



Redefining urban typologies

Orange and black facade of ACTS Rednaxela challenges the Hong Kong public to appreciate the true essence of architecture

DESIGNER: CARL CHOW
PHOTOGRAPHER: DICKY LIU



WHO Carl Gouw, ACTS Group
WHERE Mid-Levels, Central
WHAT ACTS Rednaxela Serviced Apartments

What was the intent behind putting architecture, art and culture under one roof at ACTS?

I am an advocate of creativity in art, design and culture. We at ACTS believe that creativity can spring from ordinary things. We want to bring out the authenticity and beauty of everyday life, embrace reality and encourage everyone to think unilaterally about the world. Through the expression of our values, we hope to inspire and stimulate our residents, neighbours and visitors. Since many of our residents are 'cultural seekers' or 'flâneur', we are also inspired by them. It's a humble, interactive, cultural exchange of hospitality. A building is like a stage of life with many stories to tell.

How did your collaboration with Gary Chang come about for the project?

Edge Design Institute is one of the very few firms in Hong Kong that respects architecture as it should be. Architecture is not about deliberating any fashion or style, but acknowledging that it is a set of conditions under which space and the individual are connected, like in a building or a city. Gary believes that a myriad of options may lie beneath the surface and there should be a choice of options to achieve an end. Possibly, they might produce the same appearance, but generate different meanings. It is a matter of recognising relations and context.

Architecturally, what was the driving force of the design?

The project redefines one of the most representative and unique typologies of the urban landscape in Hong Kong, the 'pencil tower': a single, mid-rise tower with a very compact footprint. The exterior envelope of the tower goes beyond the usual aesthetic and graphic intents typical of

most Hong Kong skylines, but rather endeavours to echo and articulate the various programmes inside the apartments.

The interior organisation of each apartment unit is an exercise in the optimum use of space and time. In a world of compact living, boundaries between various programmes are deliberately blurred, while each individual programme is pushed to the largest dimensions as possible.

What does ACTS Rednaxela bring to its neighbourhood and the architectural scene of Hong Kong?

A burst of colour, an imposing façade; an almost robotic, modern black block with sharply-cornered orange balconies – a result of exploring the geometry of the tower to the greatest advantage, ACTS Rednaxela offers congested urbanism a breath of fresh air amid the repetitive, covered-up, back-drop architecture of Hong Kong.

What are your thoughts on the gentrification of old districts and revival of streetscapes now happening in Hong Kong?

These practices and end products will be a complete failure if the parties concerned, including the government, NGOs and the business sectors, do not unilaterally think about the underlying purpose. There needs to be a balance between making the effort to revitalise buildings and streetscapes while providing space for creative industries to grow organically. Hong Kong has been far too commercially-driven; the



business sectors have been dictating and destroying art, design and culture.

As the director of Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design and Wanchai Visual Archive, what are your aspirations?

HKAoD is a young, dynamic and fun NGO that helps Hong Kong's community to better understand the value of design and creativity, as well as connects the public with the creative industries. We may not hold huge grand events or exhibitions, but we believe that the community and education are critical forces in the city's culture and creativity.

The Wanchai Visual Archive is a project to design, develop and deploy a visual archive in-situ, as an incubator of discussion, co-creation and co-evolution between social and economic stakeholders in the neighbourhood of Wanchai. It was inspired by a desire to experience an authentic, organic and experimental process to understand the relationship between urban renewal, cultural fabrication and community livelihood.





重塑都市

ACTS Rednaxela 黑色配橙色配綠色的新面目
外貌，邀請香港市民品味建築的風味

BY TERESA CHOW
PHOTO: DICKY LIU

WHO: Carl Gouw, ACTS Group
WHERE: 環半三區
WHAT: ACTS Rednaxela 服務式住宅

ACTS 把建築、藝術及文化合而為一，為什麼有這個構思呢？

我一向主張在藝術、設計與文化中，要有創意。在 ACTS，我們相信可從平凡的事物中孕育與美；我們希望擁抱現實，活在當下，並鼓勵大家對世界多作線性思考。透過表達我們的價值觀，希望我們的住客、鄰里及訪客能夠找到啟發。

ACTS 大多數住客都喜歡探索文化，享受思維的浪漫，所以他們也感染著我們，帶給我們靈感。這就做出謙遜、竭誠、互動與文化交流的待人接物之道。一座住宅大廈包含了很多不同人生的某個階段，總有說不完的故事。

可否談談跟張智強 (Gary Chang) 合作的緣起？

以 Gary Chang 為首的 Edge Design Institute 是香港少數真正懂得閱讀及尊重建築的設計公司之一。建築並不是為要考慮潮流和風格，而是如何連結空間與人的條件認知，就如在大廈或城市中空間與人的關係。Gow 相信無數的選擇埋藏在建築的外表裡，同時亦有無數的方法可達到一樣的成果。有時外觀也許會很類同，卻引發出很多不一樣的意義，這實在有賴如何識別空間的關係及背景。

從建築設計的角度看，ACTS Rednaxela 的推動力來自什麼？

中高度、小地積，如「鉛筆」的單幢式大廈，是最能夠代表香港獨特的城市建築類別之一；這個項目正是要重新演繹「鉛筆型」大廈。設計不僅突破香港的大廈外觀一貫的審美準則，我們更致力讓住宅單位在多方面都能表裡互相呼應，內部功能與外貌展現完美配合。

每個單位的內部佈局都能夠做到適當地善用



施和空間的分界，讓單一的設施都得到最大的擴展和發揮。

ACTS Rednaxela 為其周圍的鄰里及香港的建築面貌帶來什麼新氣象？

由近乎機械式形態的現代黑色建築，配上呈尖角的橙色露台，突破性的顏色組合和極具氣勢的外觀，是我們深入探索幾何形態的豐碩成果。香港城市的建築就像一幅既擠迫，而且景象重覆又重疊的佈景板，ACTS Rednaxela 的出現無疑帶來了一口清新的空氣。

對於香港區中產階級化及重新街頭景象的風氣，你有何見解？

如果參與其中的政府、非政府組織及商界，都沒有依循根本目的去獨立地作線性思考，而讓其他因素來左右思維，那麼這些項目的實行和成效都會是徹底的失敗。在活化建築及街道景象時，應該要取得平衡，為創意產業提供自由成長的空間。香港實在太商業主導了，經濟利益主宰並扼殺了藝術、設計與文化的發展。

身兼香港設計大使及擔任視察主席的你，有什麼抱負呢？

香港設計大使是一個年輕、充滿活力的非政府組織，目的是讓香港社會更了解設計與創意的價值，同時聯繫公眾與創意工業。我們未必舉行大型的活動或展覽，但我們相信社區與教育是城市發展文化與創意的必要動力。

至於灣仔視察，計劃目標是在社區原址現場，設計、發展及策劃觀覽的紀錄檔案。我們的角色是培育者，透過共商、共創和共進，來連結灣仔區內社會利益和經濟利益的各方持份者。灣仔視察是源自追求對城市活化、文化構建及社區生活之間關係的理解，過程是真實的、親身感受