

AM

50th Anniversary Issue



12 PROJECTS
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ART
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DESIGN

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Why is waterproofing important for any building?

When it comes to the planning process in pre-construction, waterproofing is often on the lower priority or excluded entirely, other areas such as design specifications and site preparation become the main focus of the planning process. In Malaysia, we live in a climate that has constant thunderstorms, rainy weather and frequent monsoon seasons which increases the risk of damage to surfaces in the long run, rapidly deteriorates the building's aesthetics and the overall quality of the interior and exterior surfaces of the building. Keeping this in mind, waterproofing is an investment that would benefit property developers and owners. In the long run, constant repairs and regular maintenance will be more costly and ineffective as opposed to preventing these issues in the first place.

Waterproofing improves indoor air quality by preventing moulds and mildew

To build a strong waterproofing foundation for buildings, regardless of building typography, the use of proper products and coatings systems is a definite recommendation. Waterproofing is essential to help reduce moisture levels in the interior surfaces, prevent water damage and structural breakdown across common surfaces such as walls, ceilings, basements, floors, rooftops and bathrooms. The lack of proper waterproofing systems will often cause recurring issues that may occur by water leakage that forms cracks, blisters and moulds which may cause lead to respiratory problems caused by the growth of mildew and spores.

Effective solutions for every surface, Nippon Paint has you covered

Preventing water breaches, protects the building's structure by keeping the interior and exterior areas dry and safe. In order to do this effectively, there is great important to select quality, durable waterproofing solutions. It is important to ensure that the right waterproofing solution is applied for the specific surface to ensure an effective system throughout the building.

Nippon Paint's waterproofing solutions are backed by industry market research and technology, having worked with its counterparts in China, further driving innovative solutions for various surfaces. These solutions have contributed to various iconic projects and landmarks across the globe such as the **Hong Kong-Zhu-hai-Macau Bridge**, the **Beijing-Shanghai high-speed train**, the **Shanghai Tower** and the **Three Gorges Dam**.

Waterproofing for roof protection

For new buildings, roofs with unique detailing and is made up of different materials can be a complex surface to waterproof. For such surfaces, it is recommended to opt for **Nippon LM PUSIL** – a 1k advanced hybrid technology polyurethane-silicone liquid waterproofing membrane. Moisture cured to form a seamless, UV-durable, protective waterproof and decorative membrane, **Nippon LM PUSIL** has excellent weatherability and is resistant to sun, rain, wind. Additionally, it negates negative water pressure that may be caused by water ponding at roof top or gutter. Its microstructure keeps water out but allows water vapour to escape, thus preventing the formation of blisters.

For older buildings, roofs with larger surface areas of concrete flat roofs with poor surface conditions, proper waterproofing solutions are necessary to prevent unwanted issues. **Nippon SM BITUMEN M4000** waterproofing sheet membranes showcases properties such as excellent mechanical strength, elasticity and durability. This economic yet effective waterproofing solution is designed to be placed on top of concrete slabs and is ideal for medium to large RC roof (exposed and inverted roofs).



Waterproofing for wet areas

The application of effective waterproofing solutions is critical to minimise leakages in common wet areas such as bathrooms, kitchens and swimming pools. Products such as **Nippon CM Flexible**, a two component, flexible, green label and SPAN certified, acrylic polymer modified cementitious waterproofing coating, are high resistance to both positive and negative water pressure. This solution is made to strengthen the structure through anti-carbonation and anti-chloride ion diffusion protection coatings and provides sufficient adhesion to wet surfaces and green concrete, which is easily applicable to such surfaces.

Waterproofing for basements

Common structural issues are usually caused by recurring water leakages in areas such as basements. In order to prevent such underlying issues for occurring, an effective waterproofing system needs to be implemented from the get-go, with products such as **Nippon SM Self Adhesive**, a polymer modified self-adhesive bitumen waterproofing membrane, which is laminated onto a tough high-density polyethylene (HDPE) file on one side (facing up) and a silicone release file on the other side (facing down).

Nippon SM Self Adhesive conforms to the requirement of BS8102, and is designed for below ground waterproofing membrane. Functioning as a waterproof and vapour proof protective layer, **Nippon SM Self Adhesive** has excellent adhesion to both vertical and horizontal surfaces, with good tear and puncture resistance. This waterproofing membrane is easily applicable via cold application, self-adhesive methods.

Note: Waterproofing products may vary depending on the design and requirements of each basement.

Our Work

Nippon Paint has led various waterproofing projects for both new buildings and old buildings such as **Amber Court, Genting Highlands, Gleneagles Hospital (Penang), Five Stones Condominium, Saujana Golf & Country Club (Selangor), Institute Latihan DBKL, Pavilion Elite and Residensi Rampai II in Kuala Lumpur.**

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Getting a grip on your floors?

To begin flooring is the overall aesthetic, the final touches, that completes the look and feel of any structure. It is an integral part to any building from commercial, industrial and residential developments. Beyond that, the core foundation to the structure of any building are floors, as it provides a level surface to support weight from occupants, furniture and other structural fixtures.

Every spill, scratch or drop ends up on the floor and it is simply the highest contact surface area of any room. Therefore, during the construction process, be sure to take into consideration your flooring needs and ensure that the following components are met when selecting the appropriate solutions.

- ✓ Durability
- ✓ Functionality
- ✓ Easy Maintenance

To determine a suitable flooring system for each type of space, make sure to keep in mind the many challenges you may face. Address these challenges so that the proper, recommended solutions can be put into place for your peace of mind.

More than just aesthetics

If you are looking to elevate a space further, flooring is a definite point that sets the overall appearance of a room and provides the base tone for what a space should be. Typically, floors are selected based on their appearance, without taking into consideration its functional benefit for respective spaces. For example, commercial interior spaces and industrial spaces requires different floor systems based on the frequency of usage and overall purpose of the area.

When you lack a suitable flooring system your floors will deteriorate sooner than later. Hence, this would affect the overall longevity of the building, and would result in increasing costs of building maintenance.

The ideal solution for your flooring needs

For over 50 years Nippon Paint has been driving innovation in the coatings industry, backed by the latest technologies. Flooring innovations by Nippon Paint are widely used throughout various commercial, residential and industrial properties in Malaysia.

With solutions that cater to every need, Nippon Paint offers a wide range of solutions that includes a green choice of water-based epoxy coatings, the popular solvent-free self-levelling epoxy floorings, and the hygienic polyurethane (PU) cementitious flooring.

Spearheading its journey of innovation, Nippon Paint has recently introduced its **Nippon Ucreed** series, the latest range of flooring solutions that is specifically developed for food processing and pharmaceutical industries. Whereas, **Nippon FloorShield** and **Nippon DeckGuard** are well suited for industrial and commercial purposes, and carparks respectively that require heavy, medium and light duty flooring solutions. It offers a range of complete finishing such as smooth finish, orange-peel finish and broadcast texture finish for all types of needs and purposes.



Nippon Ucreed Series

This latest range of flooring solutions are specifically developed for the food processing and pharmaceutical industry, equipped with chemical, thermo shock resistance, and abrasion resistance. These range of coatings also effectively resist bacterial growth, easy-to-clean and impact resistance. With these holistic range of coatings solutions, Nippon Paint aims to provide end-to-end flooring solutions, offering both functional and aesthetic benefits, resulting in a beautiful and long-lasting floor finish.

Nippon FloorShield Series

This range is recommended for industrial purposes (manufacturing spaces, production plants, warehouses and workshops) and commercial spaces (shopping malls, offices and modern residential buildings). It is the ideal choice for such spaces as it covers a wide spectrum of customer different needs by promoting bright and clean spaces, self levelling, easy-to-clean, excellent chemical resistant, durability, anti-slip and UV resistant.

Nippon DeckGuard Series

Offers end-to-end protection, with anti-skid, UV resistant, sound dampening, crack bridging, moisture tolerant and waterproofing properties suitable for all types of carparks, ranging from basements, intermediate and exposed bays.

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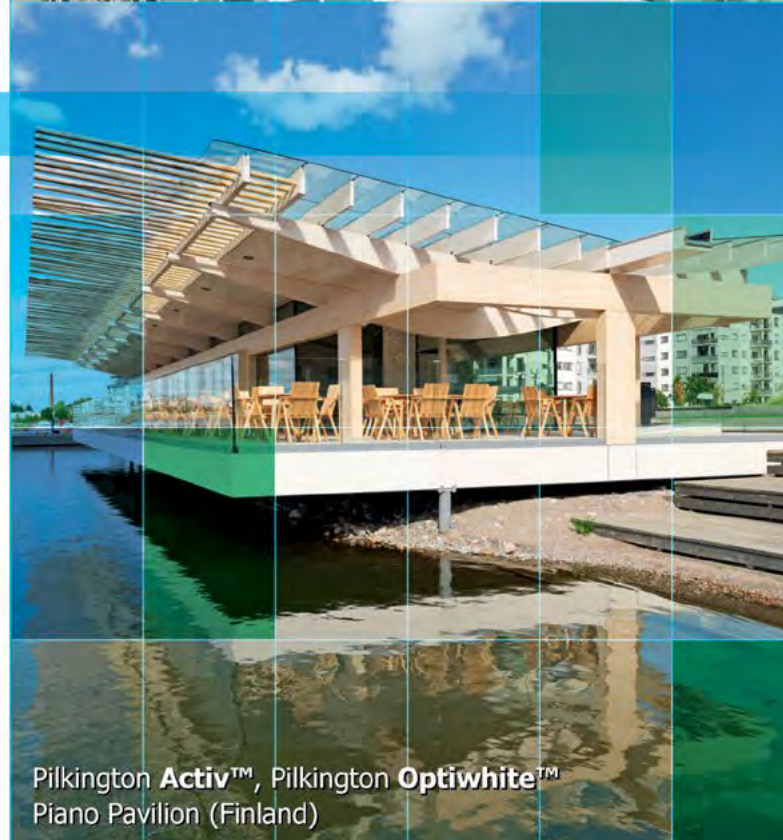
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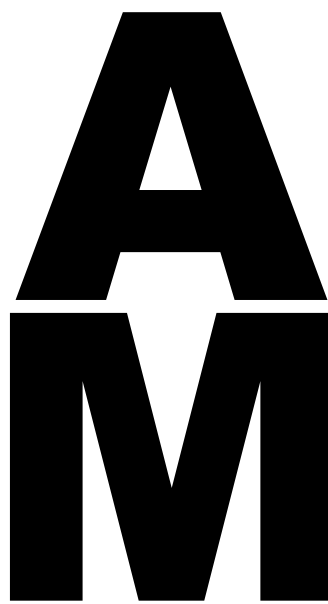
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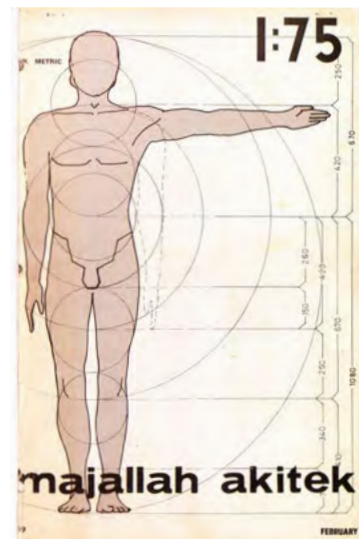
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WE'RE BACK!



Cover of the first Majallah Akitek, edition 1, 1971.



Cover of the Majallah Akitek, vol. 1, issue 1, 1975

It is my pleasure to bring back to you Architecture Malaysia, or better known to all as AM, the official magazine of PAM – the Malaysian Institute of Architects. AM had been missing for some time now, having ceased publication in August last year for a multitude of reasons and difficulties and also due to the effects of Coronavirus. But here we are, in 2021, and on behalf of PAM, I am delighted to introduce to you the new AM. A much-enlarged magazine with twice the pages, with a refreshed layout and new content mix. What makes this even more special is that it's the 50th anniversary special issue of AM.

When PAM council asked us to manage the magazine again last September, it surprised my committee that before we even met, our publishing partner terminated themselves. Under the previous team and publisher, AM stopped at vol. 32 (issue 3). As we are continuing afresh, we are now re-starting at vol. 33.1.

The AM magazine is fundamental to PAM as its public voice; we cannot and should not lose our presence in the public space. AM plays an important role in communicating the professions' agendas, and promotes the works and activities of its members to the wider audience in Malaysia and internationally. Having been editor of ten issues previously (from vol. 29.5, August 2017 to vol. 31.2, April 2019) and overseeing a revamp then, my position is that it is imperative to have AM continue. But first, some history and background.

To recap, and for those not in the know, PAM is amongst the oldest societies in Malaysia, further evidence of architecture being one of the oldest professions. Founded in 1920 as the Institute of Architects Malaya, its name was changed in 1948 to the Federation of Malaya Society of Architects (FMSA) then allied to the Royal Institute of British Architects. Another change to its current name to reflect Malaysia's independence arrived on 20th January 1967, when PAM was registered with the Registrar of Societies. In this, we are rightfully a venerable institution and unique in Malaysian society as we are already a hundred years old.

AM was previously known as Majallah Akitek, or MA, with the first ever issue published in January 1971, then as a twice-yearly edition with eight editions until 1974. The graphic designs of the early MA editions were strikingly bold, its covers in single full colour. MA later adopted the volume series in 1975 that we use now. The first issue of volume 1 featured the metric scale of a person on its cover. 1975 was also the year the US Congress

passed the Metric Conversion Act, to "coordinate and plan the increasing use of the metric system in the United States". MA then underwent a spelling adjustment to Majallah Arkitek to reflect the new era of Bahasa terminology correctness (ejaan baru). If we are to go back in time before PAM, there was the PETA publication published by FMSA, its first issue dated June 1955.

In the '90s, MA flipped upon itself to become AM, perhaps to reflect the shift as an architects' professional journal to one focused on Malaysian architecture. In the early days of MA, professional news and trade matters were covered, and these were then to be re-directed to the monthly Berita Akitek. A browse through the early copies of MA, especially from the '70s, offers many funny inside stories and amusing anecdotes. I thoroughly recommend an afternoon at the PAM Resource Centre for a walk back in time.

Thus, AM today celebrates its 50th year. With such a legacy and history, and with PAM in its various iterations at 100 years of age, we have nothing to gain by losing our periodical. I am not prepared to let the magazine die. The publication is a vital instrument to present our members works and activities to the public, and we should never lose that agency and visibility, both in our repertoire and leadership.

The 'crisis' which confronted our team last August turned out to be a rare opportunity to completely overhaul the publication, to re-invent and re-configure the magazine. Perhaps the 'idea' of the magazine in its original form itself had become formulaic and predictable, as all architectural media are also faced with these existential questions in the age of woken up realities and clamour for new social orders and relevance. This was a chance to expand our ambitions and to re-deploy.

The new AM will be produced quarterly for 2021, and we may revert to bi-monthly issues again depending on the situation. As this is a special issue, we have produced it as a bumper edition and later issues planned at 164 pages.

We have now reconfigured the financial structure of AM in all aspects; to be fully owned, operated and controlled by PAM with no external commercial arrangements. This will allow us better control over its direction and destiny. The business administration and management will be undertaken by our Pusat Binaan Sdn Bhd.

Importantly, we saw the need to have in place a dedicated professional core team in charge. In this regard, I am pleased to introduce our new Editor, Lina Esa, who brings a wealth of experience from the publishing industry and the fashion world. She has been tasked to develop the title further and to expand our platforms and readership, and there are exciting plans ahead. Art direction is undertaken by Ejin Sha as designer in charge of graphics and layouts. The new AM masthead (or logo identity) is a derivation of the PAM logo by a simple truncation and movement operation. This is in essence an expression of the new attitude.

We have opted for a larger format with almost double the number of pages from before, to present the content and projects in a more expansive layout. In part, this is our answer to the occasional calls to go digital. As architects, we believe in the primacy of assembly and materiality, and we hope the magazine reflects this. We have refreshed the previous regular sections as current briefings and paid attention towards building a stronger features section. Architectural design projects are our anchor, they still make up over 55% of the pages, with more coverage in the issues ahead. On that note, we will also feature Malaysians abroad working in architecture to celebrate our talents outside.

At AM, we will develop new verticals in the broader world of culture and design considered as extensions of architecture. As architects, we tend to talk with ourselves, within our groups, and it is time to step out of the bubble. AM seeks to be part of that bridge. In addition, we wanted a new focus on the people within the architecture and design realms. Architecture is meaningless without its constituencies and the culture it occupies, and here we seek to construct new adjacencies, a cross disciplinary zone celebrating all the creative differences. In all, we believe that this provides the conditions for better architecture. In this and upcoming issues, we speak with developers, fashion designers, art specialists, historians, urbanists, makers and many others.

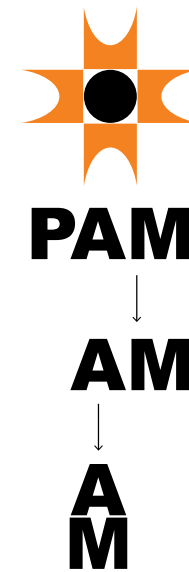
In these trying times, which often seem like the worst of times, we offer our best wishes and hope the new AM cheers you up.

Yours,

Ang Chee Cheong
Director - AM



Cover of AM, Architecture Malaysia, vol. 33, issue 1, 2021



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

HELLO,

Welcome to the first 2021 issue of Architecture Malaysia.

As I understand the magazine had stopped for a while, I am glad to be involved in the effort to revive the magazine here in its latest form.

First, a bit about myself. I have to confess that I am from outside the architectural orbit. I do however come from a creative household with an architect father (also a member of PAM). I started in publishing in 2010, and have since been in the creative industry. Up until last year, I was the Editor of CLEO Malaysia for four years until it became one of the first casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When I was approached by Ang from PAM for this position, I was excited about the plans and directions he laid out for the magazine in its new iteration, and I believe there is much room for me to participate in this new ambition.

Since architecture is about bringing life to spaces, we wanted to create content in tune with that discerning psyche. That's why we've introduced a brand new size and format, with intentional tweaks to layer in more dialogue and talking points to inspire and fuel that architectural spirit to keep creating.

Issue 1 of this year is our biggest issue yet, and it is bursting forth with 12 projects - from a spa concept that's a sight to sea (pun intended), to romanticised homes that pay homage to childhood experiences, to a farm-slash-restaurant designed for a low-carbon footprint while making full commercial sense.

We also wanted to see how women architects took on the 'work from home' directive. There's more, where we spoke to personalities from the property business, the fashion world and the art crowd. Look out also for a blast from the past with AM's past Editor, Ahmad Nizam Radzi.

While there are some familiarities and new adjustments to make in my new role as Editor of AM, I am proud of our team's first effort. I've had great support offered to me along the way, to carve out a new place to belong within the realm of architecture and design.

