

## Urban Designer Expresses Artistry Through Architect



Suenn Ho

By MOLLY WASHINGTON

Suenn Ho is an urban designer, sole owner of SUENN HO Design and co-founder with John Flynn of RESOLVE Architecture + Planning. The child of two Harvard-educated parents, one an artist and the other an architect, she was born in Boston and grew up in Hong Kong. Suenn recognizes the privilege of having opportunities afforded to her in early adulthood, studying and practicing architecture and design in Boston, New York City, France, Hong Kong, and ultimately settling down in Portland in 1993. “We found our place,” she said.

Suenn’s focus, as she describes it, is “using my design to tell stories that are seldom heard.” Drawn towards stories of historical value that were never recognized or which seemed to be unimportant to mainstream culture, her goal is to bring

these stories to the forefront through design. Suenn’s understanding of these missing stories is unique in her line of work and her awareness came through her Fulbright fellowship to study an “urban slum,” the notorious Kowloon Walled City, in Hong Kong. What she learned after 10 months of study was that “all of the things I had learned in architecture school did not prepare me to engage with people in a way that allows them to share their incredible stories. I learned how to listen. I learned how to respectfully capture their stories, through some of the work that I have been able to expand to an audience that never thought they were worth paying attention to.” This experience spurred her actively seeking out these missing stories. “There is a lot of humanity in the work we can do if we connect with the people,” she explains.

Suenn is part of a team bringing these design ideas to life on Multnomah County’s East County Flagship Library project. “My role is not just gathering information about the project from the people but trying to also draw from their aspirations, hopes, and dreams and be able to integrate their stories into the design process and design focus. East County is diverse with an increasingly rich culture presence within the community. It’s important to draw the cultural history and heritage relevancy from these seldom heard voices and seeing how we can integrate that into the inspiration for the design team to synthesize into architecture and create relatable places to the community.”

## Fire Safety for Doors and More



Chris Warren

By MOLLY WASHINGTON

Portland-native and Benson High School graduate, Chris Warren is the co-owner, along with Jared Amato, of Oregon Door Consultants. Always someone with an entrepreneurial spirit, Chris sought out opportunities to learn new industries, provide mentorship and coaching to others, and sees the most potential in working for himself. Oregon

Door Consultants is a specialty contracting company that focuses on furnishing and installing doors, frames, and hardware. Currently, ODC is working on projects at the Portland International Airport with the Hoffman Skanska joint venture, the Salem Public Works project with Howard S. Wright, and the University of Portland tenant improvement project, to name a few.

Chris doesn’t use the word “employee” when describing the people with whom he works, they are his team members. “We’re all on the same team,” Chris states. “And at the end of the day, every business owner, the key to their success is taking care of those associates, taking care of the people that work with them because those are the people that allow a business to shine, allow a business to look good, allow an owner to be successful.” Recognizing and appreciating his team members is key and treating his team members like family comes second nature. Chris’s mantra is simple: “I’m going to value every person on my team and make sure they know that they are very much appreciated because they are the success of the business.” As for budding entrepreneurs, Chris’s advice is this: “Find your passion and do your passion. Some of us are set up to go work for people. Some of us are set up to control our own success and destiny and have our own free time. And I would encourage everyone that is not afraid to take the leap to have their own business. Don’t exchange your time for money but control your own schedule.”

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