with curiosity seeking to make a positive impact on lives of others runs his belief that *'for architecture to make an impact, it must have soul'*.

A closer examination of Wesley Liu finds a designer who is modern to the core and yet steeped in Chinese spirituality and tradition. This paradox was evident from a young age when he travelled solo from his Le Corbusier-inspired modernist home estate of Mei Foo Sun Chuen in Hong Kong to Japan to live in a Buddhist Temple. The teachings of Buddha and Le Corbusier shaped him and are anchored in Frank Lloyd Wright's exhortation that *'form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union'* [a reworking of Sullivan's *'form versus function'*].

Wesley has a deep belief in karma and the power of the subconscious. Drawn to the spiritual, but seeking to make better the lives of others, his unconventional life path took him

“PplusP has an impressive portfolio of work, all of which Wesley describes as being 'inspired by boundless ideas and possibilities'.



BY MERCI MAGAZINE



The Haimen Public Library Atrium Staircase

“ My definition of architecture goes beyond a building. With a mission to influence the surrounding community, the library reads as a shelter with soul. We often put too much emphasis on “function” and “style” when it comes to designing a building, but for me it is more important to think about how to inject soul and sophistication. My focus is on how to make buildings come alive; how to use architecture to improve the quality of life in a community.”

post high school to Australia where – without the qualifications needed – he was accepted onto a masters design management and environment programme at the University of New South Wales. Leaving university, accepted onto a masters design management and environment programme at the University of New South Wales. Leaving university, he was appointed as project co-ordinator & designer at the leading practice Sogo Design in its Hong Kong office.

PplusP has an impressive portfolio of work, all of which Wesley describes as being ‘*inspired by boundless ideas and possibilities*’. This mindset is at the heart of his drive to make the impossible possible ‘*through interactions between staff and clients*’. His is a democratic approach where a passion for environmental awareness and the latest technologies are acknowledged as key roots of the practice’s collaborative approach to projects.

Wesley’s latest award, the Architecture Masterprize for the KT Store in Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon shows his fun side. This is also evident in the blast of colour the practice applied to Hong Kong grocery store U&B where joyous fruity orange infuses the space



The Haimen Public Library Welcoming Hall

in a layout that is a clever reinvention of fruit & veg boxes as moveable display units. It is also evident in his work for the Tat Ming Flooring company where a game of Tic-Tac-Toe that Wesley and his team devised adds a fun twist to their delivery of a dramatic colour washed interior.

All of PplusP’s award-winning projects are built on the commitment Wesley has made for ‘our practice to be sustainable - to keep things that are memorable, valuable, and functional’. This ethos imbues projects past, current and future. In our 21st century living where progress at all costs seems to rule, we need more than ever Wesley’s commitment to making ‘shelters with soul’.

The Haimen Public Library

After completion, the Haimen Public Library was donated to the local government by a private client. Located at a National Class AAAA historical site in Guangdong Province, Lotus Park | Liang Hua Feng occupies 4800 square meters of land with 2800 square meters of architecture and interior space.

The Haimen Public Library

The brief for the design had two major limitations. In the first place was the grid of 8x8 meter structure, which could be altered due to budget constraints (all inclusive of CNY18M). Since the library was to be constructed on an historical site, any exaggerated forms or luxurious ideas had to be avoided.

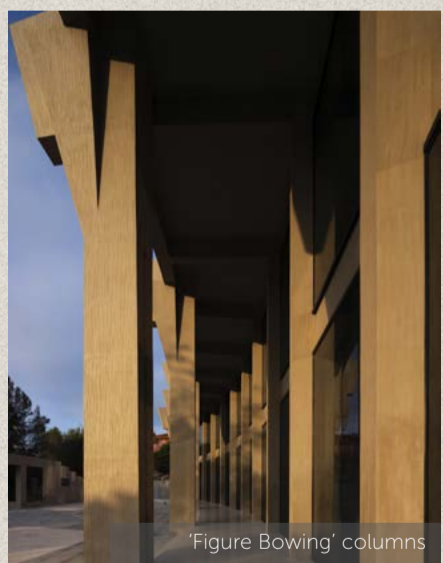
By minimizing the use of essential materials, keeping everything in its purest form, and using natural power as upholstery, the architecture was not only positioned at its location with meaning and gesture, but also blended in with its surroundings. Through a dialogue between the library user’s own movement and the natural light the design lets into the building, people emerge from the shaded entrance hall into the light of the atrium space.