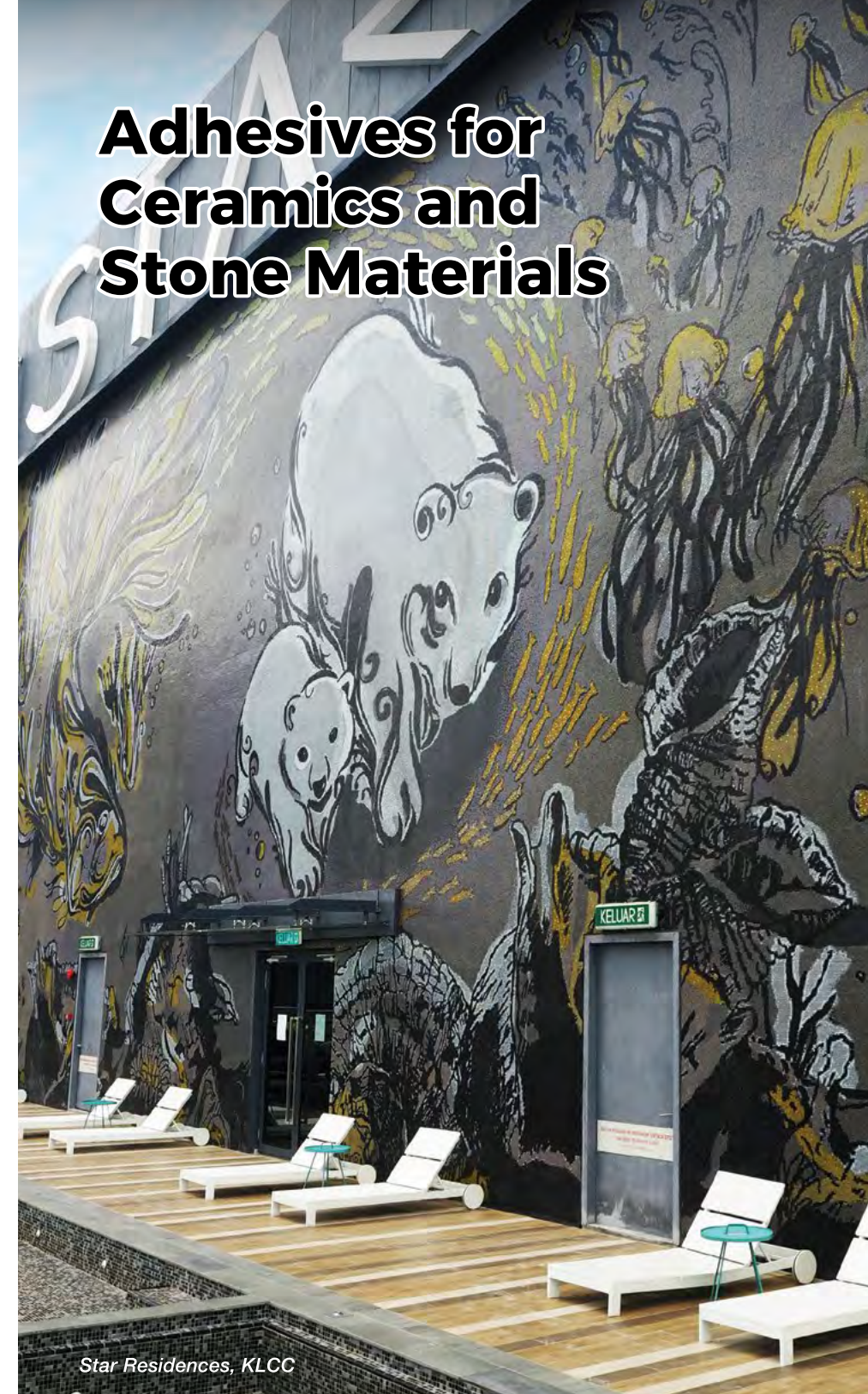
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Lina Esa
Editor



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FROM MA → AM

In the beginning.
Snippets and moments during the early days of PAM's official magazine, as recalled by
Ar Ahmad Nizam Radzi, former Editor of MA (1989 to 1990).

1989



1990



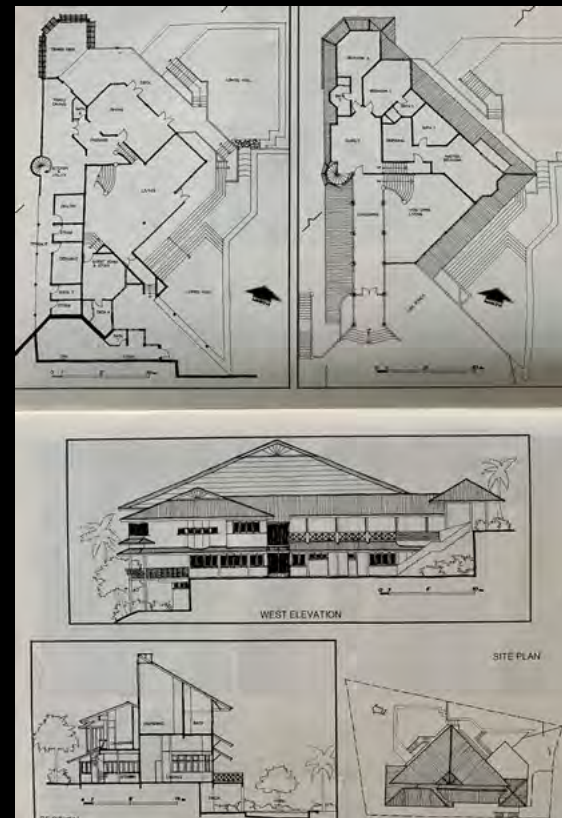
Selection of MA covers

My involvement with 'Majallah Akitek' – the official magazine of Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) – actually came about by default. I was brought into the Editorial Team when it was chaired by the late Ruslan Khalid (later Datuk) and was immediately instructed to start producing the long delayed 1987 MA issue, to be out in the first quarter of 1988. Thankfully it did see the light of day but with only 41 pages and out of that, only six pages were in glorious colour, due to dire financial constraints.

For that issue, I was asked to write a review of the new French Embassy building in Kuala Lumpur. PAM wrote for permission to feature the building and I was granted a special visit. His Excellency the Ambassador Jean Perrin was gracious enough to grant me a conversation in his private office to explain the architecture and design of the new project. It was modern, white and very Richard Meier in looks – quite a head-turner along Jalan Ampang at that time. Looking back now, I realised that my first job had brought me 'inside' France itself, as the diplomatic compound was considered French territory according to the Geneva Convention.

TWO HOUSES

I remembered visiting two houses selected for review in the second issue of MA, which was out in 1988. One was a timber residence at Jalan 12/1 Shah Alam designed by CSL Associates (now demolished after it was damaged due to fire) and the other was a private house for Datuk Rafidah Aziz (now Tan Sri), located at Bukit Damansara and designed by Arkitek MAA Sdn Bhd. In the absence of printable documentation at that time, I had to re-draw (by hand) the floor plans, elevations and sections of both houses for publication. Looking back at those drawings, I thought to myself – hey, I did all that 32 years ago without a T-square and a drawing board! I know, current architecture students would probably say: "So what's the big deal?"



House in Shah Alam (1988 issue)

CHEN VOON FEE

It was at this time in 1988 that I had made acquaintance with one of the masters of post-Merdeka modernism – the late Chen Voon Fee. I had met him and his project architect, Lim Take Bane at the Anglo-Oriental Building at Jalan Tangsi, Kuala Lumpur. It was an Art Deco building built in 1936 and originally designed by A. O. Coltman of Booty Edwards & Partners (the precursor of the present BEP Akitek). Previously occupied by the Malaysian Mining Corporation (MMC), the building was to be transformed in an adaptive re-use effort to become the Mahkota College. I wrote then, "The metamorphosis from an office building into an academic building is physically and psychologically felt". It was officially opened on a very 'auspicious' date – 8 August 1988 (or 8/8/88). I could not remember however, whether it was done at 8am.

In the absence of printable documentation at that time, I had to re-draw (by hand) [floor] plans, elevations and sections of both houses for publication. Looking back at those drawings, I thought to myself – hey, I did all that 32 years ago without a T-square and a drawing board!

THE NEW MAJALAH ARKITEK

Late in 1988, PAM Council had agreed to privatise the magazine to a publishing company, in view of the inconsistencies in production, budget constraints and commitment problems faced by the Editorial Board, whose members were full-time practitioners. I was seconded by PAM to become the working editor for the new bi-monthly, full-colour magazine under the direction of Jimmy CS Lim as the Editor. And so the re-branded, commercialised new magazine was re-born as 'Majalah Arkitek' – with the first Jan/Feb 1989 issue out as scheduled. The spelling change from the old 'Majallah Akitek', was adapted to reflect the updated Bahasa Malaysia terminology in tandem with the new spirit of the magazine. Jimmy had decided that the new re-branded Majalah Arkitek must start featuring untold stories and profiles of senior Malaysian architects, who had contributed significantly towards the profession during the post-Merdeka years of the 1960s.



Excerpt from Dato Kington Loo profile feature (1989 issue)



Subang International Airport (1989 issue)

It was a unanimous and obvious decision that the choice for the first profile feature was the quintessential Dato' Kington Loo, who at that time was a senior principal partner in BEP Akitek. It turned out to be a comprehensive interview and a nostalgic recollection with some stunning revelations on his life and his architecture. I had initially found it difficult to edit the transcript and to compose it to a single article. In the end Jimmy agreed that we should not edit it and truth should be told, so we included every bit of the story in the editorial content and spread it over three consecutive issues!

Kington Loo was born in 1930 to Loke Soh June, who was the sixth daughter of Loke Chow Kit and she was actually born in the Chow Kit residence, which later became the PAM Building at Jalan Tangsi. His father Yosun Loo was a grandson of Loke Yew. Kington was part of an illustrious noble family of both Chow Kit and Loke Yew – these two men were important figures of Kuala Lumpur history itself. Dato' Kington told us of his hardships in 1949 while in the University of Melbourne, Australia. He recalled that the pressures of studying were immense and that "there was no time for leisure, except for Friday night beer parties" and that he had to "forego Saturday night dances although there were plenty of eligible nurses around". After graduating in 1954, he joined Booty Edwards & Partners in Kuala Lumpur and started designing some of the most pioneering and recognisable buildings of the 1960s, as the firm later became known as BEP Akitek.

SUBANG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – A REVELATION

The commission to design the new Subang International Airport in 1963 was a huge surprise to Dato Kington – he described it as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' project – since most national projects at that time had been entrusted to the JKR. The budget given was 12 million Malaysian dollars, but the catch was that it had to be completed and operational within two years. Influenced by Eero Saarinen and Felix Candela, he sought the support of engineer Hans Goldstein of Steed Sehested & Partners to design a series of three-inch thick concrete hyperbolic paraboloid roof structures. The budget was slashed to 7 million midway through, which resulted in the removal of the air-conditioning system and thus, the airport had to be naturally ventilated. Still, it was completed on time and Subang was officially opened by the first YDP Agong on 30 August 1965.

RESIDENTIAL BENCHMARKS

Being an Editor of Majalah Arkitek also gave me the opportunity to visit and experience several private buildings which would have otherwise been strictly inaccessible. I remembered writing a review of the Desa Damansara condominium (circa 1990) in Bukit Damansara when it was first completed and I was blown away by the unprecedented design at that time. Several years later when I started working in GDP Architects, Kamil Merican had quietly expressed that he remembered me writing this in my review: "someday, all condominiums will be like this". Truly, by that time and long after my review was published, Desa Damansara had become a reference and benchmark for many other urban condominium developments in and around Kuala Lumpur.

I also recalled the unforgettable, timber tropical Precima House (1989) in Bangsar designed by CSL Associates, with a half-covered swimming pool as the centre of the house, located on a hillside. It was ground-breaking at that time

to have a house enclosure that is so open, yet so private. The voluminous living space was featured on the cover of the Jul/Aug 1989 issue.

CARCOSA SERI NEGARA

I stepped into colonial history during the visit to the twin stately houses of Carcosa Seri Negara before it received its first royal guests, HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip on the occasion of the Commonwealth Summit in 1989. The two mansions were originally built in 1897 for the British Resident-General Sir Frank Swettenham. The conservation and rehabilitation of the project were undertaken by Hajeedar and Associates for the owner Peremba Development Sdn Bhd. Dato' Hajeedar himself had shown me some beautiful transformations during that visit and described some interesting tales, including one haunted story of how roof tiles were magically placed back on the roofs after workers had removed and brought them to the ground. Now that was spooky, I thought.

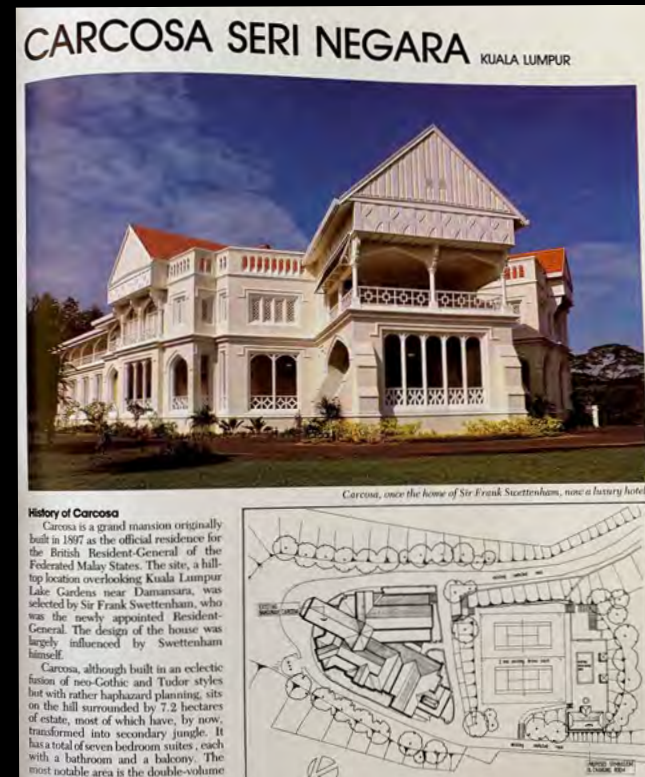
GEOFFREY BAWA

During all those years of editing and writing *Majalah Arkitek* together with Jimmy Lim and Fay Cheah, I consider the highlight to be the moment that we met with the great Geoffrey Bawa in person, for a conversation at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. Bawa, who was from Sri Lanka, was 'one of the most influential Asian architects of his generation' (Wikipedia). He was in KL for the PAM International Conference 'Architecture + Tourism' in conjunction with the CAA Assembly in September 1989. He was literally a gigantic figure, towering above us and all the architecture students who mobbed him for autographs and photos at the hotel lobby. Yes, a starchitect indeed, if ever there was one. In between his cigarettes, he spoke gently and quietly as he responded to our questions. The full transcript of that interview was published in the *Majalah Arkitek* Nov/Dec 1989 issue. I remembered his lament on why the air-conditioning of his hotel room is as cold as the temperature in Finland when Kuala Lumpur is a tropical city. I had no answer to his question, though - I was in no position to answer the master considering how young and naïve I was at that time!

MOVING ON

Soon after, I left *Majalah Arkitek* and full-time journalism in 1990 and retreated to resume my architectural and practice education, in preparation for taking the professional Part 3 Examination. From time to time though, I contributed some reviews and articles to PAM publications and other magazines but never with the intensity and passion of the early years of 1987 to 1990. It is hoped that with the new revived *Architecture Malaysia* (AM), the new Editorial Team shall continue on with exuberance and active discourse, so that our architectural adventures and misadventures, for good or for bad, will be recorded for all posterity. ■

AHMAD NIZAM RADZI received his architectural education in the UK, after which he returned to Malaysia in 1987 and had worked in several local architectural firms. Prior to that, he was attached to PAM and was involved in the production of both *Berita Arkitek* and *Majalah Arkitek* for several years. He has been in architectural practice for 25 years and taught full-time in Universiti Teknologi MARA for 5 years and is currently involved in architectural education as a part-time lecturer in University Malaya, as well as being an educational examiner for the Lembaga Arkitek Malaysia (LAM). Currently semi-retired, he is pursuing and reclaiming time lost during hectic architectural practice days.



Carcosa Seri Negara, Kuala Lumpur (1989 issue)

A PORTRAYAL OF DIPLOMATIC CHIC

The French Embassy Building in Kuala Lumpur

By Ahmad Nizam Radzi

French President Francois Mitterrand had said that "I believe a people are great when their architecture is great." Though he did not elaborate on what he meant by 'great', the President has a vision to transform Paris into the architectural showcase of Europe. Bernard Tschumi, Carlos Ott and I M Pei will join the likes of Richard Rogers, Ricardo Bofill and Renzo Piano who have contributed their architectural expertise in the French capital.

Works by such foreign names have apparently overshadowed projects carried out by French architects like Henri Chairin, Jean Nouvel and Christian de Portzamparc. Their work, which ranges from urban infills to social housing, identifies with various forms of Modernism, executed nonetheless with exuberance. Collectively, they display a clear attempt to harness a new French architecture with tendencies towards Post-Modernism, which is especially evident in de Portzamparc's work. It is with reference to this new spirit

(highlighted recently by leading architectural journals) that one suspects the new French Embassy building in Kuala Lumpur (which was completed in January 1988) is moulded from.

Embassy buildings are political statements, they represent an alien culture in the country which they are built. Manifestations of cultural (sometimes, political) and diplomatic image are therefore essential to the architectural expression of the building. The US Embassy in London exports its image through the designs of Eero Saarinen. The Malaysian High Commission in Canberra, meanwhile, spreads the message by using traditional roof metaphors. Certain nations, however, chose the option of blending their embassy buildings with the architectural context of their locations. The Belgian Embassy in New Delhi, for instance, recalls the bulkiness of traditional Indian buildings. Some do not even bother to express any statement at all. The Japanese

Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, for example, is a far cry from the excitement and dynamism of contemporary Japanese architecture. But what of the French Embassy in Kuala Lumpur?

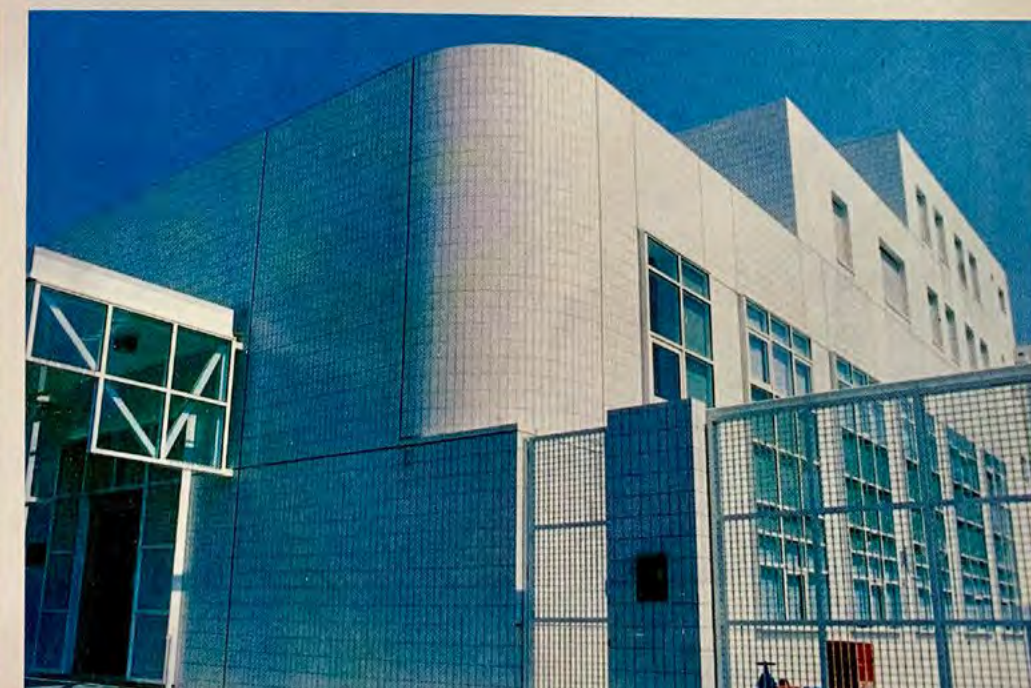
Frankly, the French Embassy is like no other building in the city.



The Belgian Embassy, New Delhi.



The Japanese Embassy, Kuala Lumpur.



