



‘Healthy’ workstation tops international entries at Furniture Design Award 2016

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- Three Singaporean designers among 11 finalists from more than 300 international entries submitted for the award
- Winning entry ‘*Sit*’ from Poland, a culmination of a year’s research into human posture, brings home S\$20,000, double the cash prize compared to previous years
- Sustainability in design and materials key characteristic among top designs at the competition

Singapore, 10 March 2016 – The 22nd edition of the Furniture Design Award (FDA) drew to a close on a high note today as the top winner was unveiled at the International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS) 2016.

Katarzyna Kempa from Poland emerged as the grand winner of the Award, beating ten other international finalists who were also honoured at the ceremony today at the Singapore Expo.

A few changes were made to this year’s edition of the award which was first launched in 1993. These include removing age and background restrictions in order for designers of all levels to compete and be recognised on the same platform. The cash prize was also doubled from previous years, to S\$20,000.

This year’s grand winner *Sit*, by Katarzyna Kempa, who is a newly-minted Master’s degree graduate in Product Design from ECAL Switzerland, is a ‘body-minded’ furniture set that tackles the oft-overlooked health issues arising from a typical office workstation today. Through a year’s worth of research and careful attention to details in the design process, the simple-looking yet elegant furniture realigns the human seating posture and relieves pressure points on the feet. The innovative elastomer bushing and ball mechanism under the seat also promotes subtle yet constant spinal movement, which helps the body to naturally lubricate the intervertebral disc along the spine.

On top of bringing home the cash prize, Katarzyna will also get to showcase her winning design at a 12-sqm booth at next year’s IFFS/AFS. The prizes and certificates were presented today by guest-of-honour Mr Lim Hng Kiang, Minister of Trade and Industry (Trade), Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Vice-President of SFIC and Chairman of Design Development, Mr Mark Yong, said, “The FDA is a platform recognising the best furniture design talents, regardless of the designer’s age or professional experience level. The Award also provides a platform for our local design talents to compete with their international counterparts, giving an indication of where Singapore stands vis-à-vis other cities in terms of creativity and design.”

“Furniture companies around the world today are increasingly turning towards innovation and design as well as sustainability to ensure that they can produce environmentally responsible products at acceptable cost levels. These same values underline the FDA, making the award even timelier. We sincerely hope that the talents discovered through these awards will go on and continue to make a positive mark in the market with their sustainable design ideas.



“The fact that we are seeing a growing percentage of international submissions and designers from more countries in recent years also signals the award’s growing global traction.”

The FDA received a total of 315 entries from 35 different countries this year. About 55% of the entries received were submissions from overseas designers.

Each submission was judged based on four main criteria: degree of innovation; marketability; functionality and environmental sustainability. The judging panel this year comprises top design names from all over the world, including chief juror Patrick Chia from Singapore, Professor Byungkil Kang, South Korea; Colin Seah, Singapore; Jurgen Bey, Netherlands; Shin Azumi, Japan; and Tony K. M. Chang, Taiwan.

Commenting on the entries, chief juror Patrick Chia said “We are really pleased to see the growth of design standards among the participants, with bolder and more innovative designs being put forward for the competition. Despite being the first time that the award is opened up to all categories, the judging panel is impressed by how designs from young and upcoming designers can stand toe to toe with the concepts submitted by their matured and more experienced counterparts and peers. At the end of the day, businesses and end consumers can only stand to benefit from this prevalence of quality ideas and designs.”

One such young finalist is Jarrell Goh from Singapore and his quirky *Potato Furniture*. The recent graduate from Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (UCL), was so affected by the wastage of perishable food he had observed being discarded by supermarkets daily, that he spent his final year in school investigating the potential recycling of such waste into materials for furniture production.

The FDA provided the perfect opportunity for him to take his design experiments further. His Potato Furniture is made from fruits and vegetables, which are treated and dried in a special manner before being waterproofed with a milk-based sealant. The result – a resilient, characterful material that recycles food waste into commercially viable products.

