

From Lego bricks to designing luxury flats in New York

从乐高积木到设计纽约奢华公寓

By Golda Arthur

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撰文：Golda Arthur

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The Singapore-based 53-year-old uses an app on his mobile phone to keep a close eye on his various projects around the world, such as a new luxury apartment building in New York.

"When I'm in Singapore there's a 12-hour time difference [with New York], so before I go to bed at night, I check on it through this app," says Mr Chan. The app connects to video cameras, which give him a real time view of construction work.

He adds: "I can even zoom in and look closely at the welding."

这位53岁的新加坡建筑师通过一款手机APP来紧密关注自己在全球各地的项目，比如一栋在建的纽约豪华公寓楼。

“新加坡和纽约有12个小时的时差，所以我在睡觉之前，会通过APP来查看项目进程。”Chan先生说。这款APP与摄像机相连，可以让他看到施工现场的实时情况。

他补充道：“我甚至可以将镜头拉近，仔细检查焊接工作。”

The founder and design director of Singapore-based SCDA Architects, Mr Chan has over the past 20 years built up a business that today employs more than 100 architects and designers.

Its past projects around the world range from luxury hotel resorts in Bali and the Caribbean, the National Design Centre in Singapore, a shopping centre in Beijing, a government building in New Delhi, to private houses from France to Malaysia.

It is quite an achievement for an architect who built the company without the need for outside investors, after starting out with just five members of staff.

作为SCDA建筑设计事务所的创始人和设计总监，Chan先生在过去的20年中不断将公司发展壮大，现在已经拥有100多名建筑师和设计师。

事务所完成的项目包括巴厘岛和加勒比海上的豪华酒店度假村、新加坡国家设计中心、北京的一家购物中心、新德里政府大楼、以及法国和马来西亚等地的私人宅邸。

一位建筑师在没有外部投资的情况下，将起初只有五位员工的事务所做到现在的规模，着实是项伟大的成就。

‘Neo-tropical architecture’

“新热带风建筑”

Born in Penang, Malaysia, before being raised in Singapore, Mr Chan says his first work as an architect was building things with Lego bricks as a small child.

He also remembers from his young childhood that he was fascinated by watching his family’s new home being constructed.

Yet despite this early interest in architecture, his family had other hopes for him. “In Asia there are three professions - lawyer, doctor and accountant,” says Mr Chan.

Chan先生出生于马来西亚槟城，在新加坡长大。他说自己作为建筑师的第一件作品是小时候用乐高积木搭建而成的。

他也还记得，儿时曾痴迷于观看自己的新家如何拔地而起。

尽管早早就对建筑产生兴趣，但父母对他寄予了其他的希望。“在亚洲有三种职业：律师、医生和会计。”Chan先生说道。

But determined to study architecture after leaving school, he travelled to the US where he did a degree in the subject at the prestigious Yale University in Connecticut.

Mr Chan subsequently spent two years in New York, working for architectural firm Kohn Pederson Fox. The lure of home then saw him return to Singapore, where in 1995 he started SCDA Architects.

Mixing both Asian and Western design, Mr Chan has developed his own style, which he calls “neo-tropical architecture”, and which often aims to blur the lines between the inside and outside of a building, often utilising - in very simple terms - lots of courtyards.

但是，从学校毕业后，他下定决心要学习建筑。于是他远渡重洋，来到美国康涅狄格州著名的耶鲁大学攻读这门学科。

之后，他在纽约待了两年，就职于KPF建筑事务所。但思乡之情最终把他带回了新加坡，随即他便于1995年成立了SCDA建筑设计事务所。

Chan先生将中西设计结合，衍生出自己的“新热带建筑”设计风格,其特点是力求模糊建筑内外的界限，比如经常使用庭院这一设计元素。

Mr Chan says that the practice has grown slowly but steadily over the years.

While most staff are based at the headquarters in Singapore, some are located in Shanghai and New York.

And despite his reputation for attention to detail, and regular visits to the other two offices, Mr Chan says he knows the importance of delegating.

“I focus on the bigger picture, and then come in and look selectively at the small, important details. I then find that the middle bit takes care of itself,” he says.

He adds that he relies on key employees to handle the day-to-day functioning of the company, confident that everyone at the firm speaks “the same design language”.

“We share the same thinking about how you design and use space.”

Chan先生说他的事务所在过去这些年里，一直在平稳发展。

事务所的大部分员工在新加坡总部，一小部分在上海和纽约。

尽管他以注重细节而闻名，并经常去另外两处办公室，但是Chan先生说清楚放权的重要性。

“我会把握大方向，然后有选择地检查一些重要的细节。这样，中间环节会自然理清。”他说。

他还补充道，自己依靠关键员工来维持公司的日常运转，他相信事务所里的每一位员工都使用着“同一种设计语言”。

“我们关于如何设计和运用空间的理念是相同的。”

'Big moment'

“重要时刻”

Married, and with no less than six sons, Mr Chan's latest big development at work is the Soori High Line apartment building, which is currently being built in Manhattan, New York.

He says it is a "big moment" for him, as it will be the first building he has built in the city where he began his working life as an architect.

The luxury scheme has raised eyebrows in the Big Apple because 16 of the building's 31 apartments will have their own private, indoor swimming pools, something of a rarity in the city.

Chan先生已婚并育有六个儿子。他最新的大型在建项目是位于纽约曼哈顿的Soori High Line公寓楼。

他说这对于他来说是一个“重要时刻”，因为这栋楼将成为他在这个城市的第一个建筑，而纽约是他开始建筑师生涯的地方。

公寓的奢华程度让“大苹果城(Big Apple, 即纽约)”的人们大为吃惊，因为31间公寓中将有16间自带私人室内泳池，这在纽约极为罕见。

"The pools are definitely the highlight," says Mr Chan, who has already built apartment blocks in East Asia with private pools.

"It certainly evokes a reaction, you either like it, or you think it's a bit crazy. People think - it's a pool. Do I swim every day? How do I maintain it?"

"But true luxury means never having to worry about all these practicalities.

"The risk is not in the making of it, but in culturally getting everyone - even my own salespeople and consultants - on board."

The building is due to be finished in 2016, and Mr Chan is confident it will be a sell-out. The prices of the apartments range from \$3m (£2m) to \$22m.

“泳池是绝对的亮点，”已在东亚建造了多个带有私人泳池公寓楼的Chan先生说道。

“它的确激起了一些反响，有的人爱它，还有的觉得这太过疯狂。他们会想：‘这是个泳池。我应该每天都下去游一圈吗？要如何维护它呢？’

“但是真正的奢华就意味着永远不需要去考虑这些实际问题。

“风险并不在于工程本身，而是让身边来自不同文化的每个人——包括我自己的销

售人员和顾问，从内心深处接受它。”

这个公寓楼预计于2016年完工，Chan先生非常自信地认为它会一售而空。每间公寓的价格在300万美元（200万英镑）至2200万美元之间。

For an architect well known for his attention to detail, smart phones are a godsend for Soo Chan.

对于一位以专注细节而闻名的建筑师来说，智能手机简直是天赐之物。

In Asia there are three professions - lawyer, doctor and accountant

Soo Chan

“在亚洲有三种职业：律师、医生和会计” —— Soo Chan

SCDA's buildings often feature courtyards

SCDA 的建筑经常含有庭院元素

His latest project is a luxury apartment building in New York with private swimming pools

他的最新项目是纽约一栋拥有私人泳池的公寓楼

SCDA now employs more than 100 architects and designers

SCDA现在拥有100多名建筑师和设计师