Reproduction of the Kuala Lumpur French Embassy article (1987)

TODAY TOMORROW THINGS

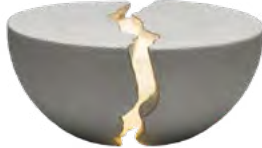
BY NATALIE KHOO

SOLID IDEAS



Founded by a former graduate architect, Concrete Dezin started from humble beginnings selling handmade concrete and cement pots using hand-molded paper cups and cardboard models. Thereafter, it expanded to offer a wider range of modern home and office décor using silicone molds made from 3D printed tools. Each collection references minimal architecture with necessary functional components, and each piece is molded, sanded, and coated with clear matte paint by hand from start to finish. concretedezign.com

CRACKING UP



Crack it open to turn it on, piece it back together to turn it off. Meet Teno, a portable speaker that doubles as a cool, decorative bowl sculpture. Crafted from natural sand, it feels like a piece of nature when held, but the role of touch is just as functional as it is sensorial. Gestures serve to adjust the volume and light radiating from its centre to create your desired atmosphere. hellolumio.com

SHOWER SMART

Turning your shower into an at-home experience is now made even easier, with the Grohe Rainshower SmartActive which is designed to be installed easily and with minimal effort, but still boasts the latest features. For one, its SmartTip control enables easy, intuitive switching between three spray modes, and you can even activate a powerful ActiveMassage spray for a quick jolt of energy. To completely zen out, the circularly arranged nozzles ensure a gentle rain shower. A bonus is that it also includes a DripStop function, which minimises dripping after switching off. Choose from two sizes (130 mm and 150 mm), 11 colours (GROHE Colors collection, with chrome plated or white spray plate) and from two designs: round or square. grohe.my



COLOUR



STORY

Designed in London and Singapore and produced in Malaysia, these natural rattan drum stools pay tribute to heritage through modern lenses. Handwoven by veteran craftsmen using locally harvested Malaysian rattan, the stool features an indigenous pattern juxtaposed against jacquard upholstery from China, which adds a pop of colour to any room it furnishes. It can be used as a stool, side table or decorative object and is stackable for convenience and easy storage. ongshunmugan.com



CREATING PERSPECTIVES

Translated from Portuguese to mean "small book", Livrete is born of a collaboration between two designers from Malaysia and Portugal. Inspired by Built Environment Designers and the One Point Perspective View, they created the Perspektif book to make sketching, writing and doodling easier and more fun. It uses Favini Paper, which is the highest quality recycled paper endorsed by the International Forest Stewardship Council; and soy-based ink, which is environmentally friendly. livrete.my



ANALOGUE OR DIGITAL?

A product of collaboration between Rado and Japanese design duo YOY, this ceramic watch isn't what it may seem at first glance... It's Undigital. Taking the classic face of a digital watch and transferring it onto an analogue time display with hands, it operates on a modern mechanical movement whose automatic winding makes it a work of art, without artificial intelligence. The luminous white Super-LumiNova technology stands it out further, giving it a pure, minimal appearance. rado.com



MOVING TO GREEN

When you think of Volvo you think of its safety heritage. But now, you may need to rethink the brand as it puts electric cars at the forefront. The Volvo Recharge line is their new way forward – it's their fleet of cars but plug-in hybrid versions. For example, choose from the XC90, XC60, XC40 in Recharge that aims for a purpose for our planet, yet engineered with the same technology that keeps you safe with intelligent driver assist technology, intuitive comfort designs to keep you cool behind the wheel, and the same sleek lines that make a Volvo so covetable. www.volvocars.com/my



GOING LEAN

Homegrown furniture brand Kantan Kollektiv prides itself in offering handcrafted rattan furniture painstakingly made by a family of dedicated artisans with craftsmanship skills passed down from generation to generation. The designs are inspired by the family's travels, blending influences from the east and west, as well as old and new. No two pieces of furniture in its collection are identical in texture, form or colour – making every product unique. kantankollektiv.com

GROWING TOGETHER

A gap in the local market for contemporary children's furniture led to the birth of Lou Lou James and its best-selling ALTA Learning Tower. The three-tier step-up platform is designed with the motto "creating only the best for your little ones" in mind, providing a safe environment for kids to learn or help out at home while blending in with modern home interiors. instagram.com/louloujames.official



ART OF PRESERVATION

Since 2014, Art of Tree has championed the art of turning salvaged trees from urban areas into fine furniture. Each wooden slab is preserved in its natural form – cavities and all – resulting in solid wood furniture pieces that are unique and personal. The cavities are filled with either clear or pigmented epoxy resin, creating a striking finish that makes each piece a conversation starter in its own right. artoftree.com



BOUQUET

STORIES

Far from one-dimensional creations that fulfill a certain standard of aesthetic, ZahuoHang designs each of its floral arrangements with individual stories and experiences in mind. Be it for a wedding, party, product launch, art installation, space styling or concept display, the brand's creations are curated heavily based on specific concepts and memories they are intended to beautify. The resulting pieces combine art and design in a way that forces one to look beyond the ordinary. instagram.com/zahuohang

KNIT PICKINGS

Stephanie Ng, founder of her eponymous lighting design studio, is best known for her Merino wool lighting designs. Dubbed Luna Lana, which means 'moon' and 'wool' in Spanish, her colourful knitted creations ingeniously embody the name with their soft woolen handiwork wrapped around bulbs resembling full moons. The wool is 100% natural and sustainably sourced, while the components of the lamp such as the LED bulbs are specially produced to be safe for use with wool. stephaniengdesign.com



GLOBAL DESIGN BRIEFINGS

MALAYSIAN PAVILION 2020+

The Malaysian Pavilion 2020 at the Dubai World Expo was conceptualised to showcase the synergy between nature and human settlement. 'Synergize Nature' is the proposed theme, represented by groves of columns supporting the 'crown canopies', meandering river walkways and firefly poles, symbolising reforestation efforts and our biodiversity. The exhibition halls are housed in three separate one and two storey massing volumes, suspended on long slender legs four to six meters above the ground. The landscape concept carries a forest narrative found in the understorey of the majestic canopy trees of Malaysia. Having reduced the energy required as far as possible, the pavilion uses energy efficient chillers, displacement ventilation systems, and LED lighting with daylight control. The Malaysia Pavilion 2020 endeavours to be the first carbon-neutral pavilion at the World Expo.



NUANCED PERSPECTIVES

Project DipoMuria by SHAU in Semarang, Indonesia, contains a photo studio and gastronomy facilities and is modelled after urban *kampung* (village) typologies found in Indonesia. The volumes are grouped around a central courtyard connected to the outside (with a grounded plinth and stairs materialised by rough plaster) but also features terraces on the second floor and a slide for kids to play. Most of the larger, glazed façade openings face north and are shaded by overhangs; whereas the east-west facades are more closed, self-shaded by the other volumes or behind the polycarbonate facades. The outdoor areas have ample seating areas, with Brazilian fire trees and their slender trunks defining the minimalistic character of the space.



YOUTH, TOGETHER

Public research university ETH Zurich plans for a new building in the north-west part of their Höggerberg campus to offer students and entrepreneurial talents the space needed to develop and implement their ideas. To create a place of mutual exchange and interdisciplinary collaboration between student organisations and entrepreneurial initiatives, the competition winning entry by Buchner Bründler Architekten is a multi-layered, readable body of buildings. The wooden upper storeys, which lie on a concrete construction, form a filigree and transparent grid. The building also distinguishes itself between primary and secondary structures - when walking along the exterior, one of the concrete load-bearing elements become visible, as the progression of forces translates into a sculptural gesture.



NEW NORMAL PAVILIONS

Italy alone suffered the most from Coronavirus out of all the European countries in 2020. The arrival of vaccines and its global rollout brings hope to all who have suffered much. To assist in the deployment, Italian architect Stefano Boeri has designed a prefabricated and timber-framed vaccination pavilions to be distributed to 1,500 public squares of Italy, at the direction of Domenico Arcuri, the country's special commissioner for the COVID-19 emergency. The tops of the pavilions showcase a flower shape inspired by the Primrose (usually signifying the arrival of Spring), and is an icon not only of the biodiversity in Italy but also as a symbol of the natural cycle of life.



FROM ALL SIDES

A project to rebuild the owner's office and residence in Nishi-Shinbashi, Tokyo, the Arakawa Building by architects Nikken Sekkei addresses a few concerns while creating a visual marvel. All levels are wrapped with 'emergency' stairs, which not only are functional but work as an 'engawa'-like space (veranda). As the south and east sides are subject to height restrictions and setbacks above the eighth floor (to ensure sunshine in Tokyo's narrow streets), the sculptural configuration of the stairs and the focus on its relationship with its surroundings ensured sufficient lighting was secured for the environment, allowing the building to increase its height from 8 to 9 storeys.



STAY RADICAL

"Radical Austria - Everything is Architecture" is an upcoming exhibition at the Design Museum Den Bosch, showcasing the mind-expanding, boundary-shifting and socially critical work of the Austrian avant-garde of the 1960s and 70s. Have an insightful gaze into the works of the group that were opposed to traditional design disciplines, preferring instead to create buildings, environments, objects, fashion, performances, furniture and even experiences. It includes work by Coop Himmelblau, Haus-Rucker-Co, Zünd-Up, Walter Pichler, Valie Export, Hans Hollein, Angela Hareiter and Raimund Abraham. From 10 April until 3 October, 2021.



PERMANENT SUN / SHADOW

Situated at the northern edge of Madrid, the RENAZCA project aims to transform the AZCA financial district, delivering the area's urban, economic and social revitalisation. Designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Gustafson Porter + Bowman, and b720 Fermín Vázquez Arquitectos, accessibility, open spaces and sustainability are at the forefront. The proposal responds to the site's complexities and the 'Central Green' in particular aims to be a flexible outdoor meadow to accommodate a variety of outdoor events, ranging from 200 to 10,000 person capacity with a pair of responsive environmental sculptures. 'Permanent Sun' will reflect sunlight onto the dark, shadowed areas by using an array of pivoting heliostats, while 'Permanent Shadow' will provide a constant circle of shaded reprieve from harsh Spanish sun by using a hovering 22m-diameter disc.



THE NEXT TALLEST...

In modern practice, every new project completed leaves behind the ghosts of previous endeavours by a cast of hopefuls with endless iterations, options and ambitions. And every exposure of a 'new major project' previously kept under the cloak of non-disclosure agreements will almost certainly announce its demise. In late February, this project started making its rounds in social media posts to a disbelieving KL audience. Sited on the former Hilton Hotel site, the proposal boasted over 5 mil sq. ft. of mixed development with an incredulous 775m tower even taller than PNB118 currently under construction. From the architect's website, the needle hole-like design is a matrix of Islamic geometry and biomimicry, with the rigours of architectural function and integrated structural engineering. Accordingly, the project "creates a powerful architectural destination while integrating seamlessly into the complex urban fabric of Kuala Lumpur". Yes, of course.



PRESCRIBED COMPULSORY OPTIONAL READINGS

BY MEGAT ARIFF SHAH

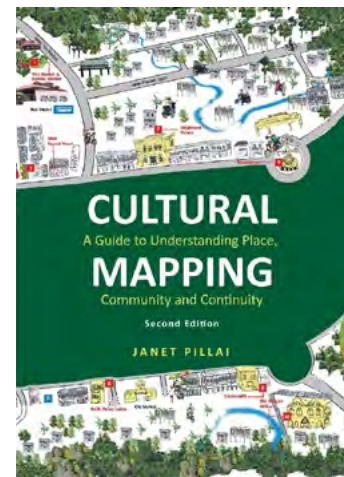
GELAS SEPARUH PENUH
Affendi Salleh,
Skinnifolk

Irreverently autobiographical, this anthology by local practicing architect Affendi Salleh takes the reader on a self-professed exploration of finding meanings through his imagination. Deftly-written and generously illustrated by Affendi himself, his texts are sharply critical of everything and anything he can think of, no holds barred. The beauty of the book lies somewhere in between the witty monologues on architecture and philosophy, and the sudden turns into loving yet aching reflections on his family. It is best approached by opening up random pages, and happily proceed from there.



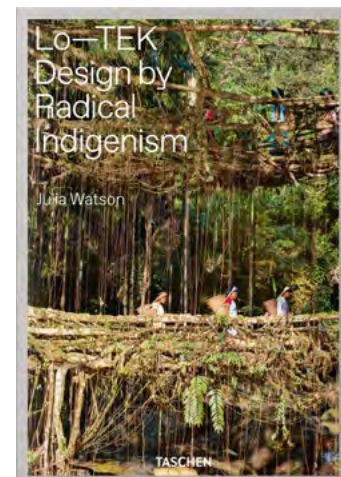
CULTURAL MAPPING
Second Edition
Janet Pillai,
Sird

This is a veritable textbook on how to record and present information on the cultural DNA of a place and its community. In this second edition, Janet Pillai has carefully revised and updated the work to include detailed methodologies on the tools and techniques involved in identifying and assessing cultural assets and resources of a historically and culturally significant area. It starts with a general lay of the land involved with cultural mapping, as well as what is involved in the act of mapping and the procedures involved. Moving on, it is the case studies that clearly puts into action the theories discussed beforehand, with layers upon layers of information and findings and analysis adding up to an interesting and intimate profile of the places being studied.



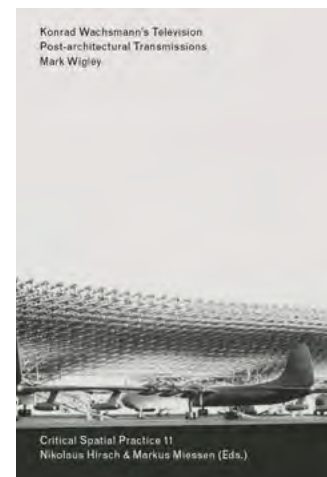
LO-TEK DESIGN BY RADICAL INDIGENISM
Julia Watson,
Taschen

Written by designer, environmentalist and educator Julia Watson, Lo-TEK is a beautifully written and illustrated manual for a design movement centred on indigenous philosophy and vernacular infrastructure to generate sustainable, resilient, nature-based technology. Using 18 case studies from around the globe, these indigenous communities showcase technologies and design philosophies that are advanced in their practicality and usage of natural resources, and are adaptable yet resilient to change. The end results are thought-provoking projects that withstood the test of time and provide a middle ground for traditional ecological knowledge to be translated into designs of cities. Julia Watson has summarised millennia-old human ingenuity built upon symbiotic relationships with our environment in this book, perfect for those seeking alternative answers on how to build and urbanise innovatively and sustainably, based on what can be considered the original smart settlements.



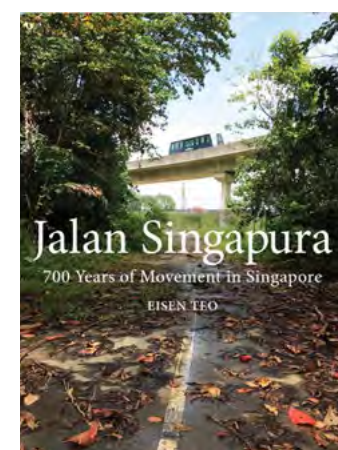
KONRAD WACHSMANN'S TELEVISION: POST-ARCHITECTURAL TRANSMISSIONS
Mark Wigley,
Sternberg Press

An alternative reading of the life and work of the modernist architect Konrad Wachsmann, Mark Wigley illustrates how the idea of television greatly influenced the architect's projects. In this book, Wachsmann was seen to embrace the idea of television of being able to modulate the experience of the users by collapsing time and space. This was reiterated into his projects for a new kind of space; instead of turning away and ignoring television, he transformed architecture into pulsating, flickering images that influenced the experimental avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s. The term anti-architect was used to describe him, and Wachsmann developed one of the most compelling and prescient manifestos of what architecture would need to become in the age of ubiquitous electronics.



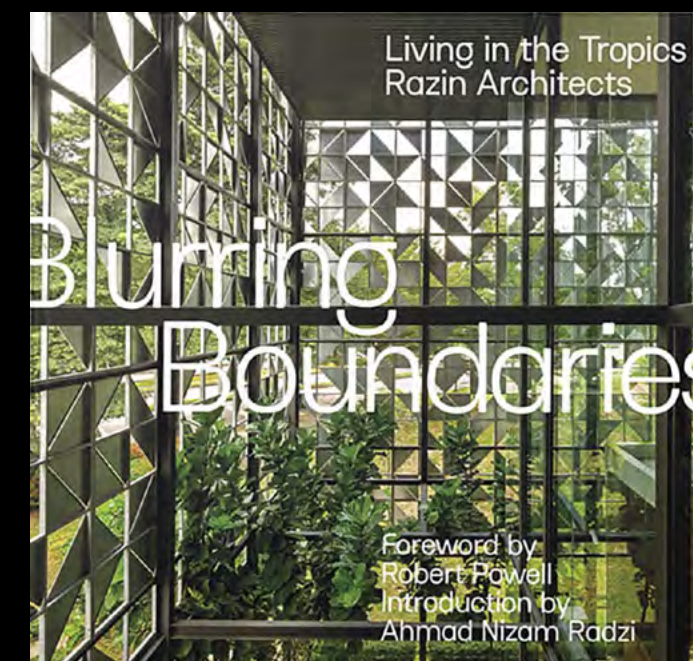
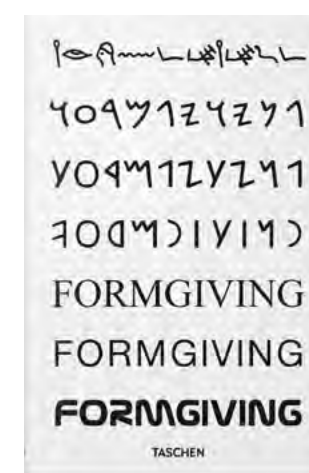
JALAN SINGAPURA: 700 YEARS OF MOVEMENT IN SINGAPORE
Eisen Teo,
Marshall Cavendish

It is a good indicator when an author chooses a topic that any Singaporean would be intimately familiar with, that of its land transport networks as well as urban and traffic patterns. Uncovering layers of Singapore history in the process, Jalan Singapura is declared by the author as chronicling the History of Movement, which forms an ever-present and connective thread in the urbanisation of the city-state. The narrative of the book necessarily veers toward the academic, but interwoven within it are personal insights by the author that gives new perspective on its development throughout the years. Additionally, the future of Singapore can be drawn from the examination of its history, contextualising the necessarily bold solutions in response to present-day urban and land transport problems.



FORMGIVING: AN ARCHITECTURAL FUTURE HISTORY
BIG, Taschen

The latest project from BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group) is not architectural, but takes the form of this ambitious book that scrutinises design within the fourth dimension, that of time. Beginning from the Big Bang and stretching into the distant future, this book presents BIG's works (familiar to their followers) within six strands of evolution — 'Making,' 'Sensing,' 'Sustaining,' 'Thinking,' 'Healing,' and 'Moving.' Bjarke Ingels' vision is that designers will be aware of the past and future in making design decisions that would not be derailed by the random distractions of today. Touching lightly on a broad range of issues such as artificial intelligence, climate, sustainability, and even interplanetary migration, the third book in TASCHEN's trilogy by BIG will be an interesting conversation-starter for students, professionals and the general public.



BLURRING BOUNDARIES
Razin Architects
Atelier International

Showcasing the works of Ar Razin Mahmood of Razin Architects, this book chronicles the journey of the firm in creating architecture and spaces that blur the boundaries between physical and conceptual aspects of design. The range of selected works have an underlying urgency of questioning and lifting expectations of designs for the tropical climate.

Robert Powell suggested the background of Ar Razin's architectural development as one of contrasts and duality, from the rural upbringing in Malaysia to the United States of America. This continual reframing of one's perspective, from Malay traditional architecture to the postmodernism and deconstructivism of America at that time, has left traces in the design approach seen in the generous selection of buildings in this book.

