

# LYDIA SO, AIA, LEED AP

## BIOGRAPHY

Lydia moved to San Francisco after college 19 years ago and calls San Francisco her home. She was born in Hong Kong when it was a British colony. It was the freedom, diversity and equalities of this City that inspired her to stay. She enjoys riding bikes with her daughter to school from their home in the Mission.

Lydia is an astute architect highly skilled in solving problems through design thinking. Her brush strokes in architectural design & preservation and real estate developments span across North America, China and Japan. A dynamic collaborative communicator, she believes design is not just skin deep and focuses on building relationships among stakeholders. She is proven to excel in projects that leverage design quality, historic significance, regulatory constraints and construction realities to improve our living environments for generations to enjoy.

Lydia's work has made positive impacts on regional economic growth, transit oriented developments and sustainability. Her global experience includes the tallest building, China World Trade Center, for the Olympics in Beijing. Creatively designed adaptive re-use of historically significant building for Adobe HQ in San Francisco, Hutong (traditional dwellings) in Beijing Finance Street Daji mixed use development, Apple Store Stockton Street in SF, Apple Store Soho in New York and Apple Store Regent Street in London. The most advanced neuroscience building at UCSF Mission Bay and the world's first all glass spiral staircase in the Apple Store in Osaka, Japan. Lydia is very proud and honor to work alongside with the Chinese artisans from Suzhou to design the traditional Lan Su Chinese Garden in Portland, Oregon, based on a 2,000-year-old historical architecture design.

Prior to founding her own architecture and consulting firm in 2015, Lydia held a real estate design and management position at Apple which redefined the status quo of retail real estate development. Prior to that, Lydia was the first minority woman architect promoted to Technical Associate at, the eminence of architecture firms, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. She honed her design and preservation skills and trailblazed the technical aspects of architecture, engineering and construction practice. It was her first job at Bohlin, Cywinski, Jackson where she met Steve Jobs whom she was involved with inventing the first nine Apple Stores.

## EDUCATION

Bachelor of Architecture, Business Administration Minor, Dean's List  
Portland Urban Architecture Center  
**UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, 2000**

Leadership & Management  
Certificate

**APPLE UNIVERSITY, 2014**

## CREDENTIALS

**Registered Architect**, CA C-31721

Member, **American Institute of Architects** since 2007

**LEED Accredited Professional**,  
**USGBC** since 2003

**Commissioner**, Civic Design  
Committee, Community Investment  
Committee, Nominating Committee,  
Liason to MOHCD

**San Francisco Arts Commission**

**Vice President** of the Board, **Asian  
American Architects & Engineers  
Association**

Impact Award Jury Panel,  
Architectural Guest Critic,  
**California College of Arts**

Master Planning Advisory  
Committee, **Presidio Knolls  
School**

USA Representative, the **Italy  
Stone Conference**, Carrara, Italy

## LANGUAGES

Native Cantonese and professional  
Mandarin speaker. Lydia's  
Chinese writing skills allow her to  
effectively demystify ambiguous  
translation assumptions in project  
management and business deals.

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## EXPERIENCE

### **SOLYD Architecture, Management & Design, Principal, 2015 - current**

A woman, minority owned certified SBE & LBE company based in San Francisco. Offering turn-key architectural design and consulting services to private residences, condos and offices owners. Specialty consulting services for third-party quality control, accessibility compliance, elevators system design, and artwork management.

### **San Francisco Arts Commission, Commissioner, 2016 - current**

Civic Design Committee - Serve as the architect seats to review and approve design of public buildings and infrastructures, and advice on the public art appropriateness criteria. Focus on multi-agency complex projects balancing construction budgetary realities and design excellence. Serve on MOHCD panels to select development & architect team to design and build affordable housing.

Community Investment Committee - Evaluate and award grants funding to artists and community cultural groups. Manage operation of the commission's cultural centers. Regulatory authority on Street Artist Permits and disputes.

Nominating Committee - Nominate and elect commission leadership by building consensus and bridges among fellow Commissioners and the Mayor's Office.

### **SOLYD online marketplace, Founder, 2014-15**

Founded an online technology platform for homeowners to hire independent prequalified architects, engineers, designers and experts on renovation projects.

### **Apple, Retail Real Estate Development, Design Manager, North America, 2011 - 14**

Managed real estate development and design new prototype initiatives of Apple Stores in North America. Negotiated optimal real estate leases with landlords and streamlined contracts with consultants through unique design approach. Established design and construction standards in line with financial pro forma analysis and store operations. Instrumental in interpreting appropriateness of design within historically significance contexts.

### **Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP, Associate, Senior Project Architect, 2003 - 11**

Directed extensive portfolio of work globally, including urban scale master planning, multi modal transportation centers, Class A commercial office mixed-use developments in United States and China.

### **Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects, Designer, 2001 - 03**

Key designer of R&D effort for the first nine Apple Flagship Stores including the engineering of all-glass stairs & Pixar Animation Studios HQ.

### **Merryman Barnes Architects, Designer, 1998**

Designer and translator of the Lan Su Chinese Historical Garden.