

SPECIAL  
EDITION

HONG KONG

## ONE STORY

BY MERCI MEDIA CORPORATION

ISSN 2817-1276

\$5 CAD  
¥500

February 04, 2023

ART | BUSINESS | DESIGN | HOSPITALITY | LEISURE | LIVING | TRAVEL | WELL-BEING | REAL ESTATE

www.merci-magazine.com

## THE CORE OF ATELIER E

Enoch founded Atelier E in 2009 as an atelier solution studio. As the name makes clear: Enoch is at the core of the practice.

## COMPOSITIONAL DESIGN

NINETYs cafe stand at AIA Central defines itself as a welcoming oasis of peace and tranquillity at the heart of Hong Kong's financial centre, right in the midst of all its hustle and bustle.

## CURVES AS SENSATIONS

Curved forms are rightly associated with fluidity, dynamism and unhindered movement. Atelier E has a crush on everything, round, voluminous, and winding.

## INTERIOR DESIGN



In order to comply with Finavia Airport's commitment to be carbon neutral, the Plaza Premium Lounge at Helsinki Airport (Terminal 2, Arrivals) has a "zero carbon footprint".

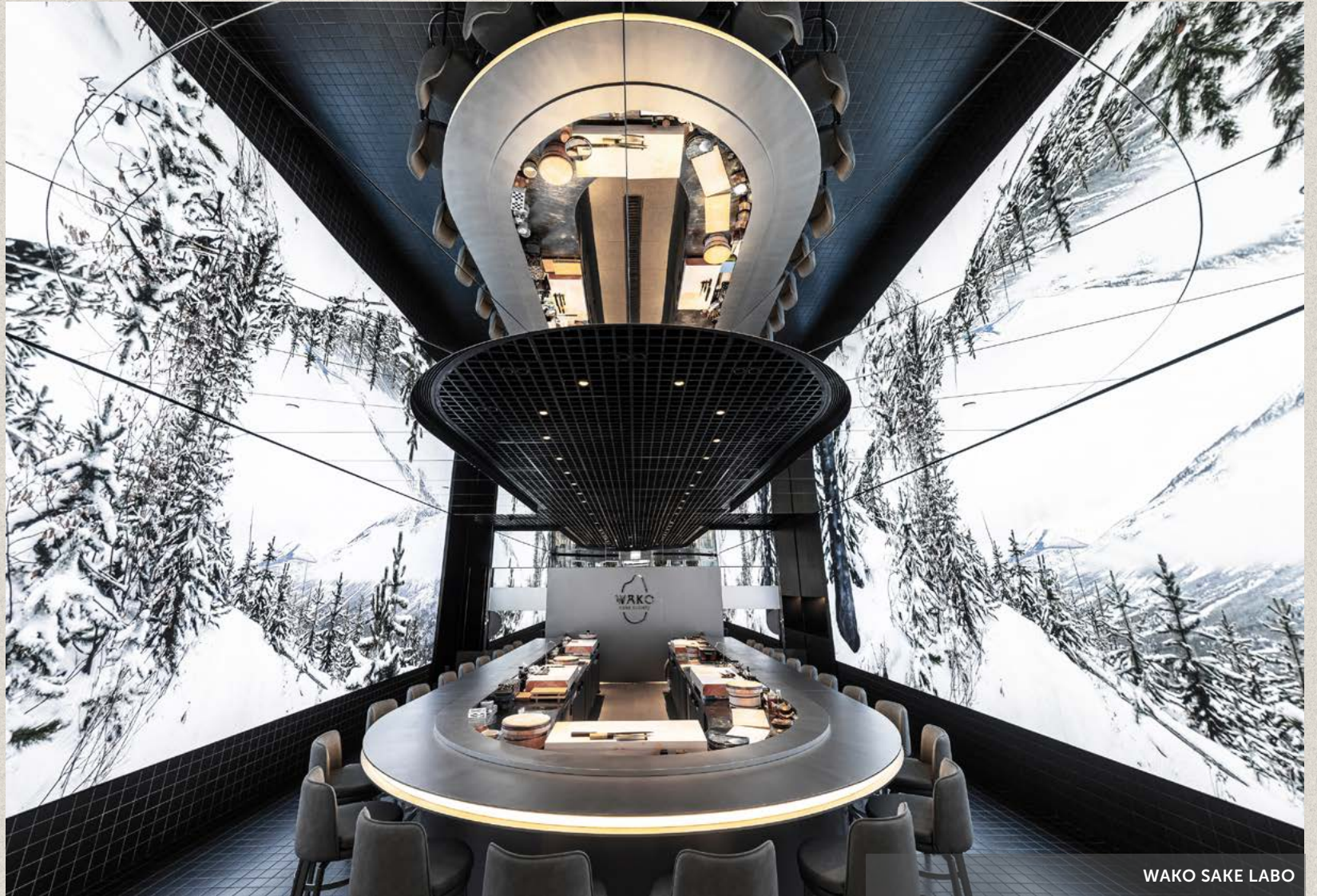
## INTERVIEW

For Enoch, there are two roles in his life that he enjoys more than others: being a father and an interior designer.