Be it residential, commercial or religious buildings, there is a balance in the aesthetics as well as the relationship between architecture with nature. Above all, there is a pragmatic approach in the celebration of materials, natural light and ventilation. As the author-architect seeks to explore the 'in-between' spaces found in local architecture — in particular the transitional spaces, shared boundaries of the communities it serves, and the permeability between the inside with outside — one gets a sense that the book is also asking the readers to think deeply about how to build and live with a heightened sensitivity to contexts. Blurring Boundaries clearly feels like a metaphor for more explorations and exciting evolution of the practice.

MEGAT ARIFF SHAH BIN MEGAT OMAR obtained his Bachelor's degrees and Master of Science in Architecture from the University of Malaya. Since 2006, he has taught in the architecture departments of the University of Malaya followed by City University, Malaysia. He has authored, co-edited, and assisted in the publication of journal papers, articles and books on the themes of architectural history, culture, materiality and design. He is currently the Associate Dean at the School of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment, Tunku Abdul Rahman University College.

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Projects developed for the city.

A NEW COMMONS

Coronavirus brought with it devastating changes to life and the city. Now already a year and more of contagion, its effects continue to shake and reverberate throughout all levels of society. Where it was once understood that cities brought multitudes of people together to bring out the best of each other collectively, the commons in this era of the pandemic dictates how, in daily SOP announcements, we are to function in a world where we are to stay indoors, towards an internalised existence with minimal contact with each other.

As architects and urban design professionals are trained to bring people together spatially with imagination, the challenge was now to find solutions to the questions raised in the environmental viral risks. And the more we had to stand apart, the more we aspired to come together for each other, to contribute positively to help all around us.

Here are two urban contributions by Arkitek JFN Sdn Bhd in Kuching, Sarawak, demonstrating how and what architects can do to improve the urban environment and experience, enhancing the civic realm and working for the public. Rather than let people lose connection with each other, the objective in the New Normal was to get people to stay together, yet standing safely apart.



Planters placed on the roof by MBKS Landscape Department minimise heat gain from direct sunlight



The installation is a tribute to the frontliners, reminding us of the importance of social distancing, raising awareness on sustainability and our relationship with nature



BUS STOP PROTOTYPE

The bus stop prototype project was a response to the launching of a free school bus service for Kuching by the Sarawak Government. At the same time there was also a need for new stops and to upgrade existing bus stops for the city bus route.

For the prototype project, it was important to underline the Sarawak government's sustainability goals, by delivering a low maintenance, mobile and modular design that also promotes Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle goals. More notably, this project was carried out with a cost of under RM20,000.

Standard modules were developed that could be rapidly produced to suit varying site conditions with minimal modifications whilst ensuring consistent quality control for pre-fabrication. The result: mobile structures that can be deployed for public use with minimal site works required.

Re-purposed from used shipping containers, parts of the side walls were cut out to be re-used as awnings, and leftover panels were converted into seating benches. Where side walls were cut, anti-climb fencing were installed to ensure user safety without compromising visibility and air circulation. Cement fibre boards with steel framing replace the original plywood floor of the container to withstand pedestrian traffic. Planters were placed on the roof to minimise direct sunlight and heat gain.

The project also served another purpose, to motivate and mobilise Kuching's youth to contribute in working for the community. The mural was designed by an intern at the time, and was brought to life by volunteers from JCI (Junior Chamber International) Kuching.

NEW NORMS PARK

Building from the previous Bus Stop Prototype, this proposal was for an under-used paved circular space within the recreation park surrounding the City Hall building. The installation was to re-activate the neglected sections of the existing park, raising awareness on sustainability and the natural environment, and to give tribute to the frontliners battling COVID-19. It was also to remind the community of the importance of social distancing whilst using public facilities during the new normal. Kuching South's (MBKS) Mayor launched a crowd-funding drive, while the design team volunteered to design, seek sponsorship and co-ordinate the fabrication works.

The installation comprised of reversible additions to the existing space. By working closely with the fabricator using commonly available materials and techniques, the design of the components were optimised for pre-fabrication and rapid installation. All the components can be relocated or reused for other purposes, ensuring that the materials have a second life.

Adapting to the existing concrete pavers, a 2m x 2m social distancing grid forms the backbone of the project. The alternating checker grid is painted blue as a visual association with the PPE and masks worn by the front-liners.

The protective cages fabricated from steel reinforcement bars depict our isolation during lockdown and portrays our unity and resilience as a country when facing the pandemic. Used oil drums repurposed as planter boxes were placed in unpainted areas of the checker pattern, reintroducing the natural environment back into the hardscape. The greenery for the installation is sponsored and maintained by the council's landscape department.

Encircling the installation is a golden circle marking our optimism, hope and positivity; which connects to the main circulation axis painted as a Red Cross symbol that intersects the installation representing our gratitude to all the front-liners standing as a shield between the people and the pandemic. ■



LOCATION
Kuching, Sarawak

CLIENT
Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan (MBKS)

ARCHITECT
Arkitek JFN Sdn Bhd

PROJECT TEAM
Ar Mike Boon (Mentor)
Ar Goh Tze Hui
and David Boon (Principals)
Esther Wong (Intern)

DESIGN PERIOD
1 month

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD
Two weeks

DATE OF COMPLETION
16 March 2020

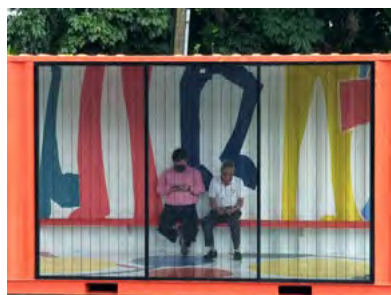
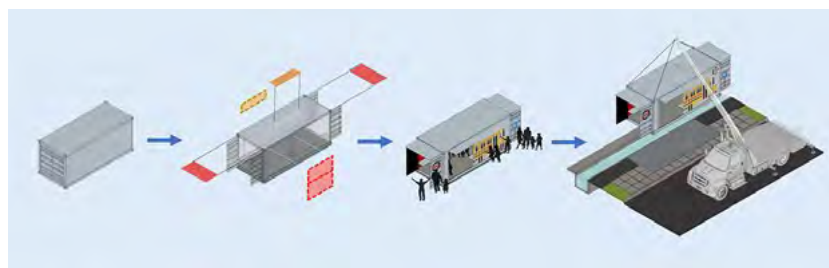
FLOOR AREA
14.4sqm

PROJECT COST
Below RM20,000

CONTRACTOR
Acute Project Sdn Bhd

OTHER CONSULTANTS
& SPONSORS
Wan Li Wan Welding Works (fabricator), Nippon Paint (M) Sdn Bhd (paint sponsor), volunteers from Junior Chamber International (JCI) Kuching (mural paint volunteers)

PHOTOGRAPHY
David Boon



LOCATION
Kuching, Sarawak

CLIENT
Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan (MBKS)

PRINCIPAL USE
Installation

ARCHITECT
Arkitek JFN Sdn Bhd

PROJECT TEAM
Ar Mike Boon (Mentor)
Ar Goh Tze Hui
and David Boon (Principals)

DESIGN PERIOD
1 Month

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD
Two weeks

DATE OF COMPLETION
30 July 2020

SITE AREA
Approx 1,200sqm

FLOOR AREA
Approx 900sqm

PROJECT COST
Below RM30,000

LANDSCAPING
MBKS Landscape Department

OTHER CONSULTANTS
Trans Paint Coatings Sdn Bhd (paint sponsor), Wan Li Wan Welding Works (fabricator & painter)

MAIN MATERIALS/FINISHINGS/FITTINGS/FURNISHING (WHERE APPLICABLE):
Used oil drums, steel reinforcement bar, steel SHS, steel mesh, water-based paints

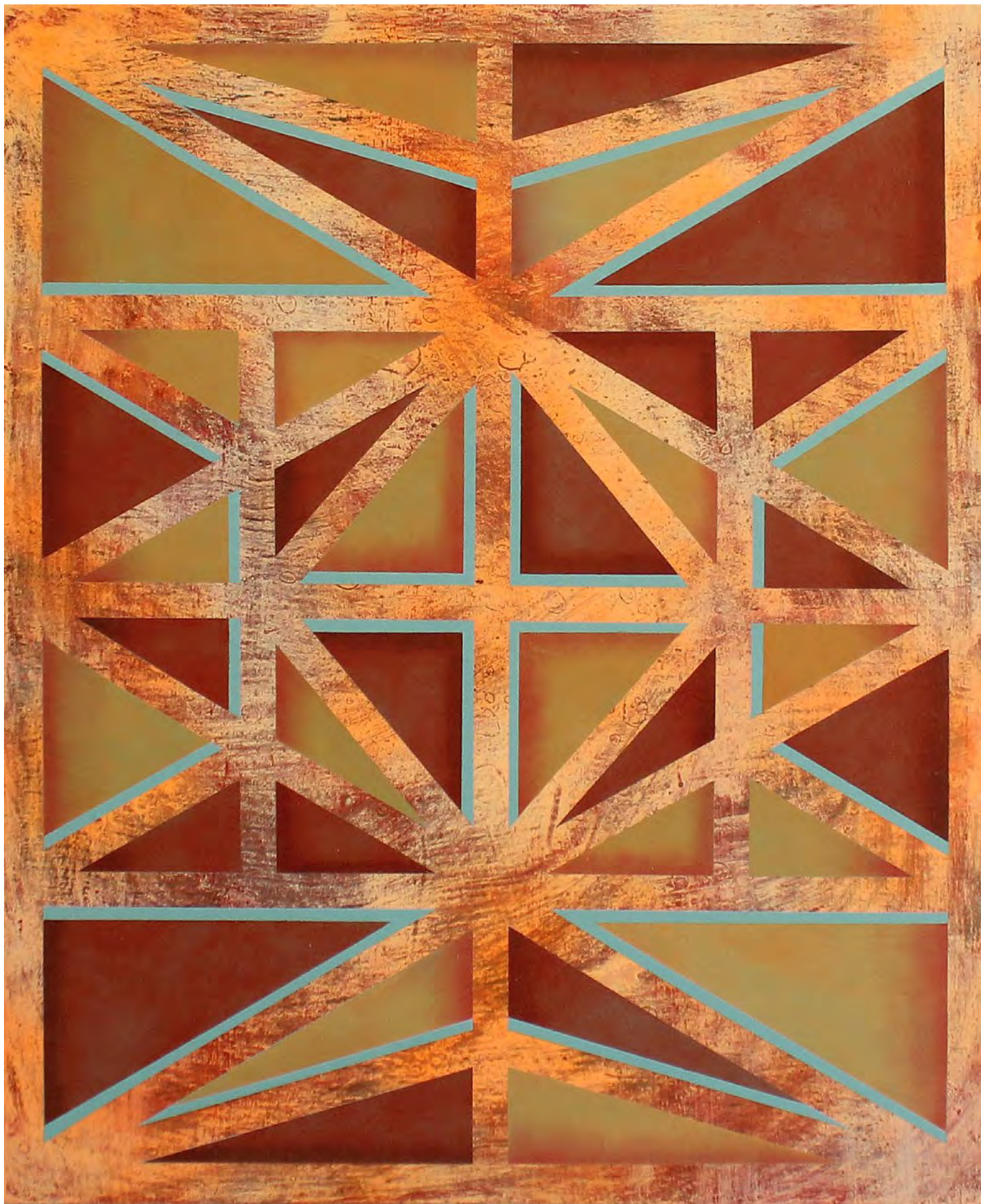
PHOTOGRAPHY
David Boon and Wixin Photography



HOW TO BUILD AN ART COLLECTION

BY BEVERLY YONG AND RACHEL NG, ROGUEART

Architects and designers have played a key role in art support and patronage in the years leading up to independence and the formation of Malaysia. In coming issues of AM, join us for conversations about their interest in and collections of art, and ways of sustaining and enlivening artistic practice and discourse. In this issue, we propose some guidelines for navigating the Malaysian art world and starting to build your own art collection.



Haffendi Anuar, *Window 10*, 2013, oil, acrylic and enamel paint on MDF board with powder coated steel frames, 63 x 51 x 2.5 cm, image courtesy Richard Koh Fine Art



Yim Sen Sum, *How Tall Will You Be? II*, 2018, embroidery on gauze, gauze dyed in acrylic, 205 x 52 cm, image courtesy the artist

What we recognise as modern art has been made, shown and even collected since the late colonial period in the hubs of Penang, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Today's Malaysian art scene has its roots in the late 1950s and 1960s, when educators, artists and enthusiasts began to set up art schools, studio-based practices, collective groups, a national art gallery, private galleries, even corporate art collections, based on a Western model. In the past 15 years, it has grown exponentially, with a bustling art market that now incorporates auction houses and an international art fair, and also more public spaces and a strong alternative current. The most seasoned collectors and galleries on the scene today have been around since the mid 1990s and early 2000s, with at least one much more senior collector still active.



Art Expo Malaysia 2019; image courtesy Art Expo Malaysia

It is an exciting time to be collecting art in Malaysia, as interest in art history gradually develops, artists and works are uncovered and discovered in the secondary market, and above all, approaches to art-making proliferate and diversify as younger generations of artists emerge. Some see collecting pioneer artists and modern masters as an investment in cultural heritage. Contemporary art collectors, meanwhile, support critical and creative ideas and aesthetics that help give shape to our today, and even our tomorrow.

If you are reading this, you probably already have an interest in starting an art collection. Yet with the noise that surrounds the global art market, the apparent exclusivity of galleries and collectors' circles, and the sheer diversity of artists working today, it may feel like a bit of a mystery as to where to start. There are no hard-and-fast rules or hidden secrets to 'successful' collecting, but here are some pointers for thinking about why you would start an art collection, practical considerations, how to plan and how to take it from there.

SEARCH WITHIN

Start by considering what draws you to art and to the artworks you are attracted to, and why you want to collect it. Art for you may be an aesthetic or intellectual pleasure, a means of understanding yourself or others. They could mean a cultural identifier, a piece of history, a marker of human genius, among other things. How you see and enjoy art should be the first guiding principle for building a collection – even if this completely transforms in the process.

Collecting art, however, is more than simply an extension of how you ‘consume’ art. In acquiring art, you bring it into your personal environment: the art you collect becomes part of how you express yourself and your interests. At the same time, you become an active part of a cultural economy.

Some artists will change the way we think about the world, influence the ways other artists work, gain widespread critical recognition, and you may wish to be part of supporting them or simply own a work they have made. Others may speak to where or who you are, your love of colour, say, or you may just admire the way a particular artist ‘does things’.



Fadilah Karim, *Routine #2*, 2020, oil on canvas, 152cm x 122cm, Collection of Yayasan Ilham; image courtesy Segaris Art Centre

As underlined by a collector, “At the most fundamental level, the collector provides a means for an artist to produce work they want to make.” Collectors take on a certain responsibility as patrons, caretakers or even tastemakers.



Chang Yoong Chia, *Portrait of HRH Chang Yoong Chia, commissioned by his Minions, Ants and Termites*, 2006, wings glued with lacquer on glass, 74cm x 58.5 cm, private collection, image courtesy the artist



Chang Yoong Chia, *Self portrait as a landscape*, 2008, oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm, private collection, image courtesy the artist



Chong Kim Chiew, *Ringgit Malaysia (we create the value of art, from zero to infinity)*, 2019, tape on canvas, 90 x 180 cm, private collection, image courtesy the artist

CONSIDER ART'S VALUE

Collecting art, however, is more than simply an extension of how you ‘consume’ art. In acquiring art, you bring it into your personal environment: the art you collect becomes part of how you express yourself and your interests. At the same time, you become an active part of a cultural economy.

“Is art a good investment?”

This is a common question, and RogueArt’s answer is always yes, if you take its value as being more than financial. However, if you see art primarily as an asset class, this undervalues it substantially.

As a collector, you put in money, time (and ideally research), but the ultimate value of your collection lies in what you and others can glean from it. In building a collection, you are building a body of knowledge, and through its process you may draw daily pleasure, experience the joys of discovery, cultivate deeper understandings, support careers and find opportunities for generosity – and there are intangible benefits such as meeting interesting people.

Of course, you may be lucky enough to have a few works you are able to sell on in times of need. On top of that, donations to national institutions afford some tax benefits. On the other hand, you may end up down the line finding that you need to rent an apartment or want to build a museum to accommodate your burgeoning collection.



A private collector's apartment, Kuala Lumpur, image RogueArt

BE PRACTICAL



A private collector's storeroom, image RogueArt

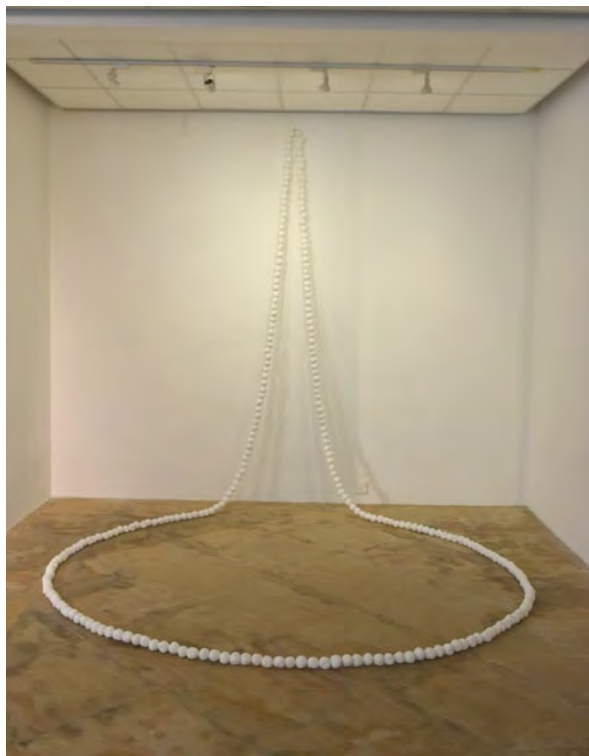
Do think about scale and budget. Whether you start out collecting a group of works for yourself or for the house, to support a few artist friends, or you have institutional-scale ambitions, you should have an idea more or less how much you are able or wish to spend on art on an annual basis. With prices ranging from a few hundred to a few hundred thousand ringgit you will have to do research into the works you are interested in and how much they may cost.

If you decide to collect contemporary art, accept that not everything in your collection will last for centuries and be easily hung on a wall. Although paintings remain the most popular medium for artists and collectors in Malaysia, you shouldn't miss out on the rich seam of works being made in sculpture, found materials, textile, ceramics,

print, photography, video and other digital media, or as multimedia installations.

Even conceptual, performance, relational art that cannot be bought as objects may be supported or documented in your collection. There are ways to display, store and care for works made in these 'un-conventional' media – and for these, check in with artists and galleries who should be able to advise.

Consider allowing some budget for care and conservation, and insuring your collection or specific works.



Kim Ng, *In the faith of a thought*, 2020, cast porcelain and copper wire, fired at 1080°C, size variable, collection of Rimbun Dahan, image courtesy the artist



Eiffel Chong, *Mathematical equations with emotional contours*, 2008, C-Type Photographic Paper. 101.6X127 cm, image courtesy the artist and Richard Koh Fine Art

NOTES ON PRICING

Before you make a purchase, here are some things to know about what you are paying for:

- 1 The pricing of artworks (for primary sale) is loosely tied to an artist's following and experience, and somewhat to their material, size and complexity. With the research-based or collaborative nature of some contemporary art, pricing may factor in the cost of research, collaborators, assistants, and so on.
- 2 Generally, artists and galleries keep to a standard pricing for each series or period of works. Prices may be raised incrementally, or in response to increased demand or sustained higher prices achieved at auction. Auction estimates for works by living artists tend to hover slightly below gallery pricing to entice interest.
- 3 Drawings and other works on paper are often priced lower than paintings on canvas. Although needing a bit more care, these are a good entry point to collecting. Works in edition, such as prints, photographs, videos, digital works and cast sculptures are also generally more affordable.
- 4 A gallery's commission may range from 20 to 50% – the cost of representing an artist and mounting exhibitions can be high. This commission is paid by the artist/seller to the gallery – it does not mean that the value of the work is 80 or 50% of the gallery price. It is best practice to respect gallery pricing, especially for works in a current exhibition (regular clients and supporters can hope for some privileges such as early notifications and first refusal on upcoming works, and occasional discounts). Some artists do not have exclusive or regular gallery representation, but in principle keep the same pricing in and outside of galleries and exhibitions.
- 5 Auction houses take commission from both seller and buyer and will state rates in their catalogues. Auctions help guide on market price, but do note only a small proportion of artists are represented at auction.



