

JULY 2017

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A Week In The Life Of Celia Chu

Born and raised in Taipei, Celia Chu has always been immersed within the creative arts, and this fascination eventually led her to pursue further education in New York City, graduating from the Parsons School of Design.

With the desire to build an interior design practice that offered practical solutions in the form of elegance and style, in 2007 Celia established her company, Celia Chu Design, to bring an unique creative vision to life in the realm of hospitality design.

Monday

After delivering my two lovely daughters to my mother's home, my Monday starts officially! I get into the office, log into Outlook, check the emails and reply to the most urgent of them. This process gets me ready and in the mood for work. At 9:30am I have the weekly meeting with everyone in my firm, catching up with all the ongoing projects, and following up on others. We do the design idea sharing for the end of the weekly meeting as usual. Everyone can share whatever they think is interesting and inspiring, including at this meeting an exhibition of Zaha Hadid's amazing work, an artist creating beautiful glass artworks, a movie by Wes Anderson, and the list of top 50 bars in Asia.

To me, it's so important to find new things and keep my eyes open. You will never know where the inspiration will come up. After lunch, I review the samples with ▼







▲ my team for the project in Cairo; the Intercontinental Hotel renovation. It's my first project in the Middle East and I am very much looking forward to the mock-up guestroom review next month. After a few office meetings, I need to get ready for a dinner with a client tonight. I make the reservation at MUME, a Scandinavian style restaurant, which always surprises me with new and special dishes.

Tuesday

I have a meeting with a long-standing client

this morning, regarding the Hyatt Regency Da Nang, Vietnam. They are thinking of adding an extension to the restaurant, which was designed by me several years ago. It was a wonderful experience to work on this project so I am so happy and excited to be a part of it again now.

In the afternoon, I meet with LASVIT, the cool lighting brand from Czech Republic. We are working together on a distinctive and original lighting fixture for a high-end residence in Taipei. We have worked on a

few projects before and I do like the passion they show and the artistic touch they create. Unsurprisingly, they surprise me with their excellent work again.

Wednesday

Grab a light luggage case, put on my sunglasses and grasp my passport, I am about to get on the plane. I like to read a novel or watch a movie during the flight, it's like a break because no email can reach me, and there's no phone calls. After three hours, Dalian, here I am. It's a pleasure to ▼



▲ come here every time but especially this time because our latest completed project, DALIAN DALIAN, the specialty restaurant at the top floors of Grand Hyatt Dalian, won a top design award for 'the best Chinese restaurant' this year.

I am here to do an interview with the media and share the happiness with my client. The design would not be realised with their great support. I transformed the traditional Chinese window pattern as a special element in the space, making the space very modern while also carrying the sense of local culture at the same time. I like to return to my past projects to see how they look after months or years, just like seeing an old friend. It looks just like handover day which is good to see. The restaurant is busy and the private dining rooms have been well received and are used daily. During the sunset, I stand by the window and seeing the sea turning gold. I will definitely miss being here tomorrow.

Thursday

When I wake up in the hotel room, there is a moment I am not sure where I am! But after I hear the warming greeting from the morning call, I know I am in the city of Bangkok. I took the late night flight from Dalian to Bangkok last night, and I am going to have the site inspection of the on-going project here, The Rosewood Hotel Bangkok. We have been working on this design for about four years, and finally I can see the hotel building is growing high very fast now.

I am here to check with the building process of the benchmark guestroom and to check the site condition for the public space. The stone work in the bathroom bothers me a little bit, and I have to explain to the contractor that the standard is not what ▼



▲ it should be. I walk along the empty building structure with the picture in my mind of how the space will look in a year's time. It will be a jewellery box containing the unique Thai culture. That's my philosophy of design, to really reflect the sense of the place.

Friday

I meet with the graphic designer this morning, we are doing a makeover for the

company website. It's time to add some new vibe since the current one is almost ten years old. The discussion goes smoothly and the design is on the right track. I am happy to work with someone who share the same taste with me.

I seize the time to work focusing on the design for my Chinese estate client before the meeting with the lighting designer, who is also a good friend of mine. To me, lighting

is very important in my work, it is just like putting on the right make-up for a special event. That's why I always have a lighting designer in my projects, we can create something special together.

My staff and I leave the office to go to see the art festival in Taipei in the afternoon. Through the eye of the artists, we can find so many enlightened things. I see a work by a Japanese artist, who builds unique ▼



▲ animal sculptures with crystal balls, shaping them in a weird but fascinating way. We move on to a roof top bar for the happy hour after the exhibition. It is a delightful moment to chat with my staff, drink sparkling wine next to the grand Taipei 101 tower, lit up with the summer breeze in the air.

The Weekend

The weekend is for my family as I have my

lovely daughters, one is 3 years old and another is just turned 1 year old. We make breakfast together and watch them eat it like little monsters! Then they put on their swimsuits and can't wait to float in the swimming pool in our backyard for the rest of the day.

Sometimes we will go to the beautiful mountain near Taipei City, to get some fresh air and take the onsen to relax. But this Sunday, I plan to visit the National Palace

Museum, where there is an exhibition of Musee d'Orsay. I love to see the mixture of the east and the west and I can stay in the museum for whole day exploring all the incredible antiques and artworks.

The only thing I worry about is for how long these two little monkeys can stay calm...

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