## WORK LIFE BALANCE

It is important to Enoch to maintain a balance between work, life and play.

The core of Atelier E | Enoch Hui



WAKO SAKE LABO

ONE CITY  
HONG KONG

Opening essay by Lianne Hackett

The Wako Sake Labo is a core work in the Atelier E portfolio of interior design commissions. Completed this year for the premium Japanese restaurant group Wako Sake Society, the restaurant is located in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. Strikingly futuristic, the exterior signage protrudes outwards from an interior that is film set immersive. It is a mesmerising space to enter. The interior, as reviewed by Time Out, 'definitely makes sipping nihonshu and nibbling on raw fish on vinegared rice a memorable experience'. One dining space is enclosed by a filmic winter snow scene evoking a wintry Japanese landscape, the diners immersed as if transported to a ski lodge setting. The fish looms large not only on the plate, but as artwork at scale in back-lit splendour as if floating in space.

Enoch Hui received his architectural training at the University of Bath in the UK where he has also practised architecture and interior design. He founded Atelier E in Hong Kong in 2009, describing every project his studio takes on as "a symphony of sequential and intertwining spaces with unique and refined detailing carefully arranged to produce a journey of discovery". The description fits perfectly the interior of Wako Sake Labo.

With Enoch's motto being 'life is full of joy, so enjoy it as much as you can, while you can.', he wants his clients also to



BY MERCI MAGAZINE



“ The idea of working as a designer gives me more freedom to do what I think is best for me and my clients at each present moment of my life .... There is always something new to learn.



**Koko coffee labo :** Koko Coffee Labo is a full-on feast of tubular angularity with the coffee grinder centre stage – a totemic object.



**Dood bottega gelateria:** Artisan gelateria gets the spaceship treatment in Atelier E's cool, clean glass and steel kiosk for a client who is passionate about gelato making.



**The Biohazard Chapter:** How to build excitement in science technology engineering & mathematics education? Have pupils enter their STEM classroom via a virtual biohazard door as pupils at Tang King Po School do thanks to Atelier E's design.



**CNA office:** In this radical design, raw materials are left deliberately untreated and exposed to emphasise CNA Metals Group's move into recycling.



WAKO SAKE LABO

## COMPOSITION DESIGN

experience joy in his designs. Any client exploring his work in advance of deciding to commission via his website or social media platforms such as Behance will find work that clearly evokes the 'emotional response' that he wishes to elicit in his work. Koko Coffee Labo for one is a full-on feast of tubular angularity with the coffee grinder centre stage – a totemic object. Eight circular serving places are lined up as if futuristic vinyl turntables for the serving of coffee.

The futuristic use of tubular steel is a constant presence in Enoch's work from in Wako Sake Labo to Koko Coffee Labo. Extruded cardboard in the Hazel & Hershey Café exemplifies the maxim 'You have got to bumble forward into the unknown', a phrase that Enoch wove into his 'The core of Atelier E', video presentation to the 29th Shenzhen International Furniture Exhibition, the dynamic video set to a soundtrack by Ka Chun Tsang.

'The Secret Chair' for the Secret Chair Project organized by Perspective in 2013 shows both Enoch's design chops and his fun side. In homage to the Vitra Design Museum miniature replicas of signature chairs by stellar architects and designers, Enoch envisioned the piece of furniture that Vitra might commission to represent Hong Kong. His choice? Hong Kong's simple, iconic folding stool. The Secret Chair Project came about 'to celebrate local design and salute a humble item of furniture which plays a key role in many Hong Kong homes and in the lives and livelihoods of generations of Hong Kongers'. The design challenge was to repurpose, revamp or completely restyle Hong Kong's simple and iconic folding stool. The resulting miniature - made using 3D printing technology – was shown in the Project's chosen location: the street, with Enoch setting his repurposed stool in a Vitra museum homage stepped showcase. Just as the 1989 Kennedy Road 'Our of Context' exhibition resonates with young Hong Kongers today, so does Secret Chair. 'Something kind of fun', as Enoch might say, but fun that is underlaid with serious purpose.



