



The Designer

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Phillip Young MCSD Interior Designer



Phillip works in the Hong Kong Studio for Dileonardo International, a renowned Architecture and Design firm. He joined the Society in 2010 to stay connected with UK designers and to keep in touch with UK design trends. He spoke to TheDesigner magazine about some of the challenges he has faced while working in both the UK and Asia.

Phillip grew up in Hong Kong and after finishing his A-levels he entered into an internship that inspired him to pursue design as a career... "I went to work for my father's friend who was an Architect. He specialized in interior design for hospitality, designing wonderful 5 star hotels, clubs and restaurants. The work was so complex and so detailed it was fascinating. During this work placement I had a first-hand view of the process of interior design; from analysing and creating spaces, to the construction details and working on a construction site... I was hooked!"

With this new found passion driving him, Phillip returned to the UK and went on to complete a diploma in Environmental Design, AA in Fine Arts and a BA in Interior Design in London. With these qualifications under his belt, he returned to Hong Kong to start his professional career as an interior designer.

Phillip is the current Regional Managing Director of Dileonardo International which has been working in Asia for the past 20 years. The company specialises in interior design for the hospitality industry and their projects include some spectacular hotels such as the St Regis Sanya China and the Sunrise Beijing Kempinski Hotel China which can be seen below.



Sunrise Kempinski Hotel, Beijing China



St. Regis Sanya Yalong Bay Resort, Sanya, China

Having lived and worked in the UK and Asia, Philip told TheDesigner magazine about the disparities that he has experienced in the design sector of these regions. “The biggest comparison is the speed at which things are done here in Asia. I have seen Hotels designed, built and opened with in 2 years (if it moves smoothly). China especially is well known for erecting buildings in super quick time. Developers invest in 24 hour construction teams and schedules and they are not shy in getting the best designers in the world to design their projects.”

However, working in Asia, Phillip has faced some challenges that the UK industry doesn't experience. “Working in Asia (especially China) is so challenging, besides the sheer size of the country designers face complex legislation as projects must satisfy a forever changing set of regulations whereby sometimes each City has a different set of regulations and laws. So whilst buildings are erected at great speed, the paperwork can hold up construction and double your construction time.”

Along his career path Philip has been fortunate to work for some interior design legends including Sir Terence Conran, David Hicks and Benoy Architects. TheDesigner asked Phillip to offer some words of advice to young graduates entering the interior design sector, in particular to those looking at working in the Far East.

“My advice is to be opened minded and understanding about the local culture and the method in which they work. If you do choose to work in Asia, embrace and respect this difference and learn from the local teams. Places like Shanghai and Beijing have some amazing spaces and buildings whose original designs would have seemed impossible. These are now immediately recognised as some of the world's most iconic buildings and spaces.”

The Asian market is extremely competitive with such high standards Phillip provides some tips on applying for jobs as a new graduate and tells us what he would look for in a portfolio.

“Ensure when applying for job in the East that your work should show originality, excitement, design research, hand sketches and ideas. Anyone can produce great 3D renderings but it's the thought process and how you got from A to Z is what we are interested in when looking at hiring young staff.”

The Asian building industry is fast paced and extremely diverse, this brings a variety of opportunities to experience different countries and cultures within one office.

“The building industry in Asia is as economic sensitive as most countries around the world but there is always a boom close by, currently we are seeing the Philippines going through a boom, so is Macau and of course China always has a steady stream of construction projects.”

Phillip's priority for joining CSD was to stay connected with the UK market whilst working on an international scale, he told TheDesigner: “I joined the CSD in 2010. It is the most recognised professional design association in the industry. It shows a level of achievement in the profession. Living overseas and being a member of the CSD is a great tool that connects you with people back in the UK and what is trending in the market at the time.”