



Video

THE ART OF SPACE

In the vibrant world of architecture and interior of Alexander Wong, every detail colours the bigger picture



ALEXANDER WONG | ARCHIPHANTASY



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he creator of Alexander Wong Architects shares his vision for designing culturally rich spaces

Alexander Wong steps into the Champagne Bar at the Grand Hyatt, exuding an aura of artistic precision. He is dressed meticulously in a sharp suit, a carefully chosen tie, and accessories that tell a story of a confident personality. His bleached blond coiffure, a signature of his bold style, catches the light as he laughs, confessing: “Today, I’m extra particular.” Referring to his appearance ahead of our shoot, he continues: “It’s all about branding – presentation is an art, after all.”

A love for art and colour lies at the core of one of Hong Kong’s most visible architects and interior designers. For Wong, the process of designing isn’t merely about constructing buildings; it’s about creating living, breathing artworks that evoke emotion, challenge boundaries and reflect a multicultural mosaic. “Everything you can imagine is real,” he shares, echoing Picasso to emphasise how imagination fuels his work.

Asked about his upbringing, Wong trains a light into his soul. “Where does one begin – self-awareness or the dawning realisation of existence?” he ruminates. “Childhood is too vast to summarise, but my earliest passions were rooted in the visual arts, particularly in drawing and painting.” He recounts being nurtured by culturally rich parents and studying privately under Luis Chan, the renowned Chinese surrealist painter. Later, he was mentored by Lee Kwok Hon, a Paris-trained Hong Kong artist. “I was utterly absorbed in art,” he says. “My idols spanned Picasso, Michelangelo, Wyeth, Degas, Bacon and Hockney. London’s museums became my second home.”

Childhood in Chromatic Light

Wong’s early immersion in art shaped his perception of space and form. “Art taught me how to see – not just look,” he explains. These lessons became the foundation for his future dreams, where space wasn’t just a vessel or an enclosure but a narrative, an emotion waiting to be unlocked. Standing before architectural masterpieces like the Le Corbusier-designed chapel in Ronchamp or Carlo Scarpa’s Brion tomb weren’t just aesthetic moments for him, but revelations that space could evoke existential truths, emotions and

even transcendence. “Art rewired how I experience architecture – space became a meaningful narrative, not just a structure,” he reflects.

As a youth, his curiosity was insatiable and a fascination with combining art, science and technology naturally drew him toward architecture. “It’s a discipline that synthesises everything I love,” he says. His time as a post-graduate student at Princeton University was pivotal, though “the city beyond the campus, especially Manhattan, taught me more about design than any classroom. Museums, galleries, the streets – they are living architectural laboratories.”

These experiences laid the foundation for his approach: architecture as a vessel for storytelling, emotion and cultural dialogue. “Architecture isn’t just a profession; it’s a way to communicate the human condition,” he asserts. “Design is a story told through space.”

Range of Growth

Founded in 2001, Alexander Wong Architects faced its share of storms – economic volatility, global crises, and pandemics. “The journey began with a leap of faith during the dot-com bubble. We navigated through SARS, natural disasters and personal trials,” he recalls, adding with a chuckle: “I remember repairing office PCs on the floor – humbling but formative.”

“Every setback was a lesson in adaptation.” His secret? “Resilience is like painting when there are holes on the canvas, but you just keep going. Survival is the beginning; evolving to become stronger and better is the real goal,” he states.

Over the years, his firm transitioned into a multi-award-winning, multi-disciplinary powerhouse. His “GSCC” framework – Growth, Strength, Competition, Cost-Benefit Ratio Over Time – guides the team’s colourful evolution. “We look beyond mere expansion,” he says. “Diversity and excellence in design, innovation and inclusivity in approach – these are our true objectives.” His re-interpretation of DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) becomes Diversity in design, exceeding users’ Expectations with a relentless pursuit

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for Innovation, creating spaces that are vibrant, meaningful and culturally rich. “We also try to blend diverse professional disciplines like a painter mixing different colours or even in different mediums – each stroke contributing to the greater whole.”

Crafting a Cohesive Spectrum

Wong’s approach to integrating architecture, interior design, urban planning, branding and property development is like composing a symphony, with each section appearing distinct yet harmonious. “We don’t force cohesion; we allow each element to find its own natural voice. The key is organic dialogue, driven by the project’s unique narrative,” he affirms. This flexible methodology lets each discipline shine; sometimes architecture takes the lead, other times branding or interior design. “It’s about respecting each colour and letting them blend naturally.”

Where do his ideas come from? “Narrative is the core. A project begins with a story rooted in its context.” As prime examples of a visual story told through space, he cites Bamboo Futura in Chengdu, influenced by pandas and bamboo forests, and Carmen Futura in Langham Place, Mong Kok, a cinema project inspired by Wong Kar-wai’s sensuality, which earned him International Property Awards in architecture and interior design, respectively.

He channels inspirations from nature, technology, history and even dance – Argentine tango or Russian ballet – each adding a unique hue to his creative palette. “We infuse tradition with innovation,” he says.

Colours of a Global Palette

Designing across cultures, Wong seeks to create environments that resonate universally yet celebrate local uniqueness. “It’s not about ‘East meets West,’” he explains. “It’s about dialogue, creating spaces that speak a universal language while honouring their roots.”

His Cinema Exotica interiors for a Shanghai shopping centre, for instance, balance Middle Eastern and Eastern influences, fostering cultural exchange rather than superficial blending. “Multiculturalism adds depth and richness, like layering different shades for

complexity,” he notes.

Winning more than 90 international design awards is a testimony to his vibrant vision. “Recognition fuels our passion,” he admits. “But what truly matters is how our designs impact lives, creating spaces that inspire, comfort and elevate the spirit of the everyday users.”

Projects like Carmen Futura, WM Hotel in Sai Kung, and his ‘Ice & Fire’ interiors for Vivace restaurant and ‘Spiral Sky’ Banquet Hall at the airport’s Regala Skycity Hotel are masterful strokes on a global canvas. The rare achievement of winning the “World’s Best Interior Design” accolade four times at the International Property Awards cements his firm’s luminous reputation. “Winning awards is just the icing on the cake --- the honour is knowing that our design is able to touch the lives of our end users in some real meaningful ways,” he reflects.

Art of Branding

His standout hair and snazzy suits aren’t just fashion statements; they are part of his branding. “It’s about the power of presentation,” he says. “Imagination is everything, but how you present that imagination is equally important.” He advises young architects to develop their own voice, stay curious and build networks because “who you know is as important as what you design.”

So what’s next for Alexander Wong Architects? “A big project on a different continent, perhaps,” he hints. The design visionary sees the future as a kaleidoscope of AI, cultural renaissance and hyper-specialisation, with each facet adding a new hue to explore. Success is about creating a lasting impact, yet he remains humble. “In a million years, no one will remember who built what,” he muses. “But the lessons we learn, the stories we tell – those are the true colours of our legacy.”

As our shoot wraps up, Wong swiftly changes into his casual attire. “Business as usual,” he says as he heads back to his office, where the art of architecture continues. His bleached tresses catch the light one last time, a symbol of boldness, creativity and the endless spectrum of human imagination. ■

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