

40

under 40

Introducing the Hong Kong
Vanguard of 2020

PRESTIGE

"My parents have always been my biggest inspiration – growing up, watching them work, pouring their hearts out into everything they do"

LOCATION MONT ROUGE
KERRY PROPERTIES

CANDICE CHAN

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Tell us about yourself.

I was born and raised in Hong Kong and majored in interior design at Syracuse University, then moved to New York where I worked for a few years at an architectural firm that specialises in historical and preservation work, which was exactly what I wanted to do. On my first day at work, my advisor asked me to meet her at a Broadway theatre on 48th Street. The whole building was under renovation with scaffolding everywhere and we had to climb up a temporary staircase to get in and take a look. When we got to the top, I realised we'd reached the theatre's ceiling – there were artists doing amazing paintwork on the theatre's medallions and architectural pieces. It was an incredible experience! Shortly after that, my boyfriend – now husband – decided to move back to Hong Kong and I started J Candice Interior Architects in 2010.

Did you always want to be an interior designer?

I did think about being a fashion or shoe designer, but by the age of 13 or 14 I think I had my heart set on interior design, most probably because I was exposed to interior spaces quite often when I was growing up. As my family is in the restaurant business, our Sunday activities consisted of touring our F&B outlets around town and talking to the managers. Whenever my father had time, he'd bring me to these bare-shell construction sites and ask me to imagine the space. I remember each space would become alive with the colours and textures that poured into my mind. I told myself I wanted to do this every day!

Whom do you look up to and why?

My parents have always been my biggest inspiration. Growing up, watching them work, pouring their hearts out into everything they do. I have to say they're the most hard-working individuals I've known.

What does it take to succeed in your line of work? What are the values one needs to "make it"?

I'm still in the process of learning. But as a female interior designer, I think we do offer a different angle and a different approach when designing. In general, you have to be an active listener – listen to what our clients need and want. Being an active listener is the first step.

What advice would you offer aspiring interior designers?

Being an entrepreneur isn't simply about running a business – it's also a lifestyle. So you have to like what you're doing. If you're determined to make that as your living, go for it! Don't procrastinate. Don't try to make everything perfect. If you don't give it a try, you'll never get the chance to perfect it.