## ONE STORY, ONE INTERVIEW

## FOR ME, THE MOMENT IS NOW.

**Why did you originally want to become a designer or architect?**

It all began with my parents. At my primary and secondary school, the subject I liked best was always art. When it came to university, I didn't know how to choose a subject. In the end, after much thought, I decided to study architecture at a university in the UK (University of Bath) and was lucky to be accepted.

However, we all can make wrong choices in life. My first impression of the architecture department was that drawing skills played a relatively small role and that theory dominated. As a result of this disappointment, during my first year, I found myself uninterested in architecture as it was taught and almost failed the year. My understanding of architecture and design was rekindled after I decided not to waste my parents' money and the opportunities of study in the UK. The experience grew gradually on me and I spent the next six years studying architecture.

**Would you share some of your life story?**

There are two roles in my life that I enjoy more than others: being a father and an interior designer. I enjoy especially being a father to my daughter. I am uncomfortable talking about my role as an interior designer, especially at design-related events where designers gather to talk design. My goal is to talk less and do more. Bragging never makes anyone better, including me.

It is important to me that I maintain a balance between work, life and play. Many successful people regret in their old age that they put all their energy into their work and did not live a fulfilling life. I am often told that I should consider design to be my life. My response is that it is just dust to me. Clearly, I am exaggerating for emphasis in saying this.

In my free time, I love fishing. I forget completely about work when I am fishing out at sea.

**Is there a design value that you wish to propose?**

In recent years, I have seen many design works being overtaken by 'art'. I find this to be a problem. Interior design and art are closely related, but there must be a balance. Making art and designing are different in that the former is more individualised. For the former, you are 100% free to create whatever you like. The end product is sold when the artist encounters a buyer who knows exactly what they want and can pay the price. In the latter case, the designer assists their client to fulfil his or her wishes (not your own), or has to focus on improving their business. The designer has to co-ordinate various elements such as project budgets and schedules, market positioning and quality control. My experience is that I have seen too many overdesigned spaces that did not align with the client's market position and were too expensive in that the client would never recoup the cost. In order to be successful, I have to think of the client first and satisfy his or her needs, principally in terms of functionality. Visual impact has to be a secondary consideration. In my view, it is selfish of designers to design only to win competitions.

**Could you tell us something of the company's history?**

I founded Atelier E in 2009 as an atelier solution studio. The name makes it clear that it is Enoch's studio. The work 'atelier' also gives me flexibility. If the designer becomes tired of designing, he can become a baker. Atelier E can become a bakery.

When I established Atelier E, it was primarily to work on residential projects. In the following years, after attempting a Japanese-style skewer

shop, we delved into commercial work. I would like to thank retrospectively that first customer for his trust and the opportunity. By chance, I came to make projects outside Hong Kong, including in Japan, Finland, the United Kingdom, China, Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar.

**How have the past two years been for you?**

Globally, almost all industries have faced major challenges over the past few years. We are no different in that. The impact of business cuts was accompanied by difficulties in managing overseas projects. Fortunately, we could work remotely using video conferencing.

The more you lose, the more you gain. My daughter was born two years ago during the epidemic. She can be said to be now the biggest project in my life. During lockdown, I spent more time with my family. I also took better care of myself. I now understand how important it is to balance work and life.



NINETYs: a concept, a cafe, an attitude or an altitude.



Black iron and warm wooden planks form a graphic edging



The cafe stand roof is formed as if made of Mikado game bamboo sticks

With a serendipitous mix of effortless charm and thoughtful structure, this NINETYs cafe stand at AIA Central defines itself as a welcoming oasis of peace and tranquillity at the heart of Hong Kong's financial centre, right in the midst of all its hustle and bustle. It takes inspiration from the form and philosophy of the Mikado game. The Sufi poet Rumi once said that serendipity is the process of finding what you are seeking in life. The game of Mikado begins with bamboo sticks placed in a pile and participants take turns using physical skills and thought-provoking moves. As a strategic tool to carry the game forward, the random presence of each stick is used as a strategy - what has been both unconsciously and consciously planned will combine to add layers of intrigue and fun to the game. The same NINETYs cafe design provides convenient refuelling for office workers in a business - as-usual neighbourhood with delightful surprises and hand-drip coffee.

