



ALEX CHOI DESIGN & PARTNERS LTD.

Distinct Sophistication

Many of Hong Kong's premier retail and lifestyle spaces carry the signature ALEX CHOI touch.

The city most have come to know is a product of design. All seen is a confluence of vision by business, government, and human need.

These however, only exert in vague terms and broad strokes. It takes certain discipline and genius to perceive and make the finer details materialize.

Alex Choi Design & Partners has done so, many times, and is responsible for much of Hong Kong's iconic look, to which many have grown accustomed.

Turning Point

Alex Choi entered the workforce at a pivotal moment in the region's recent history. "After the thriving industrial period, Hong Kong began to change its economic activities. Many factories had transitioned from OEM to ODM, creating their own designs and brands," says Choi. "Opportunities came with good timing and good relationships; I had quite a few potential clients, gained from doing freelance jobs during college. My business started mainly in drafting stylish shops for fashion designers."

Among his most prestigious early projects is his participation in the development of Hong Kong International Airport, which earned him enough favorable reputation, at a timely career juncture. "I had to choose between following my current employer Foster Asia to London and staying in Hong Kong. I decided to start my own business in my hometown."

Business to Business

Alex Choi Design & Partners provides services for shops, offices, food & beverage establishments, movie theatres, and the like. The clients include 3 Mobile, Broadway Cinema, Fortress, Hang Seng Bank and IFC. The visual characteristics of Hong Kong span



natural landscape, Chinese heritage, and modern, fusion commercial spaces such as those the design firm has built.

"Tertiary sector industries including retail make up the main economic activity in Hong Kong, and a higher tier design is needed with intense competition. To stand out in the market, shop design is essential to a brand's image, especially for those with chain stores, as consistency is one of the key points. We focus on retail shop design and specialize in rebranding," says Choi.

Working in retail often means being able to implement across multiple branches and locations, and the firm has gotten exceedingly good at the job. "The concept of the modular chain store is very useful – even suitable to apply with cinemas. We can provide the fitting out guideline or visual identity manual for clients' in-house design teams to roll out in different branches. It is very important when there are hundreds to over a thousand shops in Mainland China run by franchisees. The guideline guarantees consistency."

The firm goes beyond sheer design work. "We give our clients ideas about market trends, and tailor-make designs to go perfectly with their image. You cannot fulfill clients' requirements without analyzing the market. Years before, we had already foreseen the trend of concept stores with differentiated elements to meet different landlords' demands while retaining the balance of a brand's core characters. We use 4Ps – people, place, product, price – as principle. More than design, there is strategy."

Future Ventures

Alex Choi Design & Partners has recently taken on hospitality clients. A number of clubhouse projects are in the works. While very selective, anything new, inspirational and challenging is likely to kindle Choi's interest, leading to exciting products.

Like many Hong Kong companies, the firm is subject to the city's talent crunch, and quality manpower is scarce. Though it could take a while to bear fruit, Choi seeks to participate in designing an institution for Hong Kong's youth.

Meanwhile, business goes on. "Although the market is large, we face competition worldwide. We emphasize ourselves as a Hong Kong design company with unique Chinese-Western culture which can be found in neither China nor the West. This is our characteristic advantage."

In the race to determine the coming shape of the city, as well as many districts beyond its shores, Alex Choi Design & Partners bequeaths its unique stamp and style that never fades. ■

For additional information please visit www.alexchoi.com.hk