Rasa Rahsia by Riaz Ahmad Jamil, August 2020, exhibition view, image courtesy The Back Room



Sharifah Fatimah Zubir, *Standing Forms*, 1996, acrylic on canvas, 119 x 119 cm, Malaysian and Southeast Asian Art Auction 23 August 2020, image courtesy Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers

BUILD A BASE, EXPLORE THE TERRITORY

Galleries are the best place to start for experiencing and learning about artists' work. Cultivating a rapport with gallerists can be key to your collecting strategy.

The most serious galleries are more than just places selling art. Representing artists over different stages of their careers, they hold exhibitions and talks, document and publish. Most represent Malaysian artists, but a handful also bring in artists from around Southeast Asia.

Visit gallery websites to get a gauge of their artists and their approach, and hone in on a handful to visit regularly. Put yourself on gallery mailing lists to keep up to date.

Art fairs are a good place to compare galleries, discover a broad range of artists, meet people and catch up. Galleries also make a big effort to bring strong works to fairs.

While the pandemic has meant that Art Expo Malaysia has been on hold, it has also prompted most international fairs to go online. This provides great opportunities for browsing fairs such as Art Dubai, Art Basel Hong Kong and Taipei Dangda.



Chang Fee Ming, *Never to be Forgotten*, 1997, watercolour on paper, 56 x 76 cm, Coming of Age: Modern & Contemporary Southeast Asian Art, London, 9 November 2017, image courtesy One East Larasati.

Auctions are useful for seeing what is being sold on the secondary market (artists don't usually consign directly to auction) and survey market values. Henry Butcher and KL Lifestyle are established houses locally, while Malaysian and other Southeast Asian works do appear at the bigger international houses. Browse previous catalogues and consult others before jumping in with a first-time bid.



The Body Politic and The Body (December 2019–April 2020), exhibition view, Ilham Gallery, image courtesy Ilham Gallery

SEE AND KNOW MORE

Today, many argue that the mainstream ways of collecting art can be limiting and exclusive, and so there is also much to be discovered beyond, at events and spaces run by artist collectives and curators, graduation shows and on various online platforms.

Visit exhibitions at the National Art Gallery (currently closed for renovations) and other public institutions, where works are not customarily for sale. Institutional shows are important for providing depth and context, and expanding audiences for and conversations around art. Also become familiar with institutional collections.

Get to know what artists do better through previous catalogues and reviews (much is now online), and speaking to them if you can. Though not all artists choose to connect with collectors, you can often follow them on Instagram or Facebook, or through their websites.

Speak to gallerists, curators, writers and other collectors, and follow them online – most are very open to sharing with and encouraging fellow enthusiasts. It's good to visit and discuss exhibitions with other collectors.

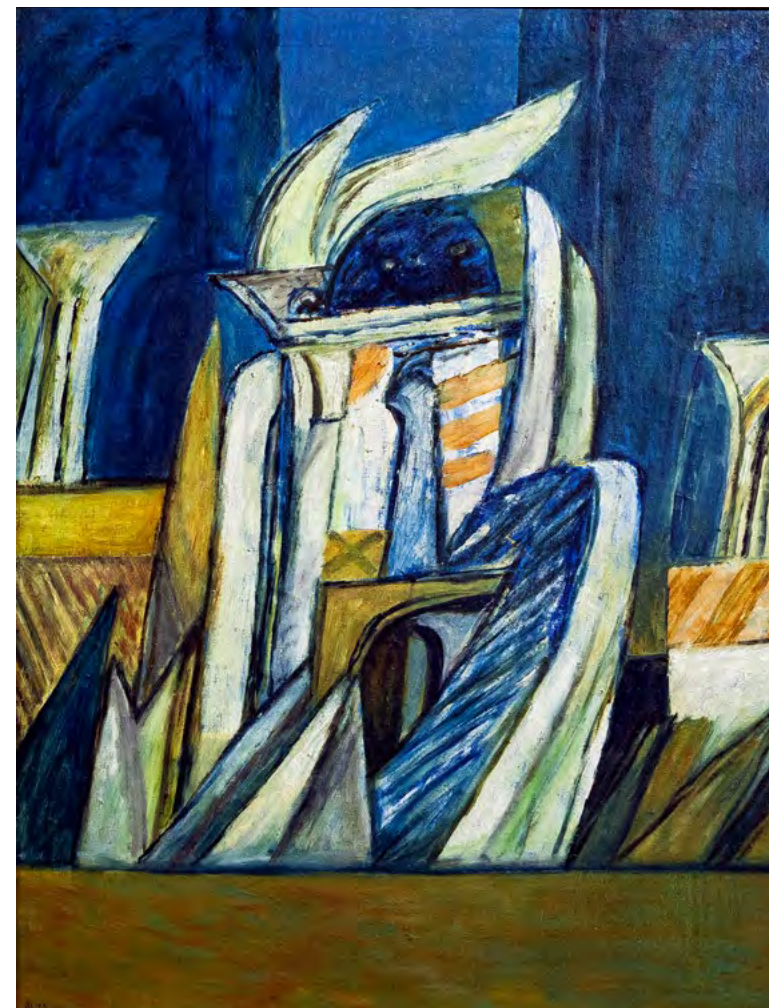
Lastly: Read! Art is a conversation, and there's a wealth of information and commentary out there.

Some artists will change the way we think about the world, influence the ways other artists work, gain widespread critical recognition, and you may wish to be part of supporting them or simply own a work they have made.

USEFUL ART RESOURCES

A quick guide on what to look up and who to follow.

- For an overview and directory of today's ecosystem, download CENDANA's Visual Arts Ecosystem Map cendana.com.my.
- The National Art Gallery have also set up a directory at gogallery.my.
- Keep track of exhibitions by following Art Seni on Instagram, and Malaysian Art Galleries' Facebook group.
- Institutional and corporate collections which regularly exhibit include National Art Gallery, Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah, USM (collections.mgtf.usm.my), PETRONAS (galeripetronas.com.my), Bank Negara (museum.bnm.gov.my) and Ilham Gallery (ilhamgallery.com).
- Some private collectors like Zain Azahari (fb.com/galerizkt), Pakhrudin Sulaiman and Bingley Sim open their collections by appointment; Ken Gallery showcases Dato' Kenny Tan's collection (kenholdings.com.my/kengallery/); and you can browse Farouk and Aliya Khan's collection at afkcollection.com. Follow @nikmfahmee on Instagram for his stories of encounters with artists.
- Auctions keep their catalogues and results online: see hbart.com.my and kl-lifestyle.com.my
- For local reviews and art commentary, follow: The Star, The Edge Options, Suara, SeniKini (by National Art Gallery), BURO., Artklitique, Penang Art District's Editorial and CENDANA's Lensa Seni.
- For the region and beyond: Popular platforms tailored to collectors include Ocula (ocula.com), Artsy (artsy.net) and Larry's List (larryslist.com); or try Collecteurs.com. For in-depth regional coverage: Art Asia Pacific and Asian Art News magazines by subscription, online Plural Art Mag (pluralartmag.com) and Art & Market (artandmarket.net) for free.
- If you like art books check out Kinokuniya, Ilham Gallery Shop, Rogueish Books (roqueish.asia).
- Research libraries: NAG (to re-open October), Galeri Petronas, Ilham Gallery, and RogueArt (at A+ Works of Art). Do look up the Narratives in Malaysian Art series for a range of insights into Malaysian art history, infrastructure and discourse.



Latiff Mohidin, *Pago-Pago*, 1966, oil on canvas, 117 x 92 cm, Koleksi Seni Tenaga Nasional Berhad, image courtesy Tenaga Nasional Berhad



Recommended reading: *Narratives in Malaysian Art Volumes 1–4*, published by RogueArt

ROGUEART are contemporary Southeast Asian art specialists who have worked in this field since the 1990s. Founded in 2008 and based in KL, RogueArt focuses on the creative, strategic and organisational management of art and cultural projects, exhibitions, collections and publications. Current directors: Rachel Ng and Beverly Yong.

BUY WHAT YOU LIKE

Unlike institutional collectors, private collectors are not tied to specific collecting policies. Some nevertheless choose to set a framework or discipline to their approach – perhaps a specific medium, period, genre, or grouping of artists. This might speak to their particular interests, and also has the advantage of creating and documenting organised bodies of work which might eventually fit in, say, to a university art collection as a donation or acquisition.

Other collectors like to claim they just 'buy what they like'. Honing 'what you like' of course takes time, experience, and self-understanding, and at a certain scale, even very eclectic collections fall into certain patterns and can be read and studied in different ways.

Collectors who enjoy a sense of discovery and continuity may focus on artists recently graduated or holding their first exhibition, following and acquiring their work over the course of their career. Others may seek out 'the best of the best', works that attest to the achievement of artists who have already established a strong reputation.

Following the path of other collectors may seem a safe introduction, but our advice would be to start with what you like that you can easily afford, and chart your way forward from there. ■



Amer Ismail, *Untitled* (29 August 2019), ink on paper, 56cm x 76 cm, private collection

NOSTALGIA MOTION



Disruptors. It's the key buzzword when it comes to technology. When once there was evolution, now we have complete reversals and fissures to let in the light, re-shaping and igniting new paradigms. Fashion is not so different, especially when you have design wunderkinds who upend the industry and make headlines - for example by using non industry-perfect models. Yes, it would be remiss to begin a story about motoguo without mentioning their Spring/Summer 2017 show, where they sent blemish-marked models down the runway at Milan's Men's Fashion Week. By confronting conventions and turning industry ideals on its head, it was clear there was some real yet unapologetic mastery at work - one that had inclusivity earmarked. motoguo consists of Moto Guo (fashion designer), Kinder Eng (creative director) and business partner Jay Ang. What started as a menswear label morphed into a genderless one: Their collections were seen to be pushing the boundaries of gender, fashion and fluidity, progressively creating a space for anyone in between. And push, they did. motoguo were, at the time, also riding high in 2016 when they were nominated as semi-finalists of the LVMH prize, being the first Malaysian (and Southeast Asian) outfit to have done so. Fast-forward to now and you'll be able to spot a whimsical motoguo piece sometimes on a celebrity. From gender busting, retro-cool, over-sized volume shoulders, romantic colour-pop knits, checks, patterns, and fine details, every collection has its narrative and an unmistakable playful vintage vibe that blurs time. Click to their website for an immediate blast to dial-up '90s - remember those GeoCities websites flickering with GIFs, neon link buttons and the simplest most basic serif fonts? Their Fall/Winter 2020 'IT' campaign on the other hand was cast in near-sepia tones, with languid models snapped in the home, self-isolating stylishly in a nod to the pandemic. The most recent collection (Spring/Summer 2021) is a fantastical play on prints, colours and textures with the theme 'Come to us, we celebrate you', alluding to flirty interlopers teasing intergalactic nirvana. The founders tell us what nostalgia means and how it plays into their psyche, the grounded way in which they view creativity and design, why fashion's cycles need to change, and the super-simple (ideal!) way they'd spend their day off.

Six years, 12 seasons, and donned by Dua Lipa. Malaysian fashion's most fearless, motoguo, speak about their career highs and tell you why the industry should stay slow.

BY LINA ESA
IMAGES COURTESY OF MOTOGUO

Models from the motoguo SS21 Lookbook

Could you describe the influences that had an imprint on your creativity?

Our creative influences was somehow imprinted from our childhood, for Moto it was growing up with a background in classical music, playing the double bass and violin which shaped his precision. As for Kinder it was his close bond to his two mothers. Trailing them to noisy salons during the late '90s while observing the girlie talks between his stepmother and stepsister were his earliest memories. He would be seated with colourful old-school fashion magazines or be watching sets of pretty china clinking. It would be those that intrigued him to be a creator of captivating garments that associates with vintage and romance.

What does 'design' mean to you?

Design is a record of our imagination and experiences of everyday life, much like a diary or writing fictional stories. We bring our clothing to life from our designs.

How did you develop your own style, professionally and personally?

Professionally, we find that meeting our friends and family has broadened our development of style and personally, it was forged from our college days, as we would often go thrift shopping for vintage pieces. There was something about the details and a complicated feeling of rarity within them. The vintage pieces brought significant sentimental value that influenced us a lot.

Your designs are unique and leave such an impact. How do you experiment?

In the early stages of the label, we often asked ourselves, "What or who was the motoguo aesthetic?" and we'd often experiment from eras mainly the 60s - 80s, trying out different things and styles through experimentation... And with those experiences, we had a clear vision of the motoguo figure in our brains, so we convey our language to design for his, her or their closets.

What is the creative process involved when producing a collection?

Our creative process usually starts from our current situation. From there, we find the best metaphors and storylines to convey into our design details. An intricate mind map of the theme that fits into our label's universe helps with the creation of the silhouette and garment.

How do you stay creatively inspired?

We often make time out of our busy schedules to catch up with friends to share thoughts, movies, music and even business ideas. As design is a part of our everyday life, we draw inspiration from anything to everything around us. It often comes unexpectedly, as long as we keep an open-mind.

When it comes to designing, which feature do you consider to be the most important?

The feature that is most important to us is the experience and the story we are conveying. Putting significant meanings and stories into every minute detail - from the silhouette to the name of the garments.



Due to the pandemic, we saw the drastic change towards consumerism. We hope that the industry will take a slower pace instead of a never-ending cycle season after season...



motoguo FW20

What do you do in your downtime?

M Eat, Sleep & YouTube.
K Window shopping.

Favourite drink?

M Pineapple juice.
K Perrier with a slice of lemon.

Favourite guilty indulgence?

M Bingeing on YouTube.
K Shopping for beauty products.

What would you say is the best time of the day?

M Any time after 00:00.
K Anytime when I'm with Rubber (my French bulldog).

On your day off, where would you be?

We would just stay in bed.

Moto (M) ; Kinder (K)

For the past five years there has been so many remarkable highlights for the brand and for the both of you. Could you tell us what were the key highs?

A few notable highlights for our career so far:

- 2016 We were nominated as a semi-finalist of the prestigious LVMH prize and we were the first Malaysian and Southeast Asian brand to be selected, and having our runway debut in Europe during Spring Summer 2017 Milan Fashion Week sponsored by The Italian Chambers of Fashion.
- 2017 Second runway show during Fall Winter 2017 Milan Fashion Week hosted by Giorgio Armani, while also having our first runway during Tokyo Fashion Week sponsored by Amazon Japan.
- 2018 Awarded the Top 10 Asian Designer to Watch Award by Hong Kong Design Centre.
- 2019 Having a runway celebration of our 5th year year (10th season) anniversary show during Shanghai Fashion Week, we created one of the most epic runway shows to date with bubble machines and birthday cakes being brought out during the finale, with audiences so touched some of them cried with joy. It was the most emotional moment to remember for what we've been through! Also, we have the full video released on our motoguo YouTube channel.

How does it feel to have celebrities wear the label? Like Dua Lipa for example...

It definitely came as a surprise to us and it does build confidence in our label to have celebrities don our pieces.

What do you think about the state of the world of fashion (and the creative industry) right now due to the pandemic?

Due to the pandemic, we saw the drastic change towards consumerism, we hope that the industry will take a slower pace instead of going through a never-ending cycle season after season and that consumers will educate themselves on the value of buying designer pieces. ■



The motoguo team: Kinder Eng, Moto Guo, Jay Perry Ang

MOTOGUO is an eponymous label, founded in 2015 by Moto Guo and business partner, Jay Perry Ang accompanied by co-creative director, Kinder Eng. Moto was enrolled in a classical music course before pursuing fashion and Kinder started in a fashion design course right after high school. Both of them had met at the same college. Towards the end of their college days, Moto presented his graduation collection which caught the attention of a buyer from Wut Berlin in Tokyo and was also featured in F***ingYoung! They are currently residing in Malaysia.

SHAPING THE CURVE

Joanne Kua, CEO of KSK Group, started her career in investment banking, working abroad in London, Hong Kong and Munich. Returning to her family business eleven years ago, she was instrumental in completing one of the largest insurance deals in Southeast Asia, providing the catalyst to diversify into property development. AM speaks to Joanne on being the newbie, her passions for venture building, technology and disruption, the importance of new perspectives, architects, 8 Conlay, celebrating design and what's coming up next.

INTERVIEW BY ANG CHEE AND LINA ESA | PHOTOGRAPHY OF JOANNE KUA BY ACACIA MARDIANA DAUD
8 CONLAY IMAGES COURTESY OF KSK GROUP



Joanne Kua's debut project, 8 Conlay, is located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, touted as the world's tallest twisting twin towers and comes with a RM 5.4 billion price tag. Consisting of a retail podium, hotel and branded residences serviced by Kempinski, the project is due for completion in 2022.

ON BEING YOUNG AND STARTING IN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

A lot of the times when I walk into a room, people always look at me and wonder, who is this young girl? The challenge for me was people viewing us as sort of 'new'. "What do you bring to the table? Do you know what you're doing?" is what people would ask, right? The flipside of the equation is really just that — it's the fact that you don't know what to expect! It was about coming into a crowded space (property development) with so many people with so many years of experience, and I was not about to go and say, "you don't know what you're doing". It was a celebration of saying, "you have all been in this industry for so long, maybe what I can bring to the table is a new perspective." I treat it as a learning curve for me. When you start talking facts and you accept constructive criticisms and accept what people are saying and listening to everybody on the ground, you'll be surprised at how much magic there is.

ON HER PRINCIPLES IN BUSINESS

When you're young and going into a new business, you kind of think to yourself, "let's continue to learn". In my personal journey, after going through the harsh environments of investment banking, you have to be humble, hardworking and just power through. When you're young, you have so much to learn, you need to put in the hours. You need to be able to earn your chair; earn the respect from people. One of my personal principles is that respect is mutual, it goes both ways. It's not about age, it's about how you treat the other person. If that very simple principle translates through, you'll be surprised at how many people actually want to listen to you.

ON SWITCHING FROM INSURANCE TO PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

My father, our chairman, has had a long fascination with property. And people think real estate is very different from insurance. Actually I don't think so. It's the perspectives — both are long gestation businesses. In insurance we sell trust, we sell a piece of paper. There's nothing to look at, it's a promise we make. When we went into property development, I realised a lot of people think of property development as just buildings. But I look at it as the same set of customers that we deal with from property to insurance.

If you take away property as just a commodity and start thinking of it as the customers' lifestyles, psychologies and their user journeys, you'll start to see it differently.



8 Conlay under construction

One of the most important things about a company is really the people. Because you can't possibly create anything interesting and new alone.



ON TRADITION AND DISRUPTION

When I came back, insurance was seen as one of the more traditional industries, but not so much today because of insurtech and fintech. When we looked at the insurance business and where the world was heading to, or where the customers are heading to, we cannot ignore technology or data. For us, that's the natural step and progression into property as well. And we have also disrupted ourselves, incubating tech start-ups such as Sunday and Carmana, with plans for more tech innovation within the group. It's something we have learnt from venture building, it's no different from when we started KSK Land. The similarity is that we're always agile and nimble. This is going to continue for us in KSK. We've just set up a technology company where we plan to look at how technology is going to help drive our property development and property management business in the whole ecosystem.

