

Fair awards young designers and exhibitors in recognition of industry excellence

Bright future for Malaysian furniture

By WONG LI ZA

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IT WAS Lim Bo Qiang's second attempt at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) Furniture Design Competition and this time, the interior designer aced it by winning the coveted top prize.

The 27-year-old Lim's modular Muk Sofa impressed a panel of international judges, earning him RM10,000, a trophy and certificate.

Second prize went to UPM industrial design student Izyan Syamimi Zainol, 26, with her Rebung Shelves, while architect Kaylynn Low Kah Ling, 24, clinched third place with her Cheng Ho Chair.

Both received cash prizes of RM5,000 and RM2,500, respectively.

Batu Pahat-born Lim was chosen from 10 finalists who were shortlisted from 100 entries.

His second entry, the Dudoo easy chair, also qualified for the final round, and earned BSL Furniture Sdn Bhd and Fella Design Sdn Bhd the title of Best Prototype Maker for collaborating on the rubber wood and foam fabric cushion chair.

"The MIFF Furniture Design Competition encourages the creation of an identity for Malaysian furniture that gives recognition to the furniture industry, either through innovation, design or functionality, and provides young aspiring designers a platform to showcase their talents and innovation," said Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) deputy chief executive officer Datuk Susila Devi.



(From left) UBM Asia managing director (Asean business) M. Gandhi, Low, Izyan, Malaysian Timber Council chief executive officer Datuk Dr Abdul Rahim Nik, Lim and MIFF chairman Datuk Dr Tan Chin Huat.

She was guest-of-honour at the awards ceremony held at the Matrade Exhibition and Convention Centre.

"The theme 'Living Furniture, Global Perspective' is timely as it reflects the need for furniture industry players to remain relevant by being innovative and creative in designing furniture that appeals to the lifestyle of both local and global consumers," said Susila, adding that Matrade recently launched the Youth Exporters Development Programme.

MIFF Furniture Design Competition chief judge Philip Yap emphasised that in furniture design, pieces have to look good

yet serve their needs.

"Our aim is to encourage commercially-viable designs rather than over-conceptual ones.

"We are pleased that most entries this year lean towards commercial designs.

"These are designs which manufacturers can respond to," Yap said.

For the exhibitor prizes, Asahi Co Ltd of Japan took home the Platinum Award for best product in household furniture with its Pulito sofa and table set, while Jemaramas Jaya Sdn Bhd secured a similar award for its Platz+ series for best office furniture in the Furniture Excellence Award category.

The Best Presentation Award for most attractive booth went to Euro Chairs Manufacturing (M) Sdn Bhd for bare space booth and Seow Buck Sen Furniture (M) Sdn Bhd for shell scheme booth.

Chapas Selectas S.L of Spain was awarded first prize in the non-furniture booth category.

Malaysia's furniture export experienced a 14.1% growth in 2015, increasing to RM9.14bil from RM8.01bil in 2014.

The largest segment came from wooden furniture, which comprised 80%. The United States was the biggest export market last year, with 31% of total exports.