A unique cafe stand to complement a glass-clad elevator lobby of a skyscraper that is completed with NINETYs signature colour scheme and pendant light that spells out the client's brand name, AIA, made from bamboo sticks interlocked in a rhythmic interlocking form. Visitors can see the changing cityscape unobstructed from the cafe stand as there are no solid walls. As the cafe stand's table surface is made of dolomite just like the lobby floor, it blends perfectly into the environment, so the focus stays on it much like the rules of the game where the participant races to pick up as many bamboo sticks as possible without moving other bamboo sticks at each time. Despite any limitations, the overall effort is about elegant simplicity, which will speak volumes as time goes by: a minimalist cuboid with its edges accented with black iron and warm wooden planks, whose careful intersection skilfully brings to a high note with its ceiling and back wall that look like bamboo sticks sprinkled across them, paying homage to the Mikado game's very essence.

aia coffee kiosk



CURVES ARE SENSATIONS IN DESIGN



No Other Than Specialty Coffee. As the owner explains, "unlike the machine-prepared variety, handmade coffee is alive and distinctive". An U-shaped stainless steel lighting grid is suspended from the ceiling to make the walls appear alive. In spite of their disparate appearance, the textures create a coherent arrangement that is an embodiment of the art of coffee making; the flow of coffee dripping into a cup of coffee.

“ Curved forms are rightly associated with fluidity, dynamism and unhindered movement. Curve Affair is the name we gave to the seductive immersive spaces that enchanted us with endless curves. In fact, Curve Affair is a crush for everything, round, voluminous, and winding. ”



An extensive range of sustainable building materials is showcased in this design. A refined woven rattan technique was chosen for its traditional lineage and as an example of what can be achieved by combining traditional crafts with modern technology. Using rattan dyed in white and woven in a pattern not unlike a canvas, this humble material is capable of expressing someone's imagination and ideas.

Whereas Atelier E's projects are glamorous, the secret chair project shows the deep connection he has to his Hong Kong roots. His UK architectural training, creative visual flair and clear identity as a Hong Konger has given Enoch the best of platforms to work internationally. His award-winning projects testament to his vision and the team he has formed at Atelier E.

WORK, LIFE & PLAY BALANCE



A standout project is the recent commission for three holiday houses in the snow resort of Niseko Hokkaido, Japan. The three houses are positioned as if in conversation with each other. Timber clad with strong steel detailing, they have a sensibility that echoes a deep understanding of Japanese simplicity. For families who will holiday there, they are a delight.

Family life is now the centre of Enoch's life following the birth of his daughter during lockdown. This period of enforced restriction prompted Enoch to act on his desire for a better work/life balance. During lockdown, like so many others, he had to pivot into new ways of working. His daughter's birth was the magic that wrought real change. Designing domestic spaces where baking bread - a love of his - and family life are centre stage is now

his driving force. Atelier E is sure to continue to make full-on glamorous commercial designs, but home is where the heart is.

Enoch lives by John Lennon's 'You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.' The dreamer has dreamed and the dream will surely play out as a symphony of family life for the architect and his many happy clients.



ATELIER E

Architecture and interior design are the specialties of Atelier E Limited. An orchestral procession of sequential and intertwined spaces carefully arranged to create a delightful journey of discovery. Atelier E's motto - Life is full of joy - reflects this approach.

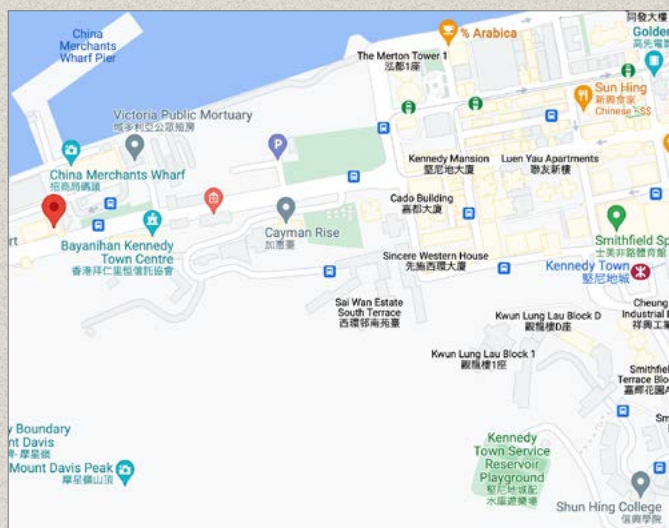
Address: 12/F, Yiuga factory building, 62 Victoria road, Kennedy town, Hong Kong.

Phone: (852) 2866 3889

Fax: (852) 2866 3890

Email: [info@ateliere.com.hk](mailto:info@ateliere.com.hk)

<https://www.ateliere.com.hk>



Photos courtesy of Atelier E (Hong Kong)

#ISSUE 05

#ISSN 2817-1276

Managing Director: Peggy Lui

Editor and copywriter: Lianne Hackett and Mr. Nigel

Art Direction: Peggy Lui

Design by: Dasom Park

Printed in Japan/ Canada

One Story by Merci Media Corporation is a Trademark publication.

Trademark file number 222129.

It all begins with one story - One Brand One Solution One Story.