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Beyond the Blueprint of Doo-Ho Lee

You step in. High ceilings and tall glass walls envelop you. Some of the most advanced pieces of technology line the tables. The airy and social environment allows you free reign to explore, test products, and find the device that's the right fit. You are standing at the center of the tech movement, and you have stepped into a work of art. This is what it feels like to enter an Apple Store.

In charge of it all is Doo-Ho Lee, the Director of Design at Apple. His main goal in his designs is ensuring that the consumer has a comfortable and satisfactory experience. When asked about why architecture matters, Doo-Ho replied, "It's the environment, right? So it's the environment that everyone is part of. So creating a healthy environment, a healthy and safe environment, first and foremost" (D. Lee). Through such ideals, he developed a love for both modern and traditionalist architecture, particularly in a residential sense. Furthermore, through his creative and unique mindset, Doo-Ho became an influence to those around him, through more than just his architecture.

"The thing that really gets me up every morning is the fact that with designs you can, you can sort of improve the environment, right?" (D. Lee). Doo-Ho's main draw to architecture is the aesthetic, and the application of concepts. The combination of both mathematical and scientific aspects along with the touch of creativity is what draws him the most to modern architecture. The modern architectural movement began in the earlier half of the 20th century. It became

recognizable through its minimalist and cold style, which incorporates aspects such as sharp edges and lines, with materials like concrete and glass extensively (Thomann). Along with these characteristics, it is the strong connection between interior and exterior that draws Doo-Ho. Throughout his career, Doo-Ho's appreciation for a more traditionalist style has intensified. Doo-Ho explains, "What I appreciate about those types of architecture is really attention to detail and craftsmanship, right? The fact that things are built by hand and given incredible consideration" (D. Lee). A constant focus of his work has been creating a social environment that encourages interaction. An environment like this is particularly important to retail design, as it needs to feel welcoming to the customer ("Why Great Retail Architecture Is Key"). This wide range of interest provides him with a unique and diverse perspective, a quality that has been paramount to his career.

Understanding where architecture was first introduced in his life is key to understanding how Doo-Ho grew so passionate towards architecture. When asked about his first introduction Doo-Ho responded by saying "I think it really came into focus around high school, sort of middle of high school. When I was, you know, thinking more and more about what I would like to do for the rest of my life" (D. Lee). Doo-Ho was first exposed to the broad spectrum of architecture at a summer program at Cornell. This opportunity gave him an insight to what he could achieve if he chose to pursue this path. After graduating from Tulane University in New Orleans, where he met his wife Michelle Lee, Doo-Ho found himself working as an intern at a small architectural firm. His first project was helping tear down a house, which gave him a unique perspective on architecture that his schooling had not: "It's amazing how much you can learn by actually, you know, working with your hands and understanding the building in this case by taking it apart piece by piece" (D. Lee).

His wisdom and unique insights allow Doo-hoo to stand out as an inspiration to those around him, family and peers alike. Doo-Ho's 17 year-old son Owen has been greatly influenced by his father's unique mind. "I definitely have a goal to make music and, you know, be creative with it. I think he and his goal of architecture, you can see reflected through me" (O. Lee). Owen is a Junior in High School who enjoys creating music as a hobby. In addition,, Michelle suggests that although Doo-Ho does not necessarily shape her view point, working with him allows for a different insight and compromises: "if we have disagreements, actually, I would say we just-we either try and find another aspect that we can agree on and develop that. And sometimes that shifts the mindset of one or both of us to a different way of looking at something" (M. Lee). Not only does Doo-Ho play a significant role in Owen's life, but he also inspires Michelle in a similar way. Michelle describes how, "I don't know if he changes my taste so much as I actually I really look up to him, frankly, because he is such a talented designer and can see solutions that I don't always see." (M. Lee), Michelle stated.

Despite his day-to-day life being much more impacted by retail architecture, Doo-Ho claims that his passion lies with residential architecture. "I think a well designed home is, um, to me probably the most kind of concentrated and focused form of architecture" (D. Lee). Residential design was the roots of Doo-Ho's architectural education, so it is at the foundation of his work. Along with this, when asked what his favorite project was, he brought up a modern house he had worked on in Chicago. He mentioned an appreciation for the "sharp angles, lots of glass, big wide openings, [...] all the things that I had studied in school" (D. Lee). What made this project stand out to him, however, was not just the architecture itself, but the process. Doo-Ho suggested that watching the house go from a mere sketch on a piece of paper to a fully built and lived in home gave that project in specific a special place in his heart.

Doo-Ho also discussed some of the newer developments of architecture, and the projects that lie ahead for him. First, he described CAD, Computer-Aided Design, a digital tool being taught and used by the newer wave of architects. It's main purpose is to help perfect moc-ups. Traditionally, moc drawings of designs would be done on paper, with more precision needed (What is CAD? | Computer-Aided Design (CAD) | PTC). Although computers have a very important role to play in overall accuracy and efficiency, Michelle suggests that "Some of that creativity can be lost when you're just looking at a flat screen on a computer" (M. Lee). Doo-Ho also alludes to his current project: remodeling his house. Doo-Ho and Michelle are collaborating to design a remodel for their home. The process has been long, but relatively smooth. Although they do not agree on every decision, the important ones tend to be mutually agreed upon, and new solutions are always found.

"The thing that really kind of gets me up every morning is the fact that with designs you can sort of improve the environment [...] You can kind of make the environment better. I think good design [...] provides you with not only the, the safety and kind of the comforts, but also pleasure" (D. Lee). It is Doo-Ho Lee's unique and creative outlook, along with his sheer passion for his job that sets him apart as an architect, retail and residential alike. Through this perspective he is able to create memorable and satisfying experiences for customers, and become a creative inspiration to those around him.

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