ON PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AS MORE THAN JUST BRICKS AND MORTAR

If you take away property as just a commodity and start thinking of it as the customers' lifestyles, psychologies and their user journeys, you'll start to see it differently. This way, when you think about a development concept, it comes from a very different perspective. For us, we've always started at where the customers are sitting. People underestimate how much Malaysians appreciate experiences. And always, there's an element of trust. Who would give you that amount of money — a lot more than in insurance — to you to say, look, in five years' time, I'm going to hand you this set of keys and it's going to look like this, and rest assured that whether you're buying this to live in or to invest, you're going to be able to live or imagine that kind of lifestyle. As developers, you're decision-makers essentially, and you have the power to decide what you want to do with that space. So much so that there will be many people living, working and playing there. That sheer power to be able to design that framework, and bring people together and put a lot of creative minds together, is rather interesting. That's where I feel people see the value, in putting all these communities together and indirectly start to craft spaces.

ON HER BIGGEST LESSONS IN THIS BUSINESS

One of the most important things about a company is really the people. Because you can't possibly create anything interesting and new alone. You need people who can understand, give their opinions and drive that through. With what we're doing currently, a lot of people are telling me that it's different. It's not easy to find like-minded individuals who have that innate belief that whatever we're doing differently, we can make it happen. Every time we try to put out a new idea, we get challenged. I think that's always a continuous journey for us, to find these people, to continue to put these people together. And it's not just our internal people, it's also our partners.

ON HER IMPRESSIONS OF ARCHITECTURE

When I was working in London, I liked going to galleries and museums, especially contemporary art galleries. In the art spaces, that sense of walking outside in, the experiences are very different - how spaces are created to experience different artworks. And you know when you're on John Nash's Regent Street and you see that curve, you wonder how they got it so perfect. That was my first awareness of architecture, I was thinking how that got done back then.

KL in comparison to cities in Asia has beautiful modern buildings like the National Mosque, even our Railway Station. The heritage shop houses in Chinatown today, if you look at them, you realise that different shophouses look different. Every arch and every curve tells a story.

In Malaysia we can push it a bit more. I like the scene because we tend to do something a little bit more Malaysian -- we're not too showy. But it's something that you can see, it stands in time. When you look at it closer and longer, you'll never get bored of it.

ON SELECTING ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS

First and foremost, good chemistry is important. I never think of us as client and consultant. Each development takes at least 5 years. That's already a relationship, it's almost a partnership. And it builds over time, right? You don't know what you don't know until you start. 8 Conlay is very close to my heart. Hud (RSP Architects) and I are quite close and we talk about a lot of things. Second, we imagine who the target audience is, understanding the type of development that we want to do. Then we look at the strengths of the architects, because every architect has their own identity and that's important. It's similar to how we view a development. I view each one like a human being, each one has a different identity, a different soul. The architect will then have to match that.

As for designers, we have a lot of designers, we even have fashion designers working with us as brand designers.

ON STARTING 8 CONLAY

We looked at the location, the heart of the city, and decided to do branded residences. It's a 'one level above' luxury and maybe KL is ready for it. At the time, branded residences were very nascent in Malaysia. It's an adventure coming into the city and being in the heart of the city. We thought about people doing so - would they want something that looks normal, or would they want something a little different?

As we started talking to designers, one day I came across YOO. I spoke to the chairman (John Hitchcox) and he told me, "we think that design has the power to build vertical communities and put like-minded people together". I thought that was interesting. Then we looked at YOO and what they were doing and they had this whole array of celebrity interior designers all with different identities. That's how the whole thing started.



Views of the 8 Conlay's show unit



A render of 8 Conlay (architects: RSP Architects Sdn Bhd)

Design is storytelling. It comes in so many shapes and forms. Design has power like language, where you are trying to tell a story.



ON DESIGN AT THE FOREFRONT OF 8 CONLAY

Design is storytelling. It comes in so many shapes and forms. Design has power like language, where you are trying to tell a story.

When you start to think of a property development not as a commodity but as a space where you're attracting like-minded individuals who want to live together, you start to think of design. I think design has always been there in every single development, right? It's a question of whether you want to bring design to the forefront. Every designer from the architect to interior designer to the brand designer, they always start by telling a story. There's an inspiration that they take and then they start to tell their story in their own way. When we started 8 Conlay, we said we have this vision, we're at the heart of the city and we owe it to the city to do this. When you start to design a building, we all know that the building will last generations. What is that story you want to tell?

Along the journey, working with my team, it was an enjoyable and eye-opening process for me because all of them wanted to tell a story and they fed off each other. Why not celebrate that?

ON WHAT'S AHEAD

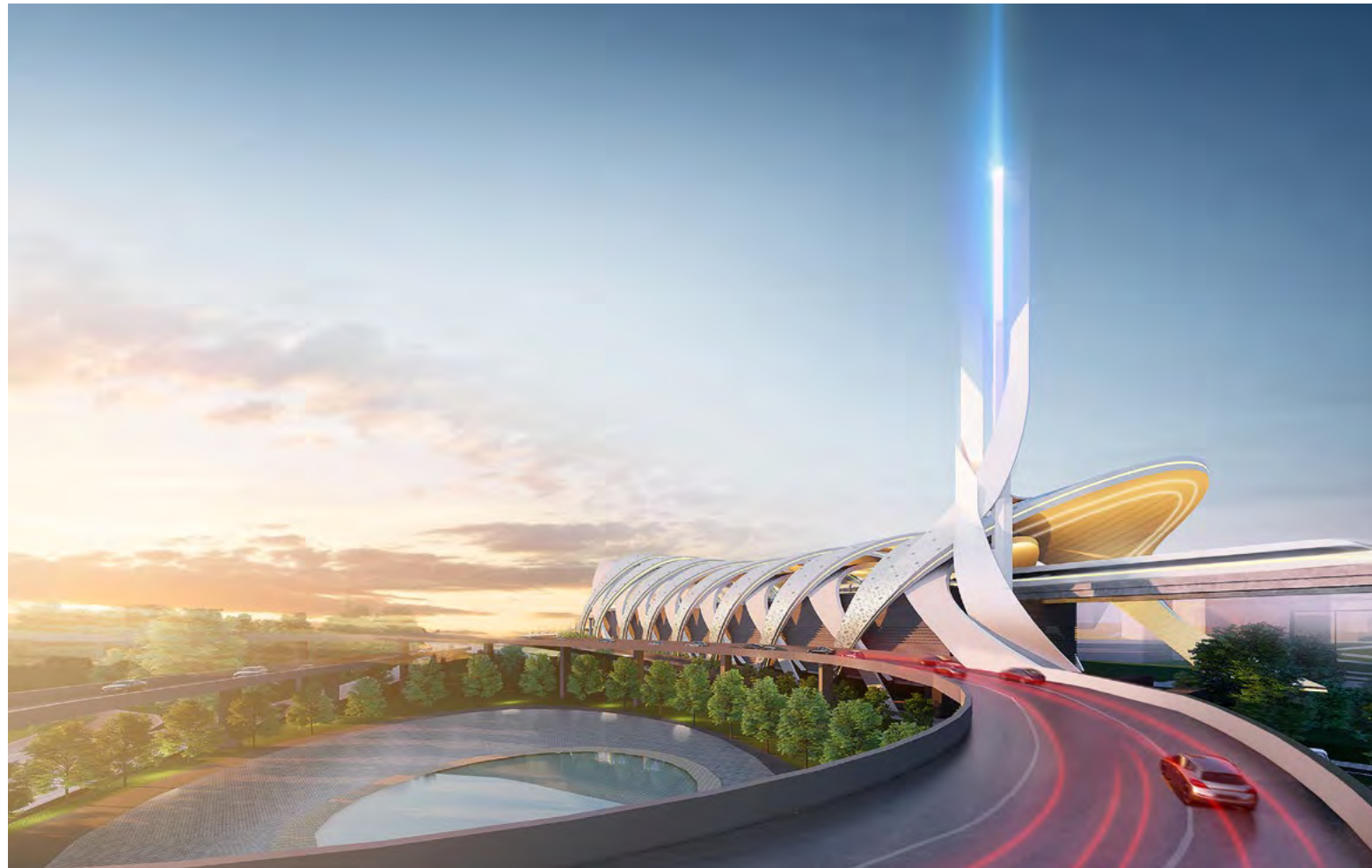
We have something in the works. Size-wise it's not as huge as 8 Conlay, it's at a very preliminary stage. It's going to be sustainability and wellness-driven. We are going to take on sustainability from a buildability perspective, somewhere customers see and don't see. I've worked abroad and I have to say in Malaysia there are still opportunities to experiment. People say experimentation is very risky but at least you know that when you experiment at home, you know what you're getting into is familiar.

8 Conlay is our debut development and a very big one in the city and we need to start strong. And we need to finish our first project strong. ■

RAPID PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE:

- What is your idea of perfect happiness?
When I am with close family and friends.
- What is your greatest fear?
Needles!
- Which living person do you most admire?
My father.
- What is your greatest extravagance?
Shoes and bags.
- What is your current state of mind?
Buzzing.
- What do you consider the most underrated virtue?
Patience.
- On what occasion do you lie?
When I don't want to go to the gym.
- What is the quality you most like in a man?
Humility.
- What is the quality you most like in a woman?
Independence.
- Which talent would you most like to have?
Teleportation.
- Where would you most like to live?
On a cliff overlooking the sea.
- What is your most treasured possession?
My phone.

READY TO BOARD



First Prize: SM Architects Sdn Bhd - The Integration of Two

The RTS Link Station Façade Design Ideas Competition

February saw the results announcement of the much anticipated RTS Link Bukit Chagar Station Façade Design Ideas Competition. A collaboration between Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT) and Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM), the open competition was launched on 23 November 2020 and attracted 124 registrations. At the closing date of 25 January 2021, a total of 94 entries were received.

At the online press conference held on 19 February 2021, MRT and PAM unveiled the winning façade design concept. The First Prize winner was announced to be Johor-based SM Architects Sdn Bhd, led by Ar. Chin Yee Chong. The modern and futuristic design, dubbed "The Integration of Two", was inspired by the historical and intertwined relationship between Johor Bahru and Singapore which had existed for centuries, and will now be further enhanced with the RTS Link between Johor Bahru and Singapore.

MRT Corp Chief Executive Officer Datuk Mohd Zarif Hashim congratulated Ar Chin Yee Choong and his team for winning first place in the competition, which comes with a prize money of RM250,000, commenting that the "contemporary and futuristic design managed to capture the relationship between Johor Bahru and Singapore. It will not only be an iconic landmark in Johor Bahru but also be amongst the great railway stations of the world".



First Prize: SM Architects Sdn Bhd - The Integration of Two



Second Prize: Formzero Cyel Architecture - The X-Change



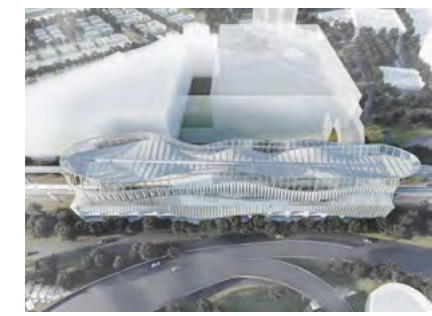
Third Prize: CHY Architects Sdn Bhd - Parasol of Johor



01

HONORARY MENTIONS

- 01 Akitek Jururancang (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd - DNA Darul Ta'zim
- 02 Ong & Ong 360 Consultancy Sdn Bhd - Dance of Johor
- 03 Eun Architect (with Spacefighters Sdn Bhd & SW1P Collective Sdn Bhd) - Anjung



02



03

"The design was picked by DYMM Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar, the Sultan of Johor, together with the competition's Jury Panel because of the strong meaning behind it," he said. His Majesty was the Chairman of the distinguished Jury Panel and Patron of the competition, which was also his brainchild, added Mohd Zarif. PAM President Datuk Ar Ezumi Harzani Ismail said that the RTS design competition provides Malaysian architects the opportunity to participate in key projects of national importance such as the RTS station to showcase their talents and capabilities in designing complex buildings.

"This competition demonstrates the vital importance architectural imagination plays in the transformation of building and cities. We hope this competition, with the many submissions received showing 'out-of-the-box' ideas and inspirations, will encourage more collaborations with the Government, GLCs and private developers when seeking solutions for which Malaysian architects are able to make a significant contribution and difference," he added.

As a key national project, the RTS Link station is set to be a new landmark icon in Johor Bahru with a capacity of 10,000 passengers per hour and an estimated ridership of about 150,000 passengers per day. Designed to ease the daily congestions on the Johor Causeway, the station is also planned as a key economic driver for Johor state. The link will be integrated with public transport systems at both the Bukit Chagar and Woodland North stations. The project is expected to be completed in 2026. ■

JURY PANEL

- DYMM Sultan Ibrahim ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar Al-Haj, Sultan of Johor (Jury Chair and Competition Patron)
- YAB Datuk Haji Ir Hasni bin Mohammad, Menteri Besar Johor
- YBhg Dato' Haji Azmi bin Rohani, State Secretary Johor
- YBhg Datuk Isham bin Ishak, Secretary-General, Ministry of Transport
- YBhg Datuk Mohd Zarif Hashim, Chief Executive Officer, MRT Corp
- YBhg Datuk Ar Ezumi Harzani Ismail, PAM President
- YBhg Dato' Ar Nafisah binti Radin, NR Architect
- Ar Boon Chee Wee, GRA Architects Sdn Bhd, PAM Past President
- Prof Ts Dr Mohd Hamdan bin Haji Ahmad, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, UTM
- Ar Razin Mahmood, Razin Architect, PAM Southern Chapter past Chairman

TECHNICAL REVIEWERS

- Dato' Amiruddin Ma'aris, Project Director, MRT Putrajaya Line, MRT Corp Sdn Bhd
- Ir Zulkifli Mohamed - RTS Link Project Director, Malaysia Rapid Transit System Sdn Bhd
- Er Poh Seng Tiok, Senior Vice President & Head of Rail and Transit, Asia, AECOM
- Ar. Loo Chee Keong, ARC Alliance S/B
- Mr. Mitch Gelber, GBI Facilitator, ESG consultant, Yi Design

CONVENORS

- Ar Ang Chee Cheong, Competition Convenor
- Ar Husam Abdul Fatah Haron, Deputy Convenor

ARCHITECTURE PAST

By reconciling architecture within history and giving substance to the theoretical, Lim Sheau Yun speaks about the ways her archiving, research and media projects expand the potential of architectural practice.

TEXT AND IMAGES BY LIM SHEAU YUN



On a cold fall afternoon in 2018, I was walking back from a former professor's office in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York, USA. Her office was located in a soon-to-be gentrified part of the city: warehouses turned into lofts, factories turned into architectural offices. Pasted on a lamppost was an invitation to a party for new-agers titled Universal Love 004. The text read like a lyric: "this is OM (HOME) / it's going OM / this is the PLACE!" "This is what our journey into consciousness is all about," it declared. And in the centre of the poster was the hypnotic plan of Borobudur, taunting me.

I had decided the month before that my thesis would concern Borobudur, the eighth-century temple in Java. Specifically, I was interested in how a monument is made modern: how did Borobudur transform from its state of ruination in 1817 to global tourist destination in the 1980s? At the heart of the project was an idea, drawn heavily from Beatriz Colomina, that media constitutes modernity. That is to say, architecture is more than the architectural object — it is also the circulation of images, ideas and imaginations that makes architecture. What meaning could I mine from a poster I had stumbled across that featured the object of my obsession? How could I write history from it?

I love reading too much into things. Growing up, I had always heard stories about my great-grandfather, a Communist newspaper editor who was exiled from Penang and lost everything during the Cultural Revolution in China. I fancied myself the storyteller of his alternate universe: I first entered Yale with the intention to be a historian of modern China. However, within my first year, I found the study of history too conservative for one with a predisposition for the fanciful. Rather than embracing the central paradox of writing history — that we seek reliable evidence to chase an unreliable truth — I found the discipline of history to be unwilling to contend with the implications of narrative slippage. We are in a postmodern situation; while I could make room for modernist dreams, I could not stomach modernist methodologies.

The first architecture class I took — Introduction to Architecture, delivered by Alec Purves in the circumambulating way he had taught for the past twenty years — could not have been more different. Rather than reject contradiction, architecture attempted to give it form and substance. History was not rigid truth but plastic text. The past — in the words of Ben Lerner — became citable in all its moments, to be perpetually re-read and re-constituted. A poster in Greenpoint in 2018 could be as revelatory as an account of how Borobudur was restored.

This revelation materialised itself as a minor personal crisis. I took some time off from Yale to explore a world reconfigured in my mind, or in shorthand, to 'discover myself'. For a time, I worked with Laurence Loh and Loh-Lim Lin Lee at Arkitek LLA in my hometown of Penang. I had long respected their work — The Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion, with its indigo walls and gilded doors, had long been a childhood object of fascination. As a precocious pre-teen, I would stand in the centre of the courtyard, squeeze my eyes shut and try to feel the chi of the building. My fascinations at that age were that of outrunning time: architecture, and its descendant, heritage, seemed to me exacting material evidence of legacy.

But if we are to take the past as blurry and imprecise — then what of the entire enterprise of heritage, premised on the same unshakeable belief as the enterprise of history? Conservation, for me, was merely another representational form in the circulation of ideas around a building. The moral discourse around heritage is no doubt important, but I am far more interested in what kind of stories emerge in the fallout of that circularity.

The point of time at which a building is restored to likely never existed; it is just another fiction that we must treat with seriousness.



Universal Love 004 poster in Brooklyn, NY



Image of my thesis, "The Specter of Borobudur"



At the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang, Malaysia

It was with this question of taking fiction seriously that I first started getting interested in Indonesia, where everything was tinged with a familiar made strange. I had always taken it as a given that I would study something close to home, but reading history gave me a far wider definition of home — a geography of the sea, of the permeability of borders and stories of migration. My travel and research in Indonesia were supposedly primarily about candi (Hindu-Buddhist temples) and their restorations, but it was in my encounters with people that I found myself cruising in the world of stories — from a man who claimed to be the inheritor of the Majapahit empire; the architect Pak Gede Kresna, who explained his hyperlocal philosophy over homemade *tuak* (traditional rice wine) in his home/studio in Singaraja; the woman in Mojokerto who whispered about secrets revealed in closed-door ceremonies. It is with that spirit of secret conspiracy that I began to build a methodology for writing and thinking about the world, to read worlds in the small and the intimate.

On one hand, I prize rumour, serendipity, fiction and the unrationalisable. But in order to engage meaningfully with these theoretical inclinations, one needs

Architecture is more than the architectural object — it is also the circulation of images, ideas and imaginations that makes architecture.

the counterpoint of a close and sustained engagement with sources, the 'stuff' of history as it were. If theory was the perspective point, then sources and solid research are the lines that separate horizon from ground. After graduation, I decided not to work in an architecture firm and instead obtained a fellowship to work at Malaysia Design Archive (MDA), a non-profit independent archive of visual culture based in the Zhongshan Building, Kuala Lumpur.

While there are rich traditions of oral history in the region, there remains a paucity of material sources in Southeast Asia, in part due to the climate and in part due to the lack of institutional funding to do this work. With MDA, I hoped to start building architectural knowledge from the ground-up, but the most enriching part of my time has been part of living in KL and forging alliances across disciplines, from historians and academics, artists and gallerists, and of course, architects. Witnessing the lives and practices of others is where networks of collaboration begin.