Creating a dynamic spatial experience

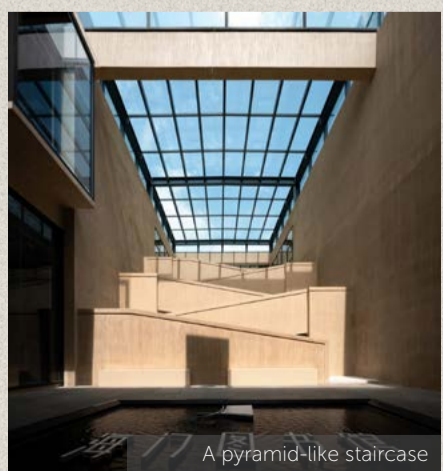
The two-story building has a semi-open atrium/ courtyard in the centre and a roof terrace on the top. A pyramid-like walk through staircase connects the ground floor and second floor atrium. Its depths provide a visual experience of the inner architecture that responds to the movement of people as they ascend and descend. In the staircase, natural light and shadow movements appear to dance together. This dynamic spatial experience of the site-specific design is achieved through a dialogue between the architecture and the passage of people in ever-changing rays of sunlight.



The Haimen Public Library - Semi-open Atrium



‘Figure Bowing’ columns



A pyramid-like staircase



The Haimen Public Library - Side facade

As part of the development of the site plan and interior floorplan, consideration has been given to the shoreline, the surrounding historical landmarks, the history of the city, and the current use of the park. Arrayed giant circles with diameters of 150 and 180 meters are self-rotating 360 degrees, overlapping each other, generating a unique parametric pattern on the site plan.



Above: The board of the game contains three engraved names of the designers.

IT'S FUN TO COLLABORATE! TIC-TAC-TOE

Wesley's latest award, the Architecture Masterprize for the kt store in Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon shows his fun side. This is also evident in the blast of colour the practice applied to Hong Kong grocery store U&B where joyous fruity orange infuses the space in a layout that is a clever reinvention of fruit & veg boxes as moveable display units. It is also evident in his work for the Tat Ming Flooring company where a game of Tic-Tac-Toe that Wesley and co-design with re-knowned designers Kinney Chan and Enoch Hui devised adds a fun twist to their delivery of a dramatic colour washed interior.

ONE STORY, ONE INTERVIEW

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

Your forward-thinking ethos is one of continuing 'to work hard and to create more impossibles', saying 'Nothing is impossible! To get it, you have to focus, to believe and to strive for it.' How do you maintain this focus for you and your team?

I don't believe in rules but in trial and error. My team get this. Luckily, it has always worked.

You have determination. How does this help you in your working life?

When I applied for my Master of Design I did not have the right entry qualifications, but I did not give up. I went through many interviews – the interview process took almost a year – I focused on this one institution and achieved my goal. There is always a way to work things out. To become a full member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), you have to be a registered architect. I read the terms for becoming an associate member and realized that they applied to me as I'm now a PhD candidate with a recognized university under the Faculty of Architecture & Urban Design.

You had the advantage of working for illustrious practices. Did this have a significant impact on your career?

I was lucky to work with masters at a young age

You also love to cook. How did this come about?

Cooking for me also relates to nothing is impossible. My first job age 14 was as a chef in a sushi restaurant. I had a six-month gap between my studies in England and Australia with nothing to do and so applied for a job. For all of the nine years that I studied in Australia, I also worked in restaurants.

You have knife skills?

I do.



Where do you do your cooking?

I had a kitchen in our previous office. Our conference room was a Japanese tatami room with a western kitchen. I established Desine Cuisigner as I like to bring together people. I like to cook for people, including my fellow design professionals.

I should say that it was not a proper restaurant: I did not charge anyone!

You talk of an injection of soul into design, which would seem to be rooted in your early life in Japan. Is this the case?

For me, this relates only to how I was educated about Buddhism. I believe strongly in karma. As a designer I keep that belief. A lot of designers design for themselves not for the client. I believe in the timeless not what is trending.

You have designed a range of furniture and accessories. When will this be launched?

"The two Ps come together in a union of passionate designers and passionate people. If my clients are not passionate about design, I would say "Don't come to us". Passion is very important to me as is having a positive mind set."

It is on the way. I have designed a few pieces over the past few years for 10cc, the group of Hong Kong designers who make and show together unique pieces of furniture that express the Hong Kong spirit. I have also designed art installations for my teachers to mark important moments in their lives. For William Lim, on the occasion of his 60th birthday, I designed a 60-thread installation with a vintage handle at its centre entitled 'William Lim's Wheel of Life'. For Tino Kwan, I designed an installation entitled '40 Years of Lighting Design' that was composed of 40 acrylic poles purchased from Tokyu Hands which I colour dyed and illuminated.

You believe that what is important in architecture is to discover 'how to inject soul'. Would you expand on this?

I do. This philosophy is at the core of my being as a designer.

