

Beyond Face Value

超越外表

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There's more than meets the eye when it comes to the sleek and sophisticated world of Chan Soo Khian.

在Chan Soo Khian光鲜而复杂的世界里，眼前看到的永远不是故事的全部。

The architecture of Chan Soo Khian could very well be used as a metaphor for the man – polished, sophisticated, exacting. That his works are as refined as they are is no happy accident. The founder and design principal of SCDA Architects has spent the past 17 years perfecting his brand of architecture. Yes, it is a brand in its own right.

“Architects don't really like to talk about it, but they do it. Every architect and their work is a brand,” Chan says pointedly. “It simply means that you're very consistent in your belief and you have stayed consistent for a while, until people can associate you with a certain aspect of your design.”

Indeed, Chan is nothing if not consistent. The firm's projects have hardly ever veered from being clear compositions of slim lines and slender profiles, regardless of scale. From single-dwelling homes to the sleek high-rise apartments and luxury resorts that premium developers seek him out for, Chan's penchant for modernist design is evident. But consistency on Chan's part goes beyond form and stylistic learnings.

Chan Soo Khian 先生的建筑设计完全可以用来形容他的人——光鲜、复杂、严谨。他的作品能够如此精致并不是一个巧合。作为 SCDA 建筑设计事务所的创始人和设计总监，他花了 17 年的时间不断完善自己的建筑设计品牌。没错，它是一个独立品牌。

“建筑师不太喜欢谈论这个问题，但是他们确实在这样实践着。每一位建筑师和他们的作品都是一个品牌，” Chan 尖锐地指出。“它其实意味着，设计师在相当一

段时间里一直非常忠于自己的设计理念，使得人们可以将作品的某些特征与设计师关联起来。”

确实，Chan 始终如一。他事务所的项目，从未偏离纤细线条和修长轮廓这样的清晰构图。从独栋房屋，到高端地产开发商指名让他设计的时尚高层住宅和豪华度假酒店，Chan 对现代主义设计的偏好显而易见。但是他对连贯性的追求，超越了对形式和体裁的固有认知。

“I don't want to talk about whether it's a screen box or a wall, because that's not the primary interest,” Chan says. What he is interested in talking about is the unlikely intersection between classicism and modernity that SCDA's works falls on.

“Spatially, [I come] from a classical point of view, it's humanist. But in terms of language, it's modern,” Chan gives a succinct summary of his design ethos.

One may not guess it at first glance, but his design roots are classical in nature and they owe themselves to his foundational days studying architecture in the liberal halls of Washington University and Yale University. Post-modernity was all the rage, and consequently historicism came into play with various schools of thought being proposed. “Within the school, you had to think about which camp you belonged to – the classicists, Art Nouveau, and so on,” he recalls. “But there was so much going on, so much dialogue that there was actually a bit of confusion.”

“我不想去讨论某个设计是一个屏幕盒还是一面墙，因为这不是我的主要关注点，” Chan 说道。他感兴趣的是如何实现古典主义和现代风格那看似不太可能的交汇，这也正是 SCDA 建筑设计事务所在探究的。

“空间上，（我）从古典主义角度出发，更具人文关怀，但是在设计语言的层面，我会选择现代的方式，” Chan 简明地总结了设计理念。

可能第一眼不易察觉，但是 Chan 的设计本质上扎根于古典派，这其实源自他在华盛顿大学和耶鲁大学的自由派讲堂里学习建筑时打下的基础。后现代主义当时普遍流行，各种不同的历史主义思潮也随之涌现。“在学校，大家需要思考自己属于哪一个阵营——古典派、新艺术派等等，”他回忆道。“但是当时有太多学派、太多对话，以致于有一些混淆。”

A very enlightened 22-year-old Chan chose to cut through all the noise and dove headlong into the fundamentals of Western architecture – that is classical architecture, “the least popular camp”.

He admits that he never really enjoyed classical studios in school, and while he did do stints in the office of staunch classicist Allan Greenberg, Chan never did

take to the orthodoxy of classicism. Rather, he counts great modernist architects like Mies van Der Rohe and Louis Kahn among his design heroes, many of whom were also exposed to classical architecture.

