

ARTIST ROOM

From left
DESMOND XXX
 Destination
MARIANNE XXX
 Destination
MARK CHEN
 Director
KATY CHONG
 Director

The youthfulness of the team at Artistroom belies their experience and mature understanding of design. Theirs is a systematic approach to residential design that consistently results in homes that not only score on aesthetics, but also work with an efficiency that is hard to come by today.

Tucked away in a quiet corner of the charming Pearls Hill Centre, Artistroom's office is a basic composition of bare white walls, concrete floor, and sparingly appointed marble textures. It is unassuming, unpretentious, and tasteful in its simplicity. It is a perfect representation of the studio and their work.

Helmed by husband and wife team Mark Chen and Katy Chong, the studio works as a tight 4-person unit that specialises in residential interiors. Set up in 2008, Artistroom has always maintained a very disciplined approach for each project.

"With homes getting smaller and smaller, good space planning can make a big difference," Katy asserts. It's one of the core principles that the firm swears by and it has worked wonders for its projects – modest homes that discreetly pack in more storage than meets the eye. Add to that a keen eye for perfectly balanced proportions and textures, and you have a recipe for success.

While preferring timeless spaces that are spacious, airy and light, Katy and Mark are not so naïve to believe that trends don't play a role in what they do – after all, a lot of it is dependent on what their clients like. "But we need to understand that within each trend – the industrial style or Scandinavian style, for example – there is a wide spectrum of looks and details that can be explored," Katy points out. "Our challenge is to explore this range of possibilities to create something unique for our clients, and then try to turn it into something that has longevity."



Katy Chong takes on the role of lead designer on many projects that the studio takes on



The well-oiled team may be small, but it packs a punch with each member having their own area of expertise





➤ A simple white shoe cabinet sits unobtrusively beside the entrance. Artistroom reveals that it was designed together with the space behind it to maximise the effectiveness of all joinery. Beside the shoe cabinet, a frosted glass door leads into the study where the husband brings home films to review as part of his job.

✔ The deep teak parquet floor, chosen at the request of the homeowners, set the direction for most of the materials and furniture. The surprisingly light-looking dining set follows the same honey-hue of the floor, and is placed decisively in the centre of the space. Beside it, a portion of wall storage behind frosted glass panels makes for a personalised backdrop to the space.

PROJECT DETAILS EXECUTIVE HDB APARTMENT, 1,200 SQFT

Smart designs are hard to come by in this age of cookie-cutter homes (no matter how different they try to be), but this apartment is a good example of design that is sensible, practical and refreshing. What the designers at Artistroom were after was a home that works for the small three-generation family, while offering a contemporary way of living. This they achieved with clever spatial planning and a strict editing eye when it came to materials and furniture choices.



▲ A single low cabinet runs across the entire length of the dining and living area, keeping things consistent and neat. Above, a full wall of shelves are set behind a mix of opaque soft-grey panels and black aluminium-framed glass panels, all of which can be slid into various permutations. It is a feature wall of a different sort – one that is highly functional, and also very discreet.

◀ Artistroom is always extremely careful about how it incorporates built-in carpentry. Too little and a space becomes impractical. Too much and the space feels bulky and closed in. In the kitchen, the designers struck the perfect balance with L-shaped under-counter storage laminated in dark wood, and a full-height, white storage unit by the side as additional storage space.