From Sogo Design, you moved to CL3, where you spent a year working as an Interior Designer in this award-winning practice that was founded by the luminary artist/architect William Lim. His seminal publication 'Asian Alterity: With Special Reference to Architecture and Urbanism through The Lens of Cultural Studies' was published during the year you were part of the practice. Did his radical training [the AA in London] and writings influence your future approach to interior architecture?

Yes. It was a short, but very important time. Without his mentoring I would not be here today.



You believe that what is important in architecture is to discover 'how to inject soul'. Would you expand on this? Art is important to you, as is collecting. What are some of the works that you have included in your projects?

I like cute and colourful pieces, including from X+Q by the contemporary Chinese artists, Xiang Jing and Qu Guangci.

And is colour also important?

I seldom use black & white and muted colours. I use colour in an intense way.

You mention that you are studying for a PhD by practice. What is the focus of your research?

In working towards a PhD by practice at RMIT Melbourne, Australia. I am being encouraged to explore my methodology. The university is encouraging me to open up my mind, rip down everything and put it all back together in the last stage of my research. The working title for the abstract I am presenting shortly to RMIT is 'Culture, Passion or Profession? Reflecting on a design practice situated in Hong Kong and mainland China'.

In your early years in Japan, you practised Zen meditation. Does that practice continue to influence your design work?

It does, as does my belief in karma. In simple terms, my philosophy is design with heart. Above all, I want to design good projects for my clients.

Do you believe in the power of the subconscious mind?

I do. My design methodology begins with closing my eyes and dreaming the project.

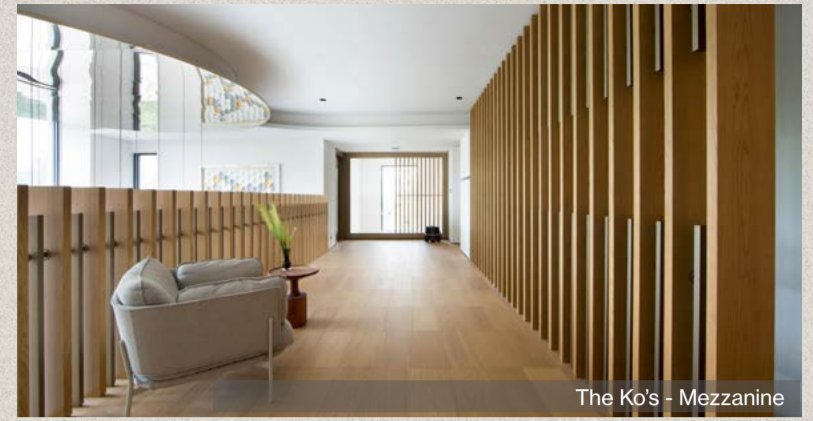
You are releasing the power of the subconscious. Is that it?

I am. Through meditation, I can now frame my brain to work on a particular dream. All my designs evolve from this process.

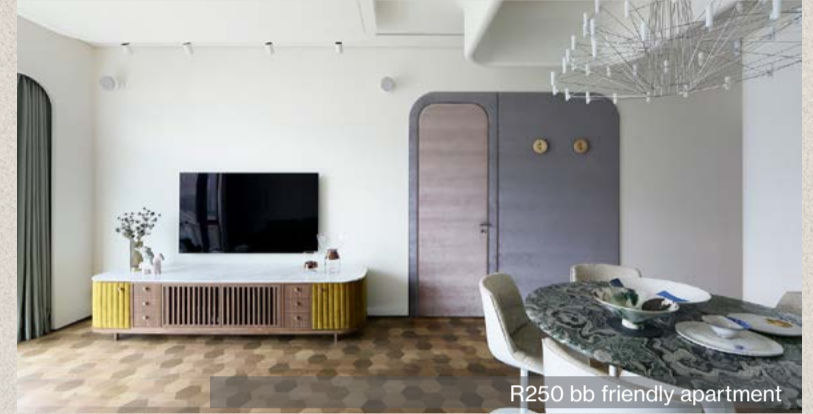
The accolade for the KT Store is the latest in an annual list of awards, including for the simple luxury of the modernist Ko's residential development and quirky baby-friendly R250 apartment in Happy Valley, Hong Kong where terrazzo on the horizontal + vertical defines a bathroom and arabescato breccia marble elevates a compact kitchen. The use of the marble has an added dimension. Originally provided by the developer, Wesley made the decision to incorporate it, saying, 'It's our practice to be sustainable - to keep things that are memorable, valuable, and functionable'. All P+P projects are built on this philosophy and the impressive foundation of the practice's first commission, the funded through-philanthropy Haimen public library, a living embodiment of the library as temple.