I've recently been working on a few publication projects, to myself participate in the economy of media around architecture. But I have come to find that the book object and the architectural object are not quite so different — they can both be read as text, not in the sense that they contain literal words, but that they both hold assumptions, arguments and implications. Couched firmly in the discipline of architecture, I hope to expand the potential of architectural practice. These are the small monuments I want to scatter, whether in books, in archives or in posters of a party. ■



The archive room at Malaysia Design Archive (MDA)



At graduation from Yale with a BA Architecture (History, Theory, Criticism concentration) in 2019



Outside Rudolph Hall, the Yale School of Architecture building designed by Paul Rudolph



The installation accompanying my senior thesis, which I designed, built and made drawings for. This installation was conceived as a drawing in space was the culmination of a semester-long project of drawing Borobudur

Opposite: At "Lateness," an installation I made critiquing the linearity of archives while researching Borobudur

LIM SHEAU YUN is an independent researcher of art and architectural history based in Kuala Lumpur. She graduated from Yale University with a BA Architecture, concentrating in History, Theory and Criticism. Her thesis, "The Specter of Borobudur," was awarded the John Addison Porter Prize, a literary award awarded by Yale University for the "best work of scholarship... of general human interest." Sheau was formerly Lead Researcher at Malaysia Design Archive, where she worked on publications, public programmes and research. Her work has been funded by various fellowships and grant organisations, including the Gordon Grand Fellowship and the Harvey P. Geiger Fellowship at Yale, the Berlin Kunster Programme des DAAD, the Krishen Jit Astro Fund and the Foundation for Arts Initiatives. She co-runs a blog on object histories, oforother.malaysiadesignarchive.org, and is currently working on publication projects.



PROJECTS

HOUSE WITH THREE FACADES MIIM Office for Architecture

KLOÉ HOTEL Domaine Architects Sdn Bhd

AURORA PLACE AND SOVO NRV Architect Sdn Bhd

AEMULUS AT THE RUNWAY Design Unit Architects Sdn Bhd

COMPOUND HOUSE Linghao Architects

GALASA EVENT PLACE KUEE Architect

DESA SENTRAL GALLERY Zone Designwork Sdn Bhd

SPA BUBU Richie Chiam Architect

FILLET HOUSE Kee Yen Architect

SELINDUNG DAUN GALLERY Malek Hassan Architect

MAKIO HOUSE Fabian Tan Architect

FARM FOODCRAFT Seshan Design Sdn Bhd



MORE SIDES TO EVERY STOREY

HOUSE WITH THREE FACADES
by MIIM Office for Architecture

Yilan, Taiwan

With an equidistance to nearby mountains and urban life, this house has a newfound relationship with nature, and also acts as an aperture for views not just of the mountains, the island, but also the sky.

A return to home. The clients for this house are a couple who left their jobs in Shanghai to relocate to their childhood hometown of Toucheng, Yilan, a town on the north-eastern Pacific coast of Taiwan. They were excited to find a small plot that was at an equal distance between the nearby mountains and the magnificent volcanic Guishan Island (Turtle Island) to build their family home, and their request for the design was simply to be close to nature without being too far from urban conveniences. According to Taiwan-based Malaysian architect, Lim Min Ter of MIIM Office for Architecture, the neighbourhood is a somewhat ambiguous mix of nature and city, and while its location afforded the clients both environments, there is little in its immediate vicinity. Without a park or beach nearby to directly engage with, the design team had to create a new kind of relationship with nature.

While this is a typical urban condition throughout Taiwan, the constraints of limited access to nature requires a rethinking of how we can engage with the environment, especially with stunning views on all sides.

The site is a vacant lot slotted in between two other similarly zoned houses. While this is a typical urban condition throughout Taiwan, the constraints of limited access to nature requires a rethinking of how we can engage with the environment, especially with stunning views on all sides.

Yilan is relatively rural, and hence the lack of light pollution allows for stunning views of the night sky. The strategy for the site was to maximise the possibility of using the building as an aperture for views not just of the mountains and the island, but also of the sky.

The immediate design problem was to address the challenge of the uncompromising westerly sun. The building front faces the west, where the mountains are coincidentally located. "How would we preserve the views while also protecting the house from heat and glare? The solution was to create a conceptual veil that provides more shade in the upper floors' bedrooms, where the clients would be less likely to spend their afternoons, and conversely, to enlarge the viewing window towards the mountains on the lower floors, where the family is more likely to spend their daytimes." says Min Ter.

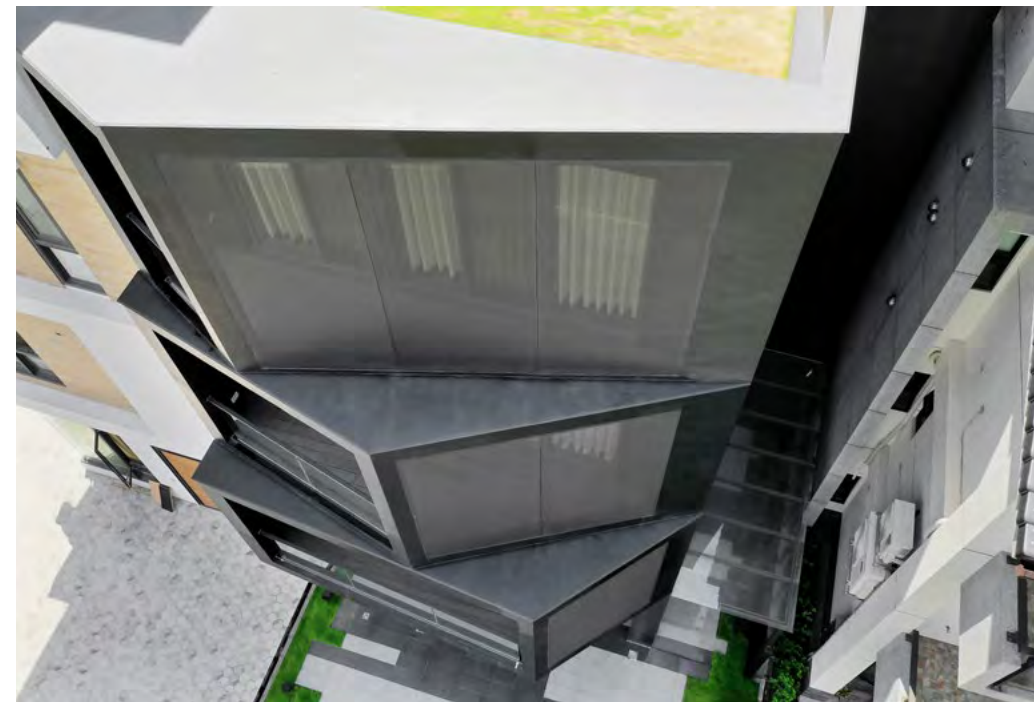
The final result is a happy compromise between the desire to meaningfully engage with nature's solar cycles, and the economics of building a simple-budget home. The easterly facades are not impacted by the morning glare, and hence pushed in just enough for optimal shadow cover. The result is full glazing towards Turtle Island. The roof acts as a facade for both day and night. During the day, its sloped green roof is angled away from the western sun, while its buildup provides effective insulation from both winter and summer temperatures. Its angle is also perfect to lie upon, for views towards the ocean as well as the sky, making it the ideal viewpoint to see the world from any angle. ■



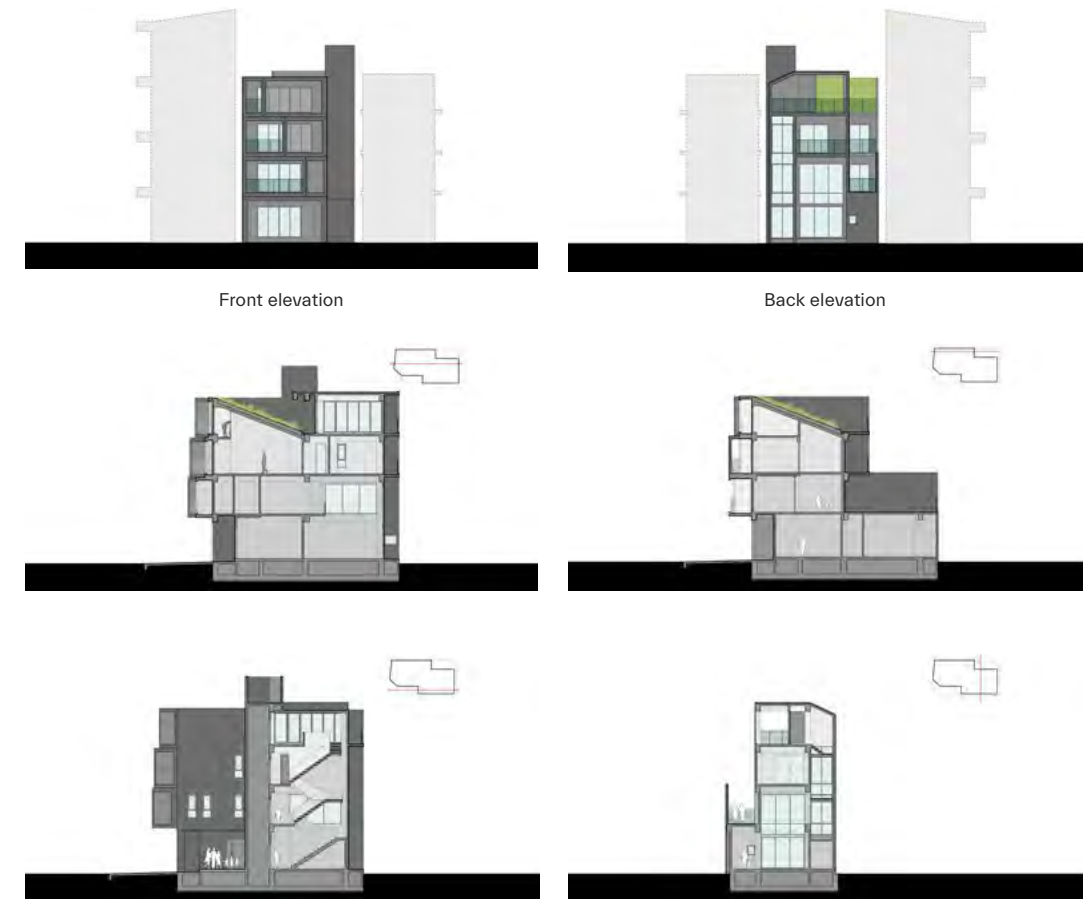
The house positioned in the neighbourhood



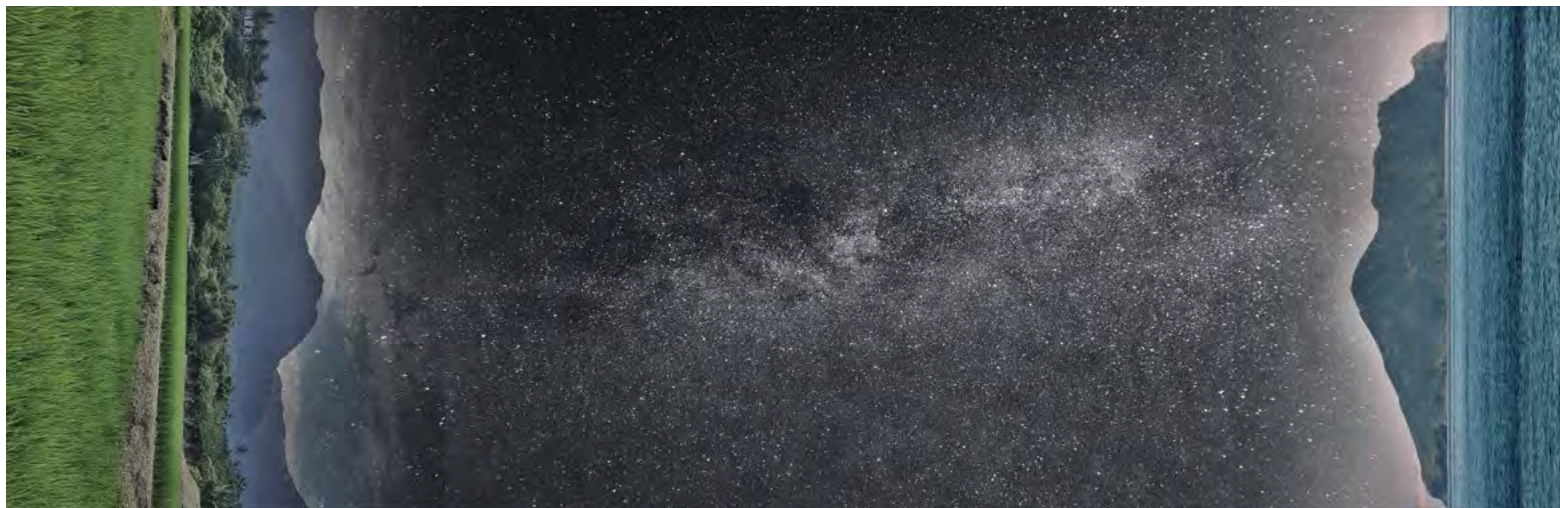
Angle of the front facade



Facade detail of fabric shade



Sections



The Mountains of Yilan

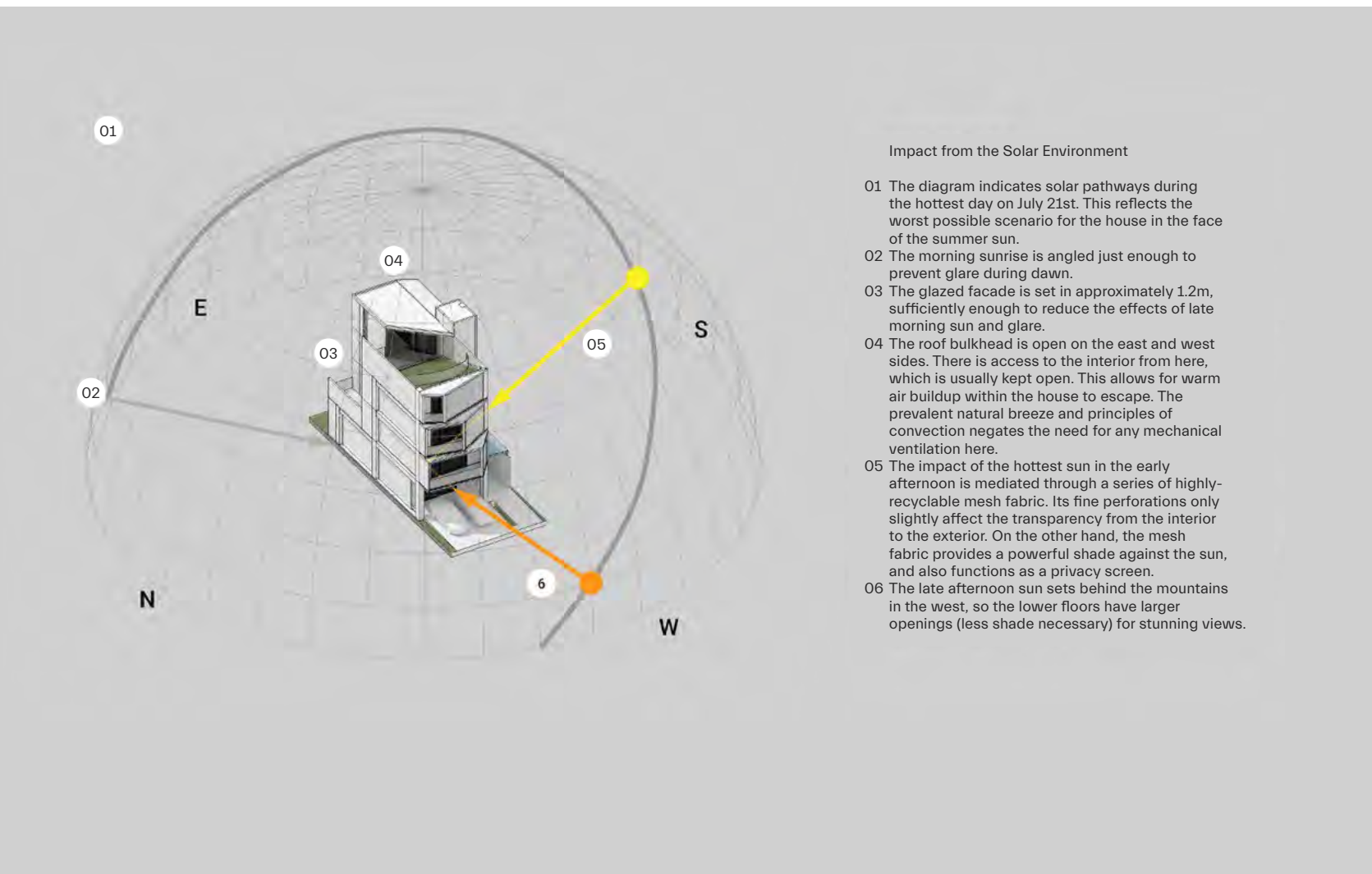
Guishan island



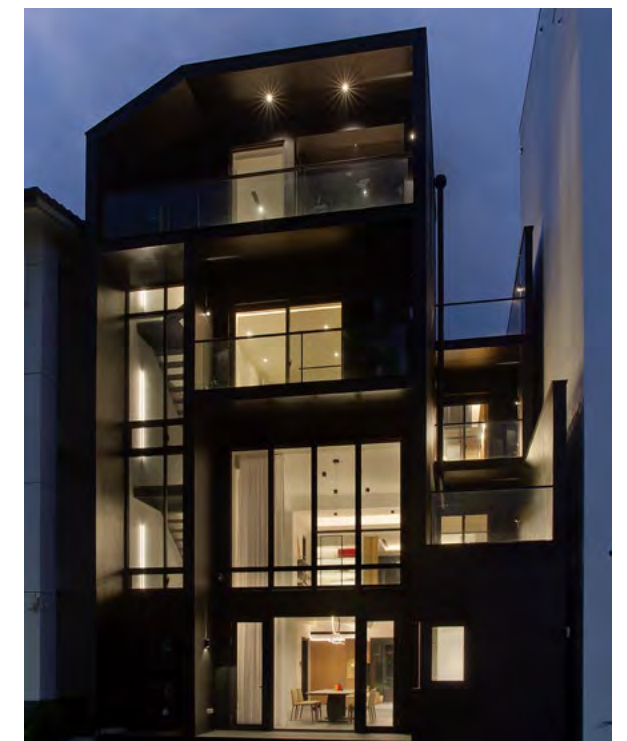
Sky and mountain panorama



Top floor activity room with green roof slope



Green roof detail



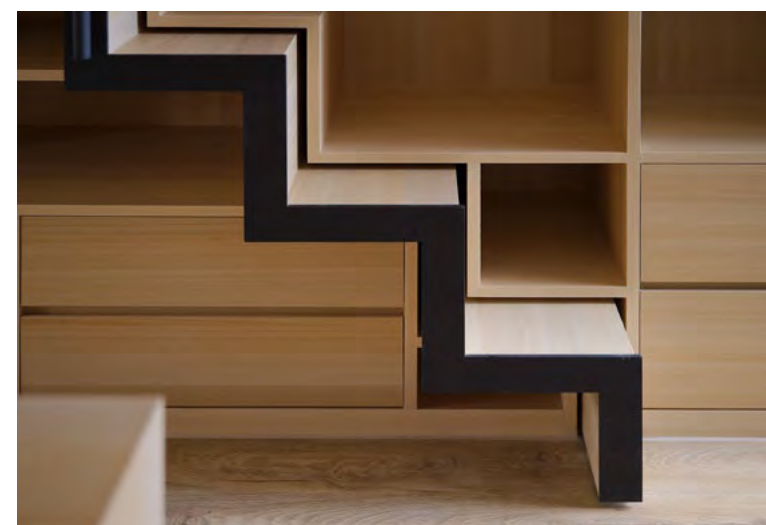
The house, lit up at night

The late afternoon sun sets behind the mountains in the west, so the lower floors have larger openings and require less shading. This results in stunning views during twilight hours.

