

## RED NETWORKING

## LOOKING AHEAD:

The PAM-Tan Sri Ar Chan Sau Lai Architecture Award 2013 that was aimed at recognising emerging talents among architectural students yielded a rich harvest of ideas



YVONNE YOONG

During an interval reserved for the media to pose questions to the Founder of Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia's PAM-Tan Sri Ar Chan Sau Lai Architecture Award after the winners announcement and award presentation, Tan Sri Ar Chan appeared relaxed as he eloquently fielded questions from the vantage point of the revolving Atmosphere 360 restaurant in the Kuala Lumpur Tower which boasts of having the highest view in town.

He recollected his first brush with having received an award when he was an architecture student and the positive impact it made on him. Buoyed by a sense of achievement, this is what he hopes to impart to the young architectural talents.

"My vision is for the award to impart a sense of prestige to the architectural profession in Malaysia, by branding and elevating outstanding students, and drawing attention to the industry.

"This collaborative effort with PAM, which lays the foundation for internships, recognition and exposure, is essential in building a new generation of homegrown architects to pave the way to meet the challenges of the future," explained the obviously resolute architect who has designed some of the buildings that grace the city's skylines.

Judging from the proliferation of architectural designs showcased during the awards ceremony recently, the aim of the award to spur young architectural talents on is already bearing fruit.



PAM President Ar Chan said the award was open to final year architecture students.



Chua's entry entitled *KL Rain Roof* hopes to solve the pollution problem at the Puduraya Bus Terminal, KL, with his architectural renderings navigating rainfall through the roof's design earning him the award cash prize of RM25,000.

## Awarding architectural talents



Tan Sri Ar Chan, founder of the award hopes to spur the growth of homegrown architectural talents.

Besides Tan Sri Ar Chan, Executive Chairman of Beneton Properties and Member of the PAM Education Fund, the other jury members included Ar Hj Saifuddin Ahmad, PAM Immediate Past President; Ar Boon Chee Wee, PAM Past President and Convener of the award; Ar Mohd Zulhemlee An, PAM Vice President and Education Committee Chairman and Ar Dr Lim Teng Ngiam, PAM Education Fund Board Member.

This year, a total of 31 entries were received from students of local and overseas universities and colleges.



PAM Immediate Past President Ar Saifuddin was one of the judges for the award.

### Shortlisted winners

Chua Yheu-Shen, a student from the Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture, UK was named the award winner, with his entry entitled *KL Rain Roof* proposing an idea that he envisions would solve the pollution problem that is prevalent at the Puduraya Bus Terminal, KL. His design that focuses on navigating rainfall through the roof's design earned him the main cash prize of RM25,000.

Other recipients of the award who received a RM5,000 commendation cash prize each included Mazlin binti Mohtar, a student from the University of Melbourne, Australia for her conceptualisation of *Avalon 2032: Adaptive Airport* that celebrates technology and sustainability in the airport building design and Muhammad Qhwarizmi bin Norhisham from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam for his *Institute of Mental Athleticism* gaming community project.

Clifford Loh Jia Yang, a student from the University of Tasmania, Australia received a commendation for his *George Town Performing Arts & Media Centre* project that explores a designated space to foster a deep sense of appreciation for the performing arts and new media arts.

The joint submission entitled *Shengsi Islands: Tourism Masterplanning* by Ho Meng Hng and Thor Eu Ric, both students from the University of Melbourne, Australia clinched a commendation for their tourism industry rejuvenation idea for an archipelago off Shanghai, China.

Five finalists who walked away with a cash prize of RM1,000 each included student Yasmin binti Abdul Rahman from Universiti Teknologi Mara, Shah Alam Superfarm with her project aimed at increasing food production by way of a multi-level precision farm design as opposed to conventional farming methods that are currently employed.

