Kijeong Jeon
PROFESSOR, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO

Originally choosing a career path in interior architecture, Jeon became more interested in designing highly specialized built environments and in determining how they are utilized. His love for helping others was spurred by his extensive international experience working with students in California, New York, Italy and Zimbabwe. Even while growing up in a small farming town in South Korea, he knew that he wanted to travel the world and experience firsthand its people and cultures.

He is recognized as a pioneer in the design of multi-sensory environments and the use of Snoezelen therapy to create calming spaces for individuals with autism. He continues to study and conduct research in Autism Spectrum Disorder. His ultimate goal is to significantly improve the lives of individuals living with autism by the integration of these environments with conventional interior design.

Jeon received his Master of Interior Architecture from the University of Oregon in 1989 and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Architecture from the California College of the Arts. Most of his professional projects have been developing branded environments for major U.S. organizations. His projects have received numerous awards within the environmental design community. He has participated in various workshops and trained to work with multi-sensory environments.

In 2008, Kijeong Jeon designed the COVE center, located in Paradise, California. The COVE is a nonprofit organization that provides services for people with autism and other developmental disorders. Jeon began research on autism, its symptoms and the possibility of using environmental factors in treating the condition.

Jeon developed the COVE as a full-fledged multi-sensory environment design project. A space specifically created to relieve the stress and anxiety often apparent in individuals with developmental disorders. Jeon's design was comprehensively based on behavioral studies and analysis of how therapeutic equipment can be used for individuals with autism. Designing the COVE for individuals with autism changed Jeon's life.