U&B Grocery Store

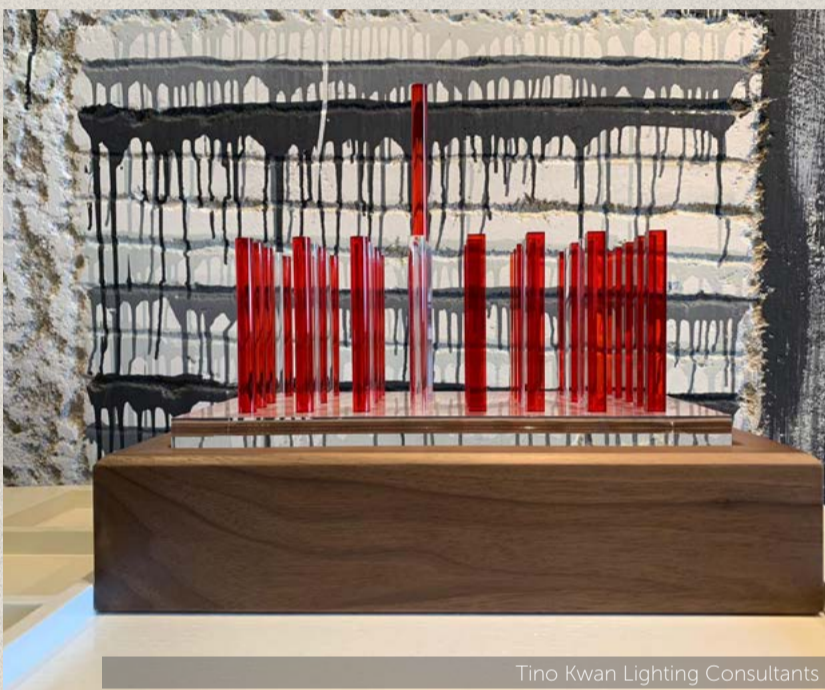


The Ko's - Mezzanine



R250 bb friendly apartment

WHEN DESIGN MEETS ART



Tino Kwan Lighting Consultants

“

There is more to design than making it beautiful. I design to give meaning to something, which is then perceived as being a beautiful experience. One cannot expect to achieve such a creation without understanding, and you cannot truly understand if you are not passionate. In that sense, I can confidently follow my decisions. If I was to offer an advice to anyone it would be... to pursue your obsession and everything else will follow. It certainly has for me.

In our 21 st century living where progress at all costs seems to rule, we need more than ever Wesley's commitment to making 'shelters with soul'. A return to Tokyo, seems more of a possibility than an impossibility, given that Japan is his spiritual home.

Left: As part of Tino Kwan's 40th Lighting consultant anniversary celebrations, Wesley bought all the raw materials from Japan "Tokyu Hands" and handcrafted the 40th pole lighting object to celebrate "Unity of Light", an exhibition featuring 40 Years of Tino Kwan's iconic projects in 2019.

Lower left to right: William Lim_60th Birthday Gift created by Wesley Liu - William Lim's Wheel of Life



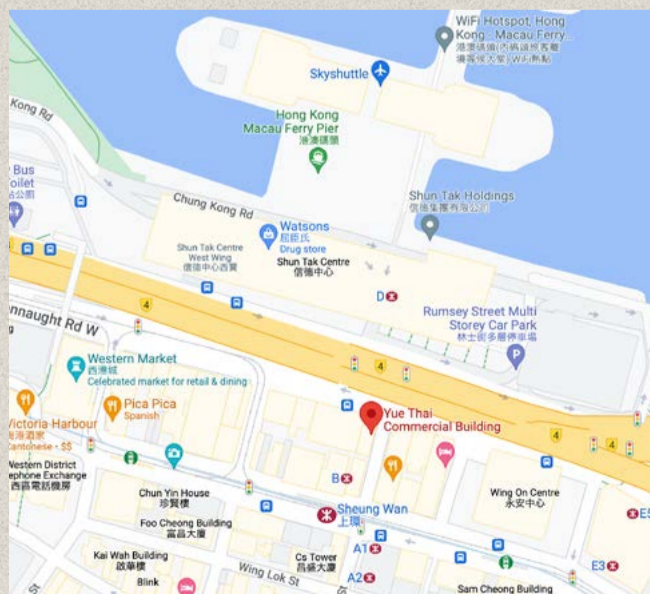
William Lim's Wheel of Life



PplusP Designers Ltd (P+P) A variety of industries are involved

P+P is a multidisciplinary design studio with expertise in Art Installations, Boutique Hotels, Corporate Design, Exhibitions, Hospitality, Luxury Living Spaces and Retail. In order to redefine the limits of conceptual ideas and possibilities, the studio combines expertise from diverse divisions of the design discipline.

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