Nurlaila Izyan binti Mad Zin from Universiti Putra Malaysia was another award finalist for her *Pudu Creative Hub* project to turn Pudu Prison site into a space for creative tourism to thrive. Other finalists included Azharul bin Kaspol from Universiti Putra Malaysia

whose *Angkasapuri Symphony Arena* project explores the idea of turning a concert hall into a symbol of the cultural spirit of a city.

Esmonde Yap Shiwen from University of New South Wales, Australia with his entry entitled *The Recovery of Fallen Horizon* highlights the central idea underpinning this project that sets out to explore the relationship between the sky (air), earth (ground) and the horizon (the intangible), thereby leading to a design interpretation which is sensitive to all three elements exploring an architectural horizon that reflects the undulating patterns of the surroundings.

Chuah Keat Wei from the University of Melbourne, Australia with his *Borderland* project proposed the redesigning of a cathedral in which the design breaks down the hard edges to connect seamlessly with the streets. In essence, he said it is like "the slope of the forecourt (which) draws the city into the depth of the cathedral, where the gradient shifts from secular to sacred".

### KL Rain Roof

Chua, 25, who is now a designer at Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), London emerged as the winner with his entry, *KL Rain Roof*.

"This project is a response towards pollution and the monsoon season in KL. It challenges the typology of a transport terminal for buses which predominantly have seen vehicles produce polluted carbon monoxide emissions.

"A clear example would be the old Puduraya Bus Terminal being badly damaged by pollution. This evolves into the question of environmental degradation that must be addressed in tandem with the experimentation of renewable building types without sacrificing the need for an effective traffic system. It looked at the possibility of creating a cell that would excite a momentum, generating cycles of (a) self-cleansing environment using rain water."

He said the solution hinges around the excessive rainfall in KL during the day to "cleanse the air within the terminal".

"The roof design which allows guided rain penetration forms the rain curtains

within the terminal building, creating cinematic experience without affect the movement of commuters. It not only reduces air pollutants but the same time, creates a cool indoor environment. Water collected will be reused domestically," he said of idea following six months' research work.

Envisioning the use of materials including structural steel and composite steel, and secondary materials including galvanised aluminium roof panels, said that when viewed from a wide perspective, the concept of the city "approached as a project, not in the sense of a masterplan but rather learning from the characteristics that make a city".

"Establishing the environmental ambition and questioning the typical function of a roof" in order to enable typologically enhanced environmental condition" was his *modus operandi*. Having identified the "problems of the city" as a starting point, he then experimented on "the typological transformation of a terminal".

"My interest has always been about architecture's role in our cities today. If buildings can be renewed by establish

architecture's most fundamental attributes related to building type (it's about) experimenting how architectural ideas of the city can provide alternatives to the design philosophy dominated by disciplines of urban design and masterplanning. This has been core subject and interest that I studied over the years at the AA," he stressed.

Driven by a keen interest in "building" and the idea that architecture is a "three-dimensional anthropologist that serves as a medium of engagement between the public and the private domains", he vouched that depending its execution, architecture could be a "small player within a wider context".

"Therefore, for architecture to play an effective role in our cities today has to reach a scale beyond itself. Through the multiplicity of types of infrastructure, will architecture have power to formulate a political order to an architecture of the city," he opined.

Elements of sustainability included, with the project responding to the Green Building Index (GBI), fulfil the six criteria - water efficiency, energy efficiency, indoor environmental quality, sustainable site planning & management materials & resources and innovative

**Avalon 2032: Adaptive Airport**  
Mazlin's entry entitled *Avalon 2032: Adaptive Airport* was part of an individual studio project with the overall project taking ten weeks to complete from idea to the final conceptualisation.

"Airport (design demands) a pro-oriented architecture. The studio investigated the evolution of airport design by considering how change the processing facilities would affect the architectural outcomes. The aim was for passengers to have a seamless experience while going through the boarding process from checking in to boarding the aircraft," she said.

