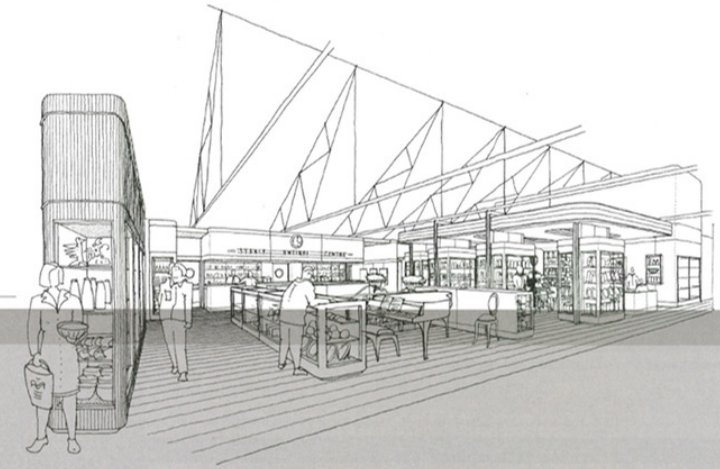


## IN | PROFILE : CULLEN FENG

THE INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE  
OF A SMALL PRACTICE IN ACTION. | ARCHITECTS



1. FLOATING BENCH AND MORPHED BACKLIT WALL GRAPHIC AT LES MOORE PROJECTS.

2. LES MOORE PROJECTS OFFICE.



As a small Sydney practice Cullen Feng need to be driven by the challenges of each project and immerse themselves in their design process, enjoying each job is an adventure. Both partners consider that they don't follow any rigid design philosophy, but energetically pursue the alchemy between them, enticing their clients to be a strong part of their design development. → Michelle Feng and Jon Cullen met while they were studying architecture at Sydney University and after working at several large Sydney practices set up a studio together. Feng also recently completed a masters degree in industrial design to complement her architecture, feeling that this additional discipline is helpful in an industry where detail is paramount. → As a practice their design process starts with an initial exploration of the site, space, brief's potential, to the point of discovering both the serendipitous and intended possibilities of the project. These possibilities are then tested with hand drawn sketches and basic computer modelling of 3D notions. A preferred group of intentions is then developed through a series of gradually refined perspective drawings which distil to a fine detail the spatial experiments that will envelope the occupant. The final perspectives become the first construction drawings.

→ Within this profile we look at several recently completed Sydney projects ranging from Rimbauds Restaurant in Leichhardt and the Fat Duck cafe in Paddington to the Sydney Antique Centre, the offices of Les Moore Projects and the Caroma Display Pod at Source 490 on Crown Street Surry Hills. → Inside the hub of little Italy in Sydney's inner west, Leichhardt is a place that can boast of many glorious taste sensations. Within this restaurant 'mile' sits the Berkeleylewo Bookshop Development. The surprise within this complex until recently, was the enigmatic Rimbaud Restaurant. Here Cullen Feng and restaurateur Josiah Li, created an oasis of fine dining. The site was more than the average challenge, being a first floor tenancy with glazing on three sides and visibility through other tenancies emitting fluorescent lighting. Further challenges were the lack of street presence and the combination of indoor and outdoor dining spaces. → 'An eastern feel pervades the design aesthetic, although →





3. RECEPTION AREA, SYDNEY ANTIQUE CENTRE.



4. CAROMA PRODUCT PRESENTATION POD AT SOURCE 490.



5. ILLUMINATED PEBBLE SCREENS AND CUSTOM LANTERNS AT RIMBAUD RESTAURANT.



6. FULL HEIGHT MARBLO PANELS UTILISED AS AN OPAQUE LANDSCAPE ELEMENT AT RIMBAUD RESTAURANT.



7. VIEW TOWARDS COUNTER AND REAR HINGE OF FAT DUCK FROM NEAR ENTRANCE.

→ various elements have been modernised or distorted beyond their known context” was part of a description Cullen gave. The unifying element throughout the restaurant and the double height space, was a series of giant rectangular lanterns. These enormous light sources were designed with a concealed access zip, for lamp maintenance. The warm glow from these lanterns spatially brings the lofty scale of the space down to a more intimate level while also diverting attention away from the underside of the roof above. → The illuminated pebble vertical screen appearing opaque from the street and translucent from inside provides a modesty panel for diners yet also highlights the “uniquely identifiable presence for the restaurant”. While the use of the humble pebble is not new, Cullen Feng have managed to change our perception. This illuminated pebble screen caged in lightweight mesh is a refreshing detail which took a considerable time to resolve. When the screen is illuminated the eye does not perceive the mesh, pebbles are usually seen as part of a horizontal plain, now vertically

