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“Good architecture is like a piece of beautifully composed music crystallised in space that elevates our spirits beyond the limitation of time”

Tao Ho



Timeless quality

Re-energised by the economic downturn, Cameron Woo's design philosophy — creating contemporary interiors with soul, serenity and softness — has won him one of the world's most prestigious competitions

TEXT: TERESA CHOW
PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF CAMERON WOO DESIGN

WHO: Cameron Woo, Cameron Woo Design
WHAT: CNBC Arabiya International Property Award for best residential interior design
WHERE: Singapore/Sydney, Australia
WORK: Showflat for The Metropolitan luxury residential condominiums for CapitaLand in Singapore

What motivated you to submit work to the CNBC awards?

There are two key reasons. Firstly, the economic downturn is the reason for our upturn over the past six months. The GFC (global financial crisis) allows us the opportunity to refocus on what's important, re-outline our business activities, and it also gave my team an opportunity to submit work that we hadn't had the opportunity to before.

We did see a little blip in our industry in terms of projects being suspended. But after that little blip, which lasted for about four months, the resurgence now is even greater. After so many big events happening in Asia, such as the Beijing Olympic, we had a little rest period, and now we start again.

Why did you choose The Metropolitan for the awards?

My team felt we had a good case study on how we were able to resolve a very difficult unit — that is, how to reform an apartment under 800 sq-ft in Singapore.

As those who would be judging the awards were mainly from the property industry, we chose this project specifically from our portfolio as we felt it would interest them.

Our design aimed to help the developer sell a small apartment at a premium. To achieve this end, we had satisfy the client's needs.

Tell us about the design concept.

We were commissioned to design two units to showcase for this development. In Singapore, there is a multi-generational market to satisfy, in which there is a need to facilitate a situation in which three generations live together. The one we submitted for the CNBC awards, however, was the bachelor pad, which is basically a show unit exhibiting the lifestyle of a single or attached professional individual with a busy social or work life. We were able to dissolve the walls between each room to create more space.



How do you strike a balance between creativity and business?

We can always learn from people who are doing big business now, like Donna Karan; she is also the creative force. Then there's other big fashion brands, like LVMH. We have creative personalities who drive the design as well as providing profits for this company through design.

You should always be innovative, not just in design, but as a person who is doing the business of design. Being creative as a designer is one thing, but there are not many people who can combine both creativity and business.

This page from top At Scott High Park, the dining room exudes strong luxurious tastes • Cameron Woo, founder of Cameron Woo Design • Open and sleek is the principle concept for the master ensuite at Trilight
Opposite page Vibrancy fills the The Metropolitan showflat, winner of a CNBC Arabiya International Property award

Is it more challenging to design a flat in Asia than Australia, with space more limited in this part of the world?

I would say it is a challenge to design for an educated or design-conscious market. Basically, what people want is spaciousness and luxury. Take Hong Kong and Singapore as examples. Here, people are very aware of brands and quality. Space is always a challenge, and always sells at optimum prices.

But for The Metropolitan luxury residential condominium project, persuading people to understand and accept innovation and new concepts was considerably more challenging – working with people of every discipline with different agendas, but with the same goal.





Above Texture and colour are two essential factors of Woo's design. Bottom Woo created a warm and harmonious environment for the living room at Sealfront on Meyer.

永恆程式

全球金融經濟滑落反而為Cameron Woo設計事務所重新注入動力；主腦Cameron Woo為現代家居灌注一份潔靜心靈的設計理論，更在全球顯赫的設計比賽中獲得肯定。

撰文：TERESA CHOW
攝影：由CAMERON WOO DESIGN攝

WHO: Cameron Woo, Cameron Woo Design

WHAT: CNBC國際地產獎最佳住宅設計

WHERE: 新加坡／澳洲悉尼

WORK: 新加坡嘉德置地The Metropolitan豪宅示範單位

什麼原因推動你參加今次比賽？

有兩個原因：第一，過去六個月的全球經濟低迷，反而給我們公司一個休養生息的機會。我們在這段時間重新衡量什麼對公司的發展最有利，重新制定業務方向。以往沒時間參加比賽，現在我的工作夥伴也能抽空，選擇自己最好的設計項目參賽。雖然，我們的行業也受到一點影響，但四個月後便見到反彈。亞洲主辦過一些大型盛事如北京奧運，又休息了一段短暫的時間，是時候重新振作了。

為何選擇The Metropolitan參賽？

設計這個新加坡物業的單位是有點難度的，要靈活地善用八百呎的面積殊不容易，但我的合作夥伴認為我們提供了一個可行而參考性甚高的方案。此外，這個大獎的評委主要來自房地產界，The Metropolitan的設計符合大會要求，評審應該感興趣，皆因我們的设计主旨是幫助發展商在高價的市場上推售小面積單位，而且我們亦成功做到這一點。

請跟我們分享你的設計概念。

發展商委託我們為該物業設計兩個示範單位。三代同堂一起居住，在新加坡很是普遍，居所的設計要符合幾代人的生活需要。可是，參賽的作品卻是專門為單身一族而設計，要切合忙碌的單身上班族生活。單位內各睡房的牆壁都被拆掉，目的是營造更多的空間。

澳洲的生活空間明顯比亞洲的多，在亞洲設計住所有否有較大挑戰性？

為一個受過教育或對設計有認知的市場做室內項目，才是最大的挑戰。基本上亞洲人追求的是空間及奢華感。以新加坡和香港為例，人們對品質和品質的要求相當高。面積永遠是設計的一大挑戰，亦往往影響住宅的售價。

至於設計The Metropolitan豪宅公寓的難度，在於如何說服用家，去明白及接受新穎的設計概念，況且還要跟多個範疇的人合作商議，去達到同一個目標。

創意與生意，如何兩者兼得？

我想可從不同的大企業身上學習，例如時裝設計師Donna Karan，她深知營商之道，更是品牌的設計靈魂。另一個龐大的時裝皇國LV也值得參考。我們的公司有設計師負責創作的部份，他們是運用創意為公司帶來利潤的一群。

不單只是設計工作，就是與設計相關的行業，創意一定不可抹煞。設計師必然要有創意，但不是人人也可以把創意及營商靈活地結合處理。