22 岁的 Chan 已经颇有天赋，他选择避开这些噪音，直接潜入西方建筑的根基——古典建筑，即“最不受欢迎的阵营”。

他承认他在上学时从没真正喜欢过古典主义的课程。尽管他确实在坚定的古典主义者 Allan Greenberg 的工作室里做过一些工作，Chan 从来没有真正热爱过正統的古典主义。他的设计英雄反而更多是现代主义建筑大师，比如 Mies van Der Rohe 和 Louis Kahn，他们当中很多人也都接触过古典主义建筑。

“I was only interested in the organizational principles and in the humanist tradition of classical architecture,” he says, making a clear distinction. Scale, feeling of space, courtyards, urban design, figure-ground relationships – these were the things that Chan took away from his brush with classicism, and up till today, they still come through in his designs.

“I don’t talk about it a whole lot,” he muses. He probably doesn’t consciously think about it a whole lot either. But it’s there nonetheless – embedded in his mind, made second nature by now. He tries to articulate it, “When I say humanist, it means the tendency to figuratively complete a space, either by landscape, by walls or by organization of space. It means that if I draw a room, it may be missing a wall or a corner, but by placing a planter or a sculpture, you can still find a sense of the centre. That’s why you feel comfortable.”

“我仅对古典建筑中的组织性原则和人文主义传统有兴趣，”他对此很明确。比例、空间感、庭院、城市设计和图底关系——这些都是 Chan 从与古典主义短暂的接触中获得的知识，直至今日，它们还是会从 Chan 的设计中渗透出来。

“我不太谈论这个，”他沉思后说道。可能，Chan 也没有经常有意识地思考这个问题。但是它们还是嵌在他的头脑中，变成了他的第二天性。他试图去解释，“我说的人文关怀，是指通过景观、墙体或对空间的组织，象征性地将空间变得完整。比如，如果我画一个房间，它可能缺少一面墙或一个角落，但通过摆放一只花盆或雕塑，房间中心就会被体现出来，这就是舒适感的来源。”

After 10 years in the States, which included a stint at Kohn Pederson Fox in New York, the Penang-born Chan came to Singapore to work, starting out at Architects 61 doing mostly speculative design work before setting up his own firm in 1995.

“I think I was one of those that was not a direct lineage of either Kerry Hill, William Lim and so on,” Chan says, all also within the Ivy League of Singapore architecture, had crossed paths with these architecture pioneers who were

interested in matters of modern tropical architecture and critical regionalism. “I was always kind of on the fringe.”

His education in Southeast Asian vernacular architecture was an organic one, informed by travels in Asia, in particular Bali. There, he was inspired by the nature of outdoor rooms, buildings with no walls, pavilions and “most importantly”, the integration of landscape into architecture.

Chan 在美国生活了十年，还曾在纽约 KPF 工作了一段时间。之后，生于槟城的他来到新加坡工作，起初就职于 Architects 61，做了很多理论设计工作，直到 1995 年创建了自己的事务所。

“我和 Kerry Hill 或者 William Lim 等人没有太多的联系，” Chan 说。这些建筑行业先锋对热带建筑和批判性地域主义颇有兴趣，很多新加坡建筑界的常青藤校友们都与他们有过交集。“我一直都在比较边缘的位置。”

他对东南亚民间建筑的了解具有系统性，是通过游历亚洲积攒起来的。尤其在巴厘岛，室外的房间、无墙的建筑、亭院，以及“最重要的”——景观与建筑的融合等建筑本质都深深启发了他。

By now, Chan had begun a very calculated mash-up of classical values, modernist design language and vernacular sensitivity. It created a unique thesis that he fleshed out in houses like East Coast House. In turn, these houses became testbeds for ideas that would later be implemented on a larger scale in housing projects like Lincoln Modern (“It’s a structurally derived building, talking about planes and interlocking elements”) and The Ladyhill (“It was about courtyards and bringing light into a high-rise building”).

With a staff of 80, Chan wishes that he had more time around his hectic schedule to have a dialogue with his staff about what he believes in as an architect. “That is the most important job of the design principal. It’s to always reiterate what is the fundamental thesis of the studio,” he says.

现如今，Chan 已经开始将古典主义理论、现代设计语言和民间建筑的感性进行精妙混合。这个独特的命题从他设计的 East Coast House 等住宅项目中展现。这些房屋随之变成了新想法的测试平台，并最终被实施于更大规模的住宅项目中，比如 Lincoln Modern 公寓项目（“从层次和互联元素的角度来看，它是一个结构衍生建筑”）和 The Ladyhill 公寓项目（“将庭院和光引进高层建筑是关键”）。

Chan 现在拥有 80 名员工，他希望可以 from 繁忙的日程中抽出更多时间来和员工讨论他的建筑信仰。“不断重述事务所的基本设计理念，是设计总监最重要的工作。”他说。

Too often, assumptions (by those within and without the studio) are made about SCDA's works and its principal based on formal readings. It would be easy to presume that Chan might be one to get caught up with issues of architectural identity and the preservation of a Southeast Asian architecture language given the track record of vernacular influences on his work. But he's not.