transformed, this screen makes a strong impression. → An impressive ‘wall of tea’ uses borrowed light to illuminate partially translucent full-height Marblo panels. These panels soothe the sharp fluorescence into shades of warm amber, providing the atmosphere required for an inviting restaurant. → Within the Sydney Antique Centre there is a feeling of great respect for the art deco grandeur as seen in the entry foyer, central cafe, main stair, and reception. Groups of display cases in dark timber highlighted with polished chrome delineate the boundary of the foyer from the individual shop holders areas. The new work gives a sense of order which does not detract from the feeling of an exotic bazaar which holds the allure for patrons of the centre, it instills a sense of harmony and elegance appropriate in its context. The cafe snuggles among the tall display cases allowing the patrons to sip tea and view at leisure the delights therein. → At Fat Duck the visual order of wall mounted light boxes displaying anything from fresh produce to colourful bottles is immediately intriguing and appeals to

our sense of curiosity. The envelope for this cafe is a remnant form, the space under the staircase of the neighbouring Grand Pacific Blue Room. It appears the negative envelope is the very challenge Cullen Feng enjoy. The notion of a hinge leads one to consider movement propelled by a connecting element, this concept works beautifully. → The space is dissected into two major accents by the display counter, cunning in its location not only regarding the idea of the hinge itself, but as it places the manager/owners in clear sight of both directions. The patron has a view of only half the cafe, one half bathed in natural light with a backdrop of toned aluminium leaf by Art Gilding, the other more secretive, with controlled lighting with residue arc shapes to the elephant grey wall, giving the cavern space a sense of quiet. → A compliment to positive work collaborations is the office of Les Moore Projects, who are more than builders, “the firm prides themselves on their attention to detail and their ability to procure extraordinary work” and delight in the challenges of good architecture. Therefore



FAT DUCK CAFE DELI

IN / PROFILE : CULLEN FENG

ARCHITECTS



SYDNEY ANTIQUE CENTRE



RIMBAUD RESTAURANT

PROJECT SUMMARY / SYDNEY ANTIQUE CENTRE

Architect Jon Cullen and Michelle Feng in association with Neil Burley Client Neil Burley Builder Les Moore Projects Project manager P&J Projects Sub-contractors Eurline (Joinery) Budget \$750,000 Time to complete 21 months (including design) Chairs/seating Thonet from Anibou Tables Honed Carrara marble tops on antique bases Joinery Tobacco-stained MDF with bright anodised aluminium trim Flooring Junckers prefinished timber floor Other fixtures/features Ribbed laminated glass on serverly wall

PROJECT SUMMARY / CAROMA DISPLAY POD

Architect Michelle Feng and Jon Cullen, Cullen Feng Client Caroma Industries Ltd (Lee Melrose) Sub-contractors Box & Dice (Joinery) Time to complete 6 months Budget \$4,000 approx. Bathware Caroma Leda Vasque freestanding vanity basin, freestanding inset vanity basin and semi-recessed vanity basin Tapware Various Caroma Items/prototypes Glass Sandblasted Ozone Azurite glass Surface finishes Silver polyurethane benchtop

PROJECT SUMMARY / RIMBAUD RESTAURANT

Architect Jon Cullen and Michelle Feng, Cullen Feng Client Josiah Li Builder Steve Riddle Budget \$300,000 approx. Size 150 sq.m., seats 90 Time to complete 4 months Chairs/seating Gorka from Stylecraft Lighting Inlite ‘Delta’ fittings, ISM bud lights Upholstery Banquette - Arkitek Façade in ‘Goldsun’, lounge - Laine’s microsuede in ‘Tobacco’ Flooring Polished timber Other fixtures/features ‘Goldengate Swirly Translucent’ Marblo panels, pebble balustrade custom-designed using Eco Pebbles, polished limestone stone cladding to bar

PROJECT SUMMARY / LES MOORE PROJECTS OFFICE

Architect Jon Cullen and Michelle Feng, Cullen Feng Client Les Moore Builder Les Moore Projects Size 74 sq.m Time to complete 4 months (including design) Chairs/seating Gorka from Stylecraft, custom-designed lounge with Laine’s microsuede ‘Safari’ upholstery Tables ‘Carma’ table base from Stylecraft Surface finishes White polyurethane reception counter with Abet laminate in ‘Charcoal’ Flooring Polished timber

PROJECT SUMMARY / FAT DUCK CAFE DELI

Architect Jon Cullen and Michelle Feng, Cullen Feng Client Robyn and Holly Jarvis Builder Les Moore Projects Sub-contractors Callow & Gray (Joinery) Budget \$200,000 approx. Size 47 sq.m. in total, seats 20 Time to complete 8 months Chairs/seating ‘Diva’ from Stylecraft Tables Neoparies (crystallised glass) table tops Upholstery Instyle ‘Elmosell’ Lighting Inlite ‘Delta’ and JSB modular fittings Flooring DLW lineum Other fixtures/features Toned aluminium leaf by Art Gilding

8. SEATING WITH WALL LIGHT DETAIL AT FAT DUCK.