MIIM is founded and led by Malaysian architect Min Ter Lim. He received his Master of Architecture from Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where he was also studio instructor and design critic. He graduated with Honours from Wesleyan University, and received his Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Studio Arts. Established in Copenhagen in 2014 by two former members of world-renowned Danish architecture firm Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), MIIM is now based in Taipei, Taiwan.



The stairwell at the second floor



Hidden stairs detail



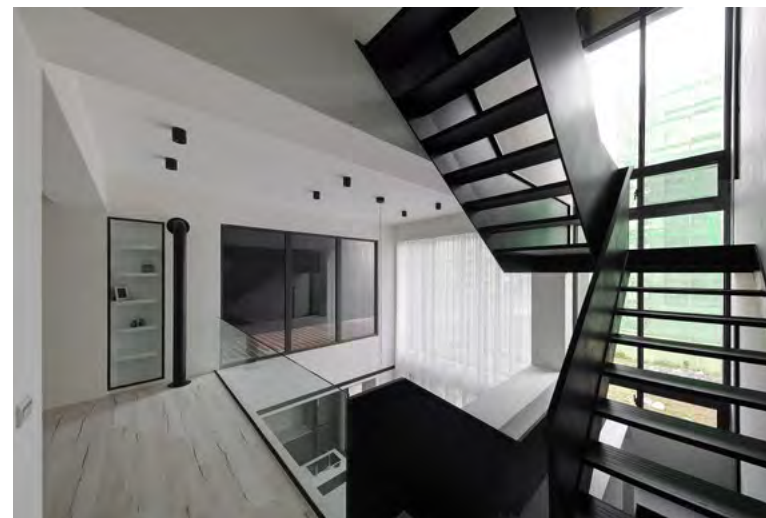
The walk-in closet with hidden stairs to the mezzanine



The floor levels, from the ground floor to rooftop



Dining room's double height space with outdoor terrace



An angle of the stairwell at the second floor



LOCATION
Yilan, Taiwan

CLIENT
Private

PRINCIPAL USE
Residential

ARCHITECT
MIIM Office for Architecture,
HHNL Architecture
& Interior Design

PROJECT PRINCIPAL
Lim Min Ter,
Jerry Hsu Yu-Chia

PROJECT TEAM
Wang Chijui, Ann Chen,
Shih Da Tseng,
Michelle M Wu

DESIGN PERIOD
April 2018 - October 2018

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD
November 2018 -
March 2020

DATE OF COMPLETION
April 2020

SITE AREA
145sqm

FLOOR AREA
350 sqm

PHOTOGRAPHY
Chi Shou Wang

HOME

AWAY
FROM
HOME

KLOÉ HOTEL
by Domaine Architects Sdn Bhd
Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur

Modernism and mid-century vogue come together in Bukit Bintang's latest boutique hotel establishment.

BY NIZAR MUSA

Kuala Lumpur's five-star hospitality scene is a quintessential part of its metropolitan DNA. Since the '70s and '80s, the finest guestrooms, spa experiences, bars, and restaurants have all beckoned the elite and well-heeled into the city's gleaming towers of luxury-brand accommodation. Yet amidst new hotels such as the RuMa, Four Seasons and EQ, another subcategory has been making headway; eschewing high-ceilinged glitz for human-scale fiesta, boutique hotels are redefining the hotelier's playbook. Fun and accessible, they offer their take on lifestyle and comfort — and coffee — at very reasonable prices. The new KLoé Hotel, opened in February 2020, is one such establishment that combines great service and design in a single award-winning package.

The nine-storey KLoé, by Domaine Architects, is impossible to miss; poised behind Bukit Bintang's lone Shell station, the 85-room mid-rise cuts a solitary figure over a patchwork of '60s dwellings, empty plots and construction hoarding. The design, as explained by architect Masyerin Mohamad Nor, had not always been sizeable. "When the client-cum-land owner first approached us in 2010, they were operating out of this old two-storey bungalow (on the site) which they wanted to renovate. Their idea was to do an Airbnb-style accommodation, and leverage on its proximity to Bukit Bintang. The reality was there were only so many rooms we could fit inside. When they looked at the returns, it didn't look like a worthwhile investment," he shares of the hotel's origins.

The decision would be made some months later to level the bungalow and start afresh albeit on a site less than half-an-acre in size. Despite the client's apprehension, the architects proceeded to work on the limited 8,500 sqm plinth. Continues Ar Masyerin, "by 2012, we were presenting to the then-mayor our design. The land had a high plot ratio, and the mayor questioned the smallish nature of the hotel. Our reply was simple in that our client wanted to do something niche, and operate it themselves. Being first-timers, 85 rooms seemed like a comfortable number for them to manage, and that's what we eventually built."



North facade with bold aluminium cladding



Sectional perspective looking north



North elevation

What we have here is a certain order. At the same time we have chaos, such as on the façade, where things appear to happen at random. It is a reflection of KL itself, a balance of order and chaos. We're creating a building that is not alien to the city.

Unavoidable hurdles continued to delay the project. Planning approval would for almost a year be frozen due to MRT tunnelling alignment, while neighbouring lot issues would hamper substructure construction progress after the building's 2016 tender. Even basement works were not spared from setback as underground rock formations dramatically reduced parking area. "These are the things that happen when you're working in tight city conditions. You just have to keep going right until the end," reflects the architect.

Virtually severed from the CBD, and with little in the way of useful context, Domaine took the liberty of putting their own design stamp on the site. In its simple U-shaped form the building is unapologetically stoic, straddling the site on a north-south axis. The building palette is *de rigueur*: red bricks, vent blocks, and off-form concrete comport to honesty of materials espoused by contemporary Malaysian vernacularism. It is through that third material, where walls, roof, and floor join to form the hotel's signature box shells, that the architects begin to incrementally devolve the design's rigidity. Random-sized slots punctuate the shells' eastern and western sides; glass façade panels of guestrooms concatenate in irregular fashion; vertical fins that cut out low-angle sun modulate in location and length as they ascend to the roof.

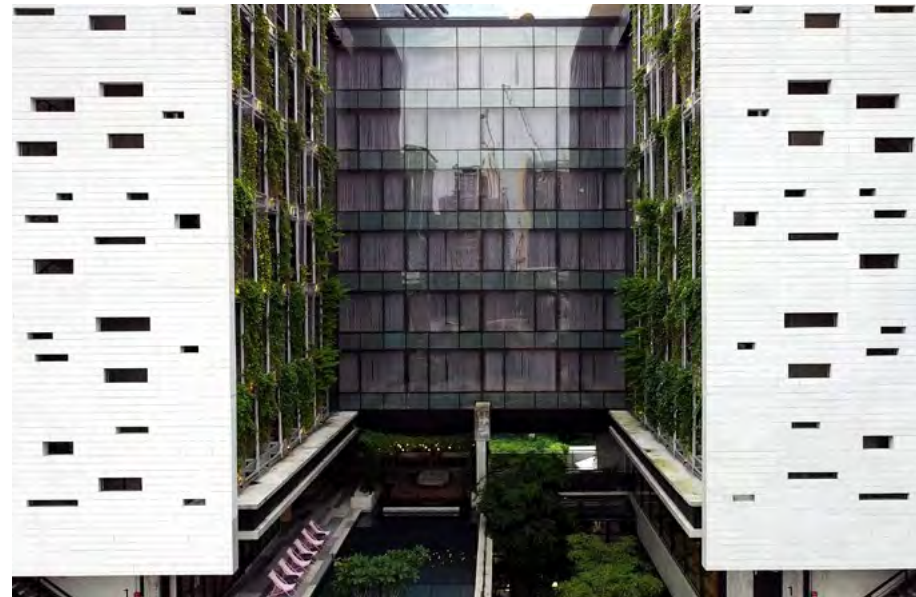
"What we have here is a certain order. At the same time we have chaos, such as on the façade, where things appear to happen at random. It is a reflection of KL itself, a balance of order and chaos. We're creating a building that is not alien to the city," elaborates Ar Masyerin on the scheme's dichotomic language.

This duality extends into the hotel's courtyard of stacked corridors that connect core to guestrooms, terminated at the base by a swimming pool. While the corridor slabs are themselves rigid, they support a checkerboard of vertical planting ostensibly organic; when ambient temperatures in corridors are warm, the vegetation assists to cool. Even on the eastern façade, vent blocks that appear random have in fact been regularised to a specific density that allows sufficient daylight and ventilation to enter the corridors.

Plenty of things can change in ten years, among them hotel interior trends. "When we were developing the architecture back in 2010-2011, we were also concurrently working the interior design, the finishes. By 2017, trends of course had changed. So we had to do some fine tuning and revamp the ID," says Ar Masyerin, explaining Domaine's 'placemaking' concept that is a hotel experience with the comfort of home-like living spaces.



Green facade with automated irrigation system



Central internal courtyard with water and plants to regulate the ambient air temperature

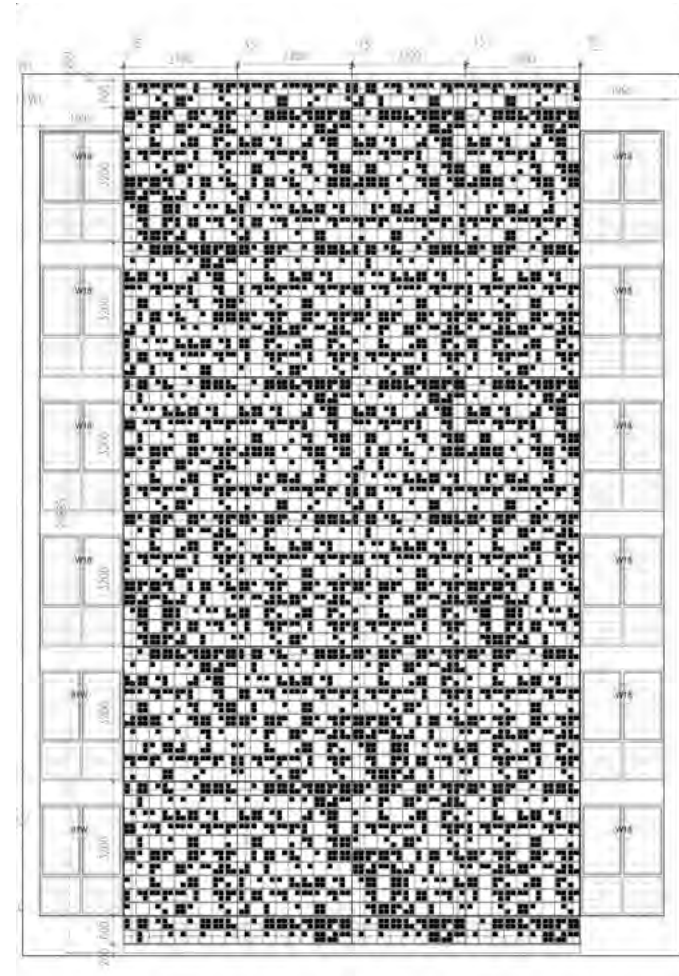


Section perspective looking west

As the hotel's direction shifted from business-oriented in 2011 to creative travel in 2017, so did its top-floor suites make the transition into artist lofts, each distinct in its character, and curated in collaboration with professional artists.



Play of light and shadow at west corridor

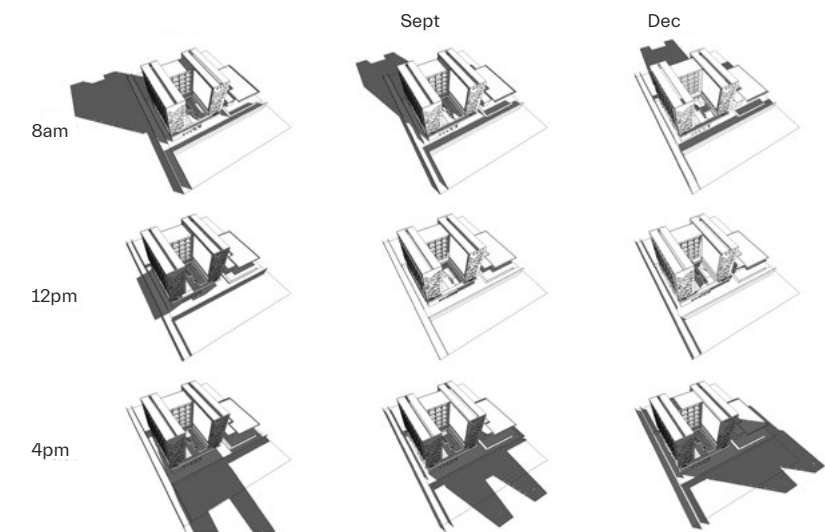


Vent Block CAD Drawing

Working hand in hand with the project's branding consultant, the palette of natural materials and soft furnishings is evident upon ground floor entry; mid-century furniture, rugs and timber cabinetry adorn the main lobby or 'living hall', creating a wholesome ambience quite unlike conventional minimalist chic varieties. There is extensive parquet flooring, in lieu of granite or tiles, which recalls familial memories of old Malaysian homes. Amplifying that ambience is daylight. Generous amounts pour into the living hall via skylight and shopfront glazing, as well as into the restaurant and multipurpose hall, highlighting colours and textures. Tonalities of timbers, leathers, fabrics, metal accents, and turquoise wall panelling are all heightened particularly in guestrooms, where Domaine have gone a step further by using fluted glass partitions to maximise daylight penetration into bathrooms. The aforementioned subtext of duality applies even at this level, where the ID layer appears to float in coloured contrast over its bare off-form concrete shell. Ar Masyerin responds, "On one hand, we're maintaining the neutrality [of the shell] to facilitate interior works. On the other, when you look at building usage, especially hotels, they go through revamps. By doing it this way, we're giving a measure of flexibility for the guestrooms to be updated in future."

As the hotel's direction shifted from business-oriented in 2011 to creative travel in 2017, so did its top-floor suites, which made the transition into artist lofts, each distinct in its character, and curated in collaboration with professional artists. In its Room to Listen, the living space features a bespoke vinyl player console designed by a skilful furniture maker with input from a professional DJ to ensure good sound quality.

This collaborative approach extends to the hotel's numerous timber furniture pieces, with those designed by Domaine going through several rounds of material testing and mock-ups with fabricators before entering mass production.



KLoé Building Shadow Study



Living hall with mix and match of locally made furniture



Materials used are timber, leather, copper and stone



Timber and wicker furniture by local indigenous people

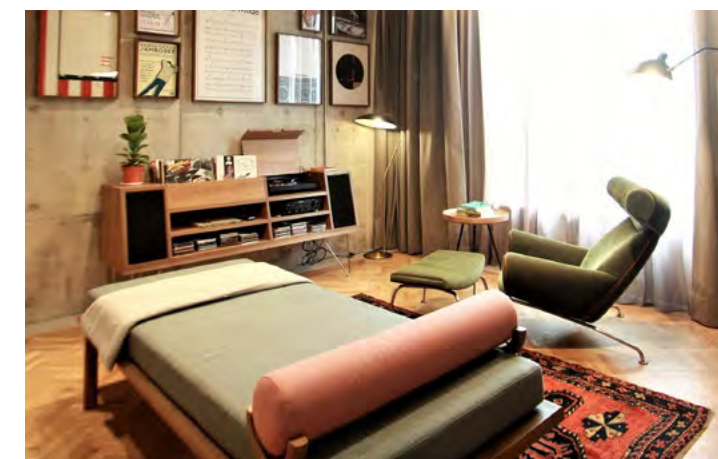
Others were developed by the furniture makers themselves, and still others produced by local furniture designers Aureole and Metisse Maison, the latter supplying beautifully crafted rattan pieces designed by indigenous Orang Asli. In a crowded hospitality scene and boilerplate designs, KLoé Hotel manages to differentiate itself in ways that matter. Its architecture, part brutalist, all modernist, professes a language entirely of its own making, yet simultaneously adopts sustainable design practices that have earned it The Edge Malaysia-PAM Green Excellence Award in 2020. Its interior, far from being a hipster hotel derivative, genuinely attempts to make the hotel a home away from home, while reconciling layers of aesthetics so that they can all one day be replaced and renewed as needed. "When we look back at our ten-year journey, it really was an opportunity for us to learn a lot of things, to be hands on not just in the design of buildings but also the interior, all the way down to individual pieces of furniture. It gave us the chance to practice architecture as a whole, as a totality. And to me, that is what being an architect is all about", concludes Ar Masyerin. ■



Marble top communal table next to an internal courtyard



Island bath with copper rail in artist loft



Bespoke furniture in Room to Listen



Locally-crafted rattan furniture in Room to Grow

NIZAR MUSA began his career in New Zealand as an honours graduate working in a structural engineer's office, retrofitting old shops and data centres before opting for a return to Malaysia in 2001. His eight-year tenure at Hijjas Architects and Planners saw among others the design of the PAM Award-winning Sasana Kijang, the LEED Platinum-certified Menara Shell in Brickfields, and the Celcom Corporate Headquarters in Petaling Jaya. He today helms QID, a brand identity, design + editorial studio, and is a regular contributor to AM and other regional design publications.



The lobby of KLoé Hotel

LOCATION Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur
CLIENT Kloe Hotel Sdn Bhd
PRINCIPAL USE Hotel
ARCHITECT Domaine Architects Sdn Bhd
PROJECT PRINCIPAL Ar Masyerin Mohamad Nor
PROJECT TEAM Ar Syahul Hamid Bin Mohamed Ali
DESIGN PERIOD 5 years
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 3 years
DATE OF COMPLETION 23 September 2019
SITE AREA 1,710.13sqm
FLOOR AREA 7,780.12sqm
CONTRACTOR Khas Corporation Sdn Bhd
CIVIL ENGINEER Lee Consult
M & E ENGINEER Nova Consult Sdn Bhd
QUANTITY SURVEYOR JUBC Sdn Bhd
LIGHTING Stephanie Ng Design
LANDSCAPING Walrus Design Sdn Bhd
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS GEDS Sdn Bhd (GBI Consultant), Miracle (signage designer), Fiske Furniture, Lain Furniture
MAIN MATERIALS /FINISHINGS/FITTINGS Concrete finish, facing bricks, solid timber, terrazzo flooring, metal, ceramic tiles, glasses
PHOTOGRAPHY Domaine Architects Sdn Bhd

BEST



OF BOTH WORLDS

AURORA PLACE AND SOVO by NRY Architects Sdn Bhd
Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur

Similar to the street mall, this is a hybrid mall integrating outdoor/indoor elements, offering natural ventilation, an open-air concept, and conceptualised work and living that will transform this urban centre.

The year 1998 heralded a new beginning: what was once an outskirts southern suburb town became home to the nation's sporting emporium, and host to the 1998 Commonwealth Games. Bukit Jalil has since grown from strength to strength, beginning from offering world-class sporting facilities, to major developments. The latest commercial and residential integrated development here is called Aurora Place and SoVo, with flagship components of a hybrid mall and flexible office suites.

In recent years, a multitude of commercial malls have been built in major urban areas. Alongside growing demands and the growing population, developers have to find ways to innovate beyond just a brick-and-mortar standalone mall, or just another typical commercial complex. The layout and architectural design of mixed developments need to be conceptualised to cater to more than specific purposes.

Close to the home of the nation's sporting emporium of KL Sports City, Aurora Place and SoVo is part of the new catalytic development of Bukit Jalil City. The 5.9 acres development is also well-positioned next to the upcoming Pavilion Bukit Jalil, and the green lungs of Bukit Jalil Recreational Park and Bukit Jalil Golf and Country Resort. It also has a seamless connection to the Bukit Jalil Highway and KESAS Highway.

Apart from becoming the