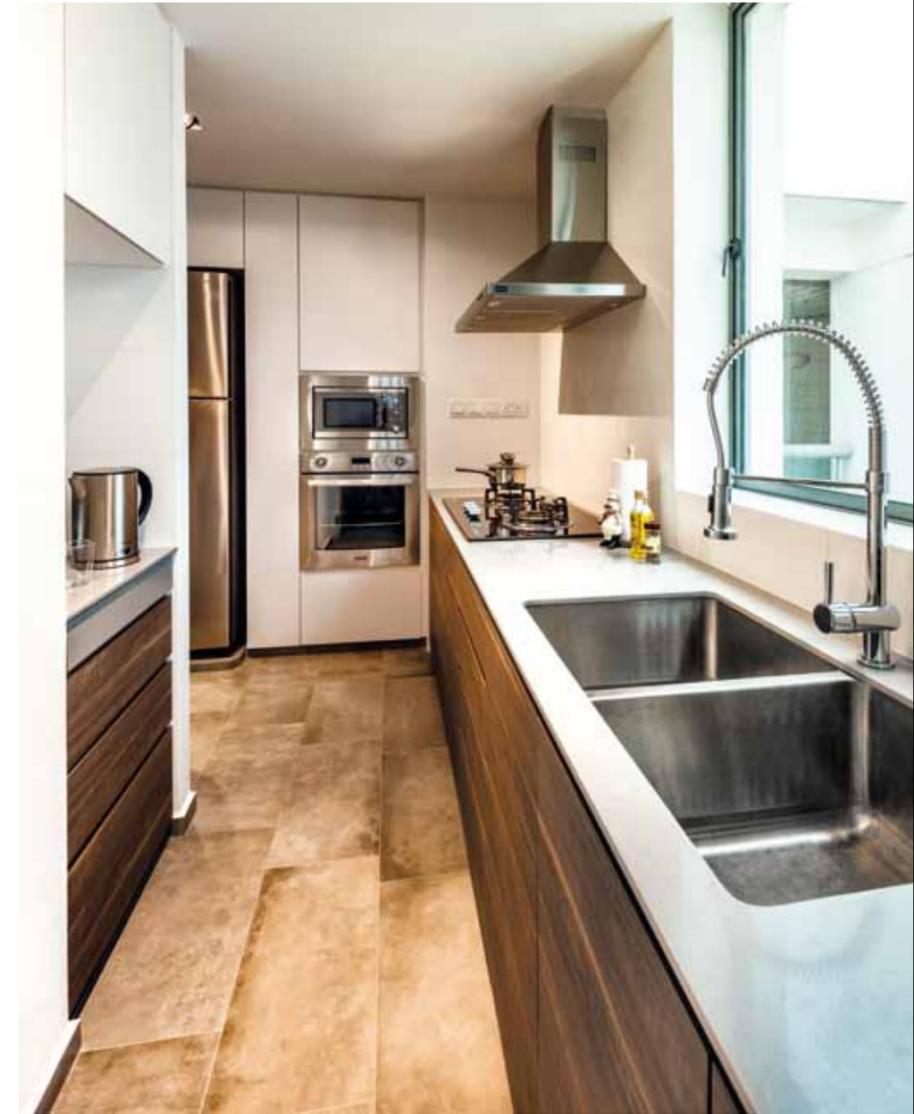
PROJECT DETAILS 2-BEDROOM CONDO, 1,000 SQFT

Homes take after those who live in it. It's the way it should be, and that's how this apartment at Astor Green was designed. Home to a couple, both of whom work in the Singapore Armed Forces, Artistroom wanted the space to reflect the owners' rugged lifestyle without going down the path of being overly gritty. An industrial-influenced space seemed most appropriate, with textures and materials being key in creating the look.



✔ A study room that was previously hidden behind solid walls is now an airy work space thanks to aluminium-framed frosted glass panels that encase the room. Set right beside the communal spaces, it effectively creates the impression of an altogether larger apartment. And if privacy is needed, smart-looking blinds get the job done easily.

⤴ A cement screed floor is the lynchpin of the industrial feel of the apartment. However, to warm the space up, the designers incorporated dark brown tones through furniture pieces and joinery. Notably, the TV console has been designed with consideration for the service yard directly behind such that the back of the console juts out behind the wall to form a shelf in the yard. Though not immediately obvious, the design is compact, concise and clever.



⤵ As is the case with most condominium apartments, the kitchen is not afforded the luxury of space. A simple galley-configuration dictated that little could be done to further maximise the potential of the space. However, they did switch out the floor tiles for something that's more suited to the overall industrial look. Cabinet fronts also follow a darker laminate covering to remain consistent with the rest of the apartment.

✔ The odd angles of the apartment are most obvious in the bedrooms. Tackling this with ease, the designers combined two rooms to create a walk-in wardrobe for the master bedroom and adeptly turned the odd corner of the room into an intimate walk-in wardrobe. The sleeping area is separated from the walk-in wardrobe by a frosted glass sliding door, and is itself designed as a simple, airy resting space devoid of unnecessary design frills.



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