"I have no baggage," he quips. "I was not born here, I spent a lot of time in the States and I still spend a large proportion of my time in New York. So from that perspective, I do not understand this big paranoia of loss of identity. You keep talking about your kampung days, using very localised references. But Singapore is not local. It's so wide open."

太多对事务所的作品和设计理念的假设，都是（事务所内外的人）基于阅读了 SCDA 发布的相关资料而作出的。考虑到民间建筑历年来对 Chan 作品的影响，我们猜测他会被身份认同和东南亚建筑保存等问题纠缠。但是他没有。

“我没有包袱，”他打趣地说道。“我没在这里出生，又在美国待了很长时间，现在仍然花大量时间在纽约。所以从这个角度来说，我并不理解这种对身份认同的强烈担忧。我们可以引用很地方化的参考，去怀念村落里曾经的时光，但是新加坡不是地方性的，它是非常开放的。”

Chan makes a clear distinction between identity and preservation of heritage ("That, you have to do"). What he doesn't subscribe to is nostalgia towards vernacular architecture. "How do you create Singapore architecture? I don't think it's a caricature or iconography of what is Singaporean or what is Malaysian," he says. "But it will come. Some critic will come and realize that there's this group of 'neo-tropical' architects doing something, and I think it's already happened."

He admits to doing what is "politically correct" in many of his earlier housing projects – exploring vernacular architecture and expressing them in ways that were accepted norms (timber screens, louvres and such). Today, however, his projects tend towards more pure forms. Recent projects like Grange Road House 1 bear a sense of monumentality, which harks back to his fascination with buildings like the Pantheon.

Chan 对身份认同和遗产保护做出了十分明确的区分（“遗产保护是必须要做的”）。他并不特别怀念乡土建筑。“如何建造属于新加坡的建筑？它不该只是把新加坡或者马来西亚简单地画成一幅画，”他说。“但是评论家终将会了解到，其实建筑界还有这样一群‘新热带风’建筑师们。我认为他们已经开始了解了。”

他承认自己在很多早年的项目中有做一些所谓“政治正确”的设计——研究探索民间建筑，再通过社会接受的形式（木质的屏风、百叶窗设计等）把成果表达出来。然而今天，他的项目则趋向于更纯粹的形式。近期的项目，比如 Grange Road

House 1（住宅），就有一种强烈的纪念性，让人联想到 Chan 钟爱的罗马万神殿这类建筑。

“When I look at my earlier projects, I think, ‘Wow, it’s nice, but it looks a bit overwrought,’” Chan points out projects in his monograph, “I look at something like this and, it’s a sampler! You’ve got a stone wall, you’ve got a concrete wall, you’ve got screens...it hands together, but there’s a sense that you have so many ideas that you’re trying to bring together.”

“So when you’re a bit more mature, you say, ‘Ah, I’m just going to go with one idea and push it a bit more,’ and not worry about what your critics will say.”

“当回顾早年的项目时，我会觉得，‘哇，还不错，但是看起来有些雕琢过度，’” Chan 指着 he 专著中的一些作品说，“我现在看这个项目，就觉得它是一个样板房！这儿有一面石墙，那儿又有一面混凝土墙，再加上屏风.....它们倒是都可以组合起来，但是会让人觉得糅合了太多的想法。

“变得更加成熟之后，想法就会变成：‘我要采用一个设计思路，并把它坚持到底，’而后不去考虑评论家们的观点。”

Today, SCDA keeps to its core focus of designing, luxury resorts and apartments, of which TwentyOne Angullia Park and OneKL, which recently won a RIBA International Award 2012 for its clever cross-ventilating structure, are two such examples.

However, the firm is also taking the time to delve into other project types such as the 9@Tagore factory building and Dhoby Ghaut Green, a public space intervention, both of which were shortlisted for the World Architecture Festival. Most interesting is the firm’s undertaking of HDB flats at Dawson Estate, where its design proposes a solution for multi-generational living through the interlocking and connecting of studio apartments and three-room apartments.

今天，SCDA 坚持做着自己的核心设计——豪华度假酒店和公寓，比如 21 Angullia Park 公寓和 One KL，其中 One KL 以智精妙绝伦的交错通风结构，为事务所摘得了 2012 年英国皇家建筑师学会国际奖。

然而，事务所也在花时间研究涉猎其他项目类型，比如 9@Tagore 工厂和 “Dhoby Ghaut Green” 公共空间项目，两者均入围世界建筑大会。最有趣的应属道森项目（Dawson Estate），它是新加坡建屋管理局开发的公寓项目，通过设计交错相扣并相连的单间公寓和三卧公寓，让数代同堂共同生活成为可能。

Overseas, projects like a private columbarium in France and the Singapore High Commission in New Delhi have allowed the firm to explore new ideas like symbolism and iconography respectively.

Still, it is luxury resort Alila Villas Soori that Chan has been most excited about in recent years. Being both developer and architect, Chan wholeheartedly played to his interest not just in architecture, but also landscape design, product design and hospitality. It led to the genesis of Soori Living, a furniture retail arm and Bistro Soori, an intimate eatery just a few units away from SCDA's office on Teck Lim Road in Chinatown.

在海外的项目，如法国的私人骨灰龛场和位于新德里的新加坡高级委员会让事务所有机会去分别探索象征主义和建筑图解。

不过近年来，令 Chan 最为兴奋的还是阿丽拉苏里别墅这样的豪华度假酒店。作为建筑师兼开发商，Chan 在将自己的兴趣投入于建筑的同时，还涉猎景观设计、产品设计和酒店业。这推动了家具零售品牌 Soori Living 的诞生，以及一间温馨的餐厅 Bistro Soori，它离 SCDA 在新加坡中国城德霖路（Teck Lim Road）上的办公室只有几步路的距离。

Most importantly, however, it gave Chan the courage and know-how to launch Soori High Line New York, a luxury hospitality and residential development in Manhattan along the famed train-track-turned-public-park High Line.

“It's not like I want to be a developer in a big way, but I wanted to build in Manhattan and since it's so hard to break into the market, I thought, 'Why not we generate our own project?'" Chan explains. It's taken him five years to get to this point where the project is just starting and is due for completion in three years' time.

但最重要的是，这些经历给了 Chan 勇气和经验，促使他在纽约投资建造 Soori High Line。这个豪华度假公寓项目位于曼哈顿著名的由旧铁轨变身成公园的高线（High Line）附近。

“我并没有想刻意去成为一名开发商，而就是想在曼哈顿做项目。但是这个市场实在太难打入，于是我就想，‘为什么不自己开发项目呢？’” Chan 解释道。这个项目花了五年的时间准备，现在终于正式起步，预计三年后完工。

Chan readily confesses that Soori High Line New York is a personal indulgence for him. But it also allows him to test out his own ideas about architecture. “We're testing our spatial paradigm on a totally different place, climate, culture, but believing in the thesis that people [around the world] are not that different. This is an argument for universality. It's the opposite of the argument for cultural identity,” he shares.

Soori High Line New York's significance also has something to do with how Chan views the role of the architect. For him, beyond composing floors and walls, the architect should be composing experiences, including the softer, lifestyle aspects

of living. “If you look at some of the turn of the century architects, the Viennese Secession architects, they used to design more than just buildings,” he points out.

Chan 爽快地坦白说，纽约 Soori High Line 于他来说是一种个人放纵。但是项目也让他有机会实践自己对建筑的想法。“我们在一个完全不同的地点、气候和文化中测试我们的空间模型，但我们同时相信（全世界的）人们并没有多么不同。这是对普适性的一项探讨，与文化认同这个议题相对，”他分享道。

纽约 Soori High Line 之所以非常重要，还在于它体现了 Chan 对建筑师这一角色的看法。对他来说，建筑师除了构造地面和墙壁之外，还应该创造各种体验，包括软性层面和生活方式方面的。“如果我们回顾世纪之交的建筑师，维也纳分离派建筑师，他们曾经就不仅仅设计建筑，”他指出。

“Architects those days were controlling everything. That’s the only way, going forward. You have to be multi-disciplinary. Today, the architect’s role has been diminished to that of a coordinator. We have to claim back the ground.”

It’s the reason why he is still so heavily involved in the creative running of his studio. While principals of studios his size might allow for a bit more personal expression among staff, Chan is careful to watch over the direction of the firm.

“过去的建筑师会管控一切，这是今后发展的唯一趋势。你需要能够跨专业。今天，建筑师的角色仅限于一个协调者，我们需要把失掉的阵地夺回来。”

这就是为什么他至今仍然积极参与事务所的创意工作。其它同等规模事务所的总监可能会让他的设计师多发挥一些个人的表达，Chan 则十分小心地监督着事务所的发展方向。

“I think more than ever, I’m imposing the creative aspects because as the firm grows larger, the design culture of the firm needs to be reinforced even more,” he says, adding that he works a lot with junior staff, even on mundane issues like where to drop the ceiling for the air-conditioning, or how to hide a structure. It all points back to his belief that the firm’s works are a direct representation of himself as an architect, and he makes no bones about it.

Chan is many things: an artful marketer, an astute businessman, a persistent teacher, an idealistic developer. But above and beyond all this, he is an architect of the most determined kind with glorious ambitions that few dare to dream of.

“我现在比任何时候都更注重对创意方面的严加把持；随着事务所的壮大，设计文化比以往更需要加强，”他说道，还表示自己会和很多年轻员工一起工作，就算是处理很平常的问题，比如天花板应该多高较为合适空调摆放，或者如何隐藏一个结

构。这些全都归因于他的信仰——事务所的作品是对建筑师的直接体现，他对这一点直言不讳。

Chan 有很多头衔：一位懂得营销艺术的营销家、一位精明的商人、一位执着的老师、一个具有理想主义的开发商。但他最终还是一位有着常人难以想象的辉煌野心和坚毅决心的建筑师。

PRINCIPAL OF DESIGN: Chan Soo Khian now leads a team of about 80 staff

设计总监：Chan Soo Khian 先生现在带领着一个 80 人的团队

COLLAGE WORK: SCDA's earlier works like Coronation Road West House (1998) often juxtaposed materials

拼图：SCDA 早期的设计经常将不同的材料并列组合，比如 Coronation Road West House 住宅（1998）

GUIDING HAND: SCDA's design principal says that he still enjoys working and guiding junior staff

指导：SCDA 的设计总监称他十分享受与年轻员工一起工作，并给予他们指导

DESIGN LANGUAGE: A very clear design language surfaced even in earlier works such as East Coast House (1996)

设计语言：一种十分清晰的设计语言在早期的作品中就有所浮现，比如 East Coast House 住宅（1996）

INSIDE MATTERS: Interior design remains one of Chan Soo Khian's core passions

内部很重要：室内设计仍然是 Chan Soo Khian 的主要兴趣之一

MAKING HISTORY: Heeren Street Shophouse (1999) was an exploration of memory and layers

成就历史：Heeren Street Shophouse 店屋（1999）是对记忆和层次的探索

SCALE UP: The Ladyhill (1999) tested the idea of the courtyard on a larger scale

规模放大：The Ladyhill 公寓楼（1999）将庭院这一元素在更大规模的项目上进行了测试

MODULAR LIVING: Lincoln Modern (2001) proposed interlocking apartment units

模块化的生活：Lincoln Modern（2001）提出了交错相扣的公寓设计

EXO-SKELETON: Apartments hang from clearly expressed load-bearing structure in Lincoln Modern

“外部骨骼”：建于清晰承重结构上的 Lincoln Modern 公寓

BUILDING SIGNATURE: TwentyOne Angullia Park (2014) is yet another one of SCDA's signature sleek high-rise apartments

建筑特色：21 Angullia Park 公寓（2014）又是一件 SCDA 时尚高层公寓的代表作

GIVING WEIGHT: Grange Road House I (2012) exemplifies a sense of monumentality in SCDA's current houses

赋予意义：Grange Road House I 住宅（2012）体现了 SCDA 现有房屋的纪念意义

DISTILLED DESIGN: Chan Soo Khian leans towards purer designs these days (Ocean Drive House, 2006)

精炼的设计：Chan Soo Khian 如今倾向于更加纯粹的设计（Ocean Drive House 住宅，2006）

PUBLIC SERVICE: SCDA's HDB proposal encourages multi-generational living

公共服务：SCDA 为新加坡建屋管理局提出的方案，鼓励数世同堂的生活

PASSION POINT: Alila Villa Soori marks Chan Soo Khian's foray into hospitality development

激情点：阿丽拉苏里别墅酒店标志了 Chan Soo Khian 正式进入酒店开发行业

SKY HIGH: OneKL explores the idea of villas in the sky

高空：One KL 探索了空中别墅这一概念

CENTRESTAGE: Dhoby Ghaut Green in a public theatre that remains sensitive to its surrounds

中央舞台：位于公共剧团的 Dhoby Ghaut Green 呼应周边环境

TESTING THEORIES: Soori High Line New York takes SCDA's design thesis to Manhattan

测试理论：纽约 Soori High Line 将 SCDA 的设计理念带入曼哈顿