Another notable finalist is seasoned local designer Nathan Yong. The 2008 President’s Designer of the Year and a two-time recipient of Red Dot Concept Design Awards strongly believes that sustainability is as much about how you use a material as it is about the kind of materials you use. This was well reflected in his creation, *Exolounge* – a modernistic, dual-function throne made of laser-cut, high grade steel and digitally mapped out calf leather. The minimalist design and high quality materials were to fashion a piece of furniture that promises to withstand the test of time, reducing the need to dispose and replace it in the long run.

Taking a leaf from nature’s book, fellow local finalist Keith Soh took an understated approach in his furniture, *Nest*. By layering coils of lacquered wood, he is able to create a well-contoured furniture piece that embraces the human natural form in a simple but yet aesthetically pleasing manner.

Organised by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) and supported by DesignSingapore Council (DSg), International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, SPRING Singapore, DesignS, American Hardwood Export Council and IFFS Pte Ltd, FDA 2016 is part of SingaPlural 2016 – the flagship event of Singapore Design Week.

For more information and photos on the FDA and its finalists, please refer to the factsheet attached, or visit <http://furnitureaward.sg/> or <http://tinyurl.com/FDA2016-media>



About FDA

The Furniture Design Award (FDA) is an annual furniture design competition organised by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC). It was first launched in 1993 as the Furniture Design Competition and was renamed FDA in 2003. The Award aims to uncover budding design talents and be a reputable showcase for the unique creations of the world's best creative minds. Increasingly, the Award has become a platform for exchange and networking amongst furniture manufacturers and designers internationally.

A project of SingaPlural — an annual design festival in March which showcases the best design elements from the multi-faceted creative spectrum of advertising, architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture, as well as interior, furniture, graphic and fashion design — the FDA is held in conjunction with the International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS), one of Asia's premiere furniture trade shows.

SingaPlural is also the anchor event of the Singapore Design Week.

About SingaPlural

SingaPlural showcases the best design elements from the multi-faceted creative spectrum – Advertising, Architecture, Urban Planning, Landscape Architecture, as well as Interior, Furniture, Graphic and Fashion Design.

Organised by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) since 2012, the name 'SingaPlural' is derived from a combination of the terms 'Singular' and 'Plural'; and was conceived from the need to create a common platform to bridge designers with the industry. SingaPlural 2016 is the anchor event of the Singapore Design Week and is held in conjunction with International Furniture Fair Singapore 2016, ASEAN Furniture Show, The Décor Show and furniPRO Asia.

Together with eight other network partners of DesignS, this week-long design celebration is an international platform for talents across the creative industries to engage and evoke the design senses of visitors; through installations, exclusively curated design spaces, symposiums and many other activities.

SingaPlural is supported by DesignSingapore Council, International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, Singapore Tourism Board, SPRING Singapore and Singapore Workforce Development Agency. It is also the anchor event of the Singapore Design Week, which is organised by the DesignSingapore Council, a part of the Ministry of Communications and Information.

For more information, please refer to www.SingaPlural.com; www.facebook.com/SingaPlural. Find us on Twitter (**@SingaPlural**) and Instagram (**#singaplural**).

About Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)

Singapore Furniture Industries Council was established in 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture and furnishings industry. Its membership comprises furniture manufacturers, interior fit-out specialists, retailers, designers, as well as furnishings and materials suppliers. Currently, the council represents 95% of established furniture



manufacturers in Singapore, of whom 65% have subsidiary manufacturing plants in various countries across the region, including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

SFIC's primary role is to promote the interests of its members and of the Singapore furniture and furnishings industry. For 35 years, SFIC has helped its members to adapt to changes in the business environment by introducing trade, talent, design development and business innovation activities, as well as upgrading business capabilities. Revolving around SFIC's 3i strategic framework – Improve, Innovate, and Integrate, all of the Council's programmes aim to grow the local furniture and furnishings industry and ultimately, to strengthen the 'Singapore brand' globally.

Visit www.singaporefurniture.com for more information

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