"The philosophy of the design was to celebrate technology and sustainability by making the process transparent. The main driver behind this philosophy was behaviour change, the notion of 'you don't know you can't act on'.



"By making the process visible and enjoyable, it is hoped that the user will be able to understand the approach taken in balancing sustainability, technology and design," said Mazlin, 30 who is currently working as a designer at IPartnership in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Her aim is to entertain the prospect of celebrating the process of transporting luggages from one tray to another by making this technology shown to the public by way of an open design scheme.

She envisioned that a lot of the passenger facilitating processes would be "designed to get users involved in the system". Singling out the baggage handling system as perhaps the "most exciting aspect in a terminal building" to her, she suggested that the technology be celebrated to a point where "people get to see this interchange of systems"

past five years, the gaming community has been actively involved in organising events, tournaments and exhibitions.

"The idea for the project came upon the realisation of the lack of excitement in (the) singular function (of) architectural elements... Why can't architectural elements such as walls and floors serve more (functions) than in their present state?" he questioned, drawing on the examples of gaming events that require a set of unique spatial qualities.

He challenged the existing status quo whereby the "versatility of architectural event spaces has long indulged in the sheer size of its spatial quantities". In its place, he proposed the idea that this "relationship of bigness and versatility of space" is no longer relevant due to the expensive operational cost.

To him, the "formation of spatial

features that would satisfy the gaming event programme's spatial needs.

"The project tries to challenge sustainability beyond its conventional paradigm. I always prefer performance based architecture that performs better than its conventional relatives. The event hedron is efficient and sustainable as compared to other event hosting spaces.

"Unlike most event spaces, they need heavy and intensive internal alteration to suit certain events and also have low usage frequency due to its versatility. The hedron can host a multitude of events, and can change floor profiles with the flick of a button. This is the new way to approach spatial sustainability."

The design scheme uses both active and passive systems to ensure the building consumes less energy while cultivating resources for its own use. These include heat recovery wheels for the air conditioning system, rainwater harvesting, frictionless rotating bearing and efficient vertical transport machinery. The building's orientation is well accounted for with large overhangs and a high ceiling height that encourages natural cross ventilation. Ample natural lighting is achieved through the use of substantial glass walls and a skylight.

"Architecture has always been and will be a testament of civilisation. It clearly acts as a direct reflection of our way of life, technology and social behaviour. The biggest architectural contribution is to be part of human civilisation and become a mirror of ideologies, thoughts, dreams and ideas of mankind for future generations to appreciate and ponder.

"Architecture around the world is different and is reflective of the environment and context. From socialist housing to regime halls and statues, from mystical pyramids and holy sites around

"slipping" into the environment and into the subconscious minds of the public.

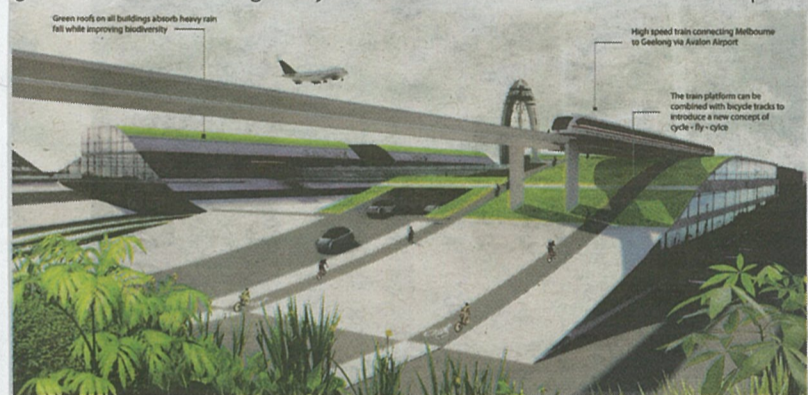
"I've designed the building to be partially air-conditioned, so permeable materials and vent blocks clad most of the circulation spaces around the theatre. There's the possibility of opening up the performing arts space to the outside, so event organisers can choose to hold events in naturally ventilated auditoriums. The permeability of the building's facade allows performances to be projected from within." The design sets about to create an architecture that

days, so I thought, why not master it and contribute to nation-building."

**Shengsi Islands: Tourism Plan**

*Shengsi Islands: Tourism Masterplanning*, the joint design by Ho, 24, and Thor, 25, captures the idea of re-invigorating the tourism industry in an archipelago off Shanghai, China while retaining the local culture and lifestyles of the islanders - and masterplanning their future.

The masterplan proposal integrates socio-economic solutions in the *Village Hub and Rapid Deployment Pods* to



**Mazlin's Avalon 2032: Adaptive Airport** project investigates the evolution of airport design to see how changes to processing facilities effect the architecture.

which is currently not shown to the public anywhere in the terminal areas.

"Another example of an exciting system at play can be seen in the design of the air-traffic control tower. Because of the height required and the wind condition at the site, it enables the structure to function as a wind generator that creates renewable energy. This is also another one of the many examples of the design whereby technology and sustainability are celebrated in unison," said the first-time contest participant.

Mazlin, who affirmed that for her, "it's architecture or nothing", said she knew her calling was towards this journey of "dedication towards art and architecture" since she truly enjoys designing, finding solutions to design challenges and looking into reinterpretation of design.

"Whenever I was given a task or a project, I will start by thinking about how others have done it, whether there is a better way to do it, and should it continue to function the way it has been or is there a better way to reinterpret it. Most importantly, I will always ask the question "What is the big idea?"

**Institute of Mental Athleticism**

Muhammad's entry entitled *Institute of Mental Athleticism* focuses on the gaming community through his technologically advanced design. He was aware of the competition since its inception in 2011, as PAM had invited students to design a logo for the award. His design emerged as the official logo for this award.

"I wasn't able to enter at the launch of the first year's competition as I was still in the first year of my Master's programme. But, with the announcement for the 2013 award, I did not hesitate to send in my final year design thesis," he said.

Stating that he is an avid fan of video games during his leisure time, Muhammad, 24, said that he has always been fascinated with the surreal environment in the video gaming world. Hence, he wanted to have a piece of it incorporated in reality. He said that in the

quality must be rethought in an unorthodox method" to address the future challenges of the built industry.

"The idea of creating flexible spaces with a large undefined flat space is no longer a sustainable approach. The



**Complex multi-storey structures characterise Muhammad's entry entitled Institute of Mental Athleticism** that draws focus on the gaming community.

alteration will consume a lot of resources and the spatial quality will be subpar.

"The project attempts to present an alternative to the current event space scenario with optimised performance of the space realised through juxtaposition," he said of the design conceptualisation.

"By creating a structure that embodies a number of programmes in the form of a polyhedron, a single structure can be used all year round with minimal or no physical alterations. This creates a new paradigm of thinking for sustainable spaces. Instead of four spaces to host different events, a singular geometry that is capable of performing the same task will save space, materials and costs."

Drawing a comparison with versatile event spaces in the past working solely on the basis of "whether the space is large enough to accommodate a programme or an event", he said inevitably, the design does not satisfy "the needs of unique physical space attributes of a gaming event". This is because not all programmes demand a huge space, but rather, a different characteristic of surface profile and/or wall and ceiling

the world, architecture will continue to serve society and be in the historical fabric as well as the unpredictable future," he pondered. His fascination for construction trailers and the movement of cranes at the construction sites, and passion for form and function has grown to the stage where he wants to "fabricate experiences" related to spatial usage.

**Performing Arts & Media Centre**

Encouraged to participate by his former lecturer, Loh, 26, entered the competition in hopes of gaining recognition in the local architecture scene and to gauge his level among other fresh graduates in the field.

Loh's Penang-inspired George Town Performing Arts & Media Centre project seeks to "open up the idea of performance" to a "performative space" to foster an appreciation of the arts among locals in view of the globalisation of performing arts and new media arts.

"The architecture produced is akin to a blank canvas or lantern that has the flexibility for the performing and media arts to be projected onto it, eventually

allows for creative reinterpretation of the local "intangible" cultural attributes.

"The blank lantern concept allows for local cultural shows to be deconstructed via the senses, allowing for new interpretations. There are efforts by the people to interpret traditional cultural performing arts in a creative manner, however what is lacking is the architectural tool in which to do so more effectively," said Penang-born Loh.

The building acts as an instrument for the deconstruction of the performing arts through the senses, which are then reconstructed and projected back to the urban stage. The stages occupy the streets while building facades act as backdrops and screens. This opens up possibilities for the public to navigate the composition of the art forms while creating new interpretations.

The act of taking apart and reconstructing the senses in public is, in itself, performative. The product of the deconstruction is part of the display. This interrogates the composition of the performing arts, leading to a new interpretation. Thus, the architecture enables the urban public spectator to "physically and sensorially" be intertwined with the audience and the institutional spaces of the performing arts spaces, leading to new interactivity.

"I have witnessed changes that are happening within George Town after the UNESCO World Heritage Site listing, so this is the inspiration of the project. I tend to get excited about architecture for the performing arts and have always been fond of architecture ever my school

enhance the islanders' living standards whilst "providing new opportunities for tourism".

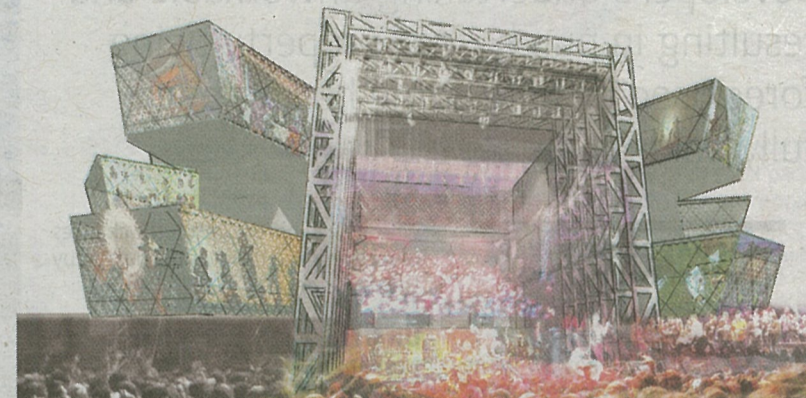
The project is a strategic and systemic intervention in establishing a fractal network distribution between the tourism authority and the villagers of the Shengsi Islands through a lateral framework in architecture.

"The architectural fabric was geared towards local and regional materials utilising vernacular approaches in building construction. The sustainable elements evolved from a very considered and sensible approach in our scheme—from the response of site constraints (topography, lack of vehicular access, narrow roads) to the implementation of positive development in design and building strategies, developing a regenerative and sustainable natural and cultural ecology of means," they said.

"We celebrate individuality and respect everyone's path in life. The amazing thing about architecture is that it goes beyond the built form; it enables one to immerse in rigorous thinking and to challenge the model through spatial syntax and the embodiment of carnal relationship to space. With such a powerful involvement in human contact, architecture has the capacity to shape humanity and our way of life. In short, architecture is the fundamental instrument in human evolution."

"Essentially, the project is a culmination of keen observation, strategic approach and elegant architecturalisation," they concluded.

Pics courtesy of PAM-Tan Sri Ar Chan Sau Lai Architecture Award 2013.



**Loh's Penang-inspired George Town Performing Arts & Media Centre** project is aimed at "opening up the idea of performance" through its design.



**The joint submission project by Ho and Thor called Shengsi Islands: Tourism Masterplanning** highlights the idea of re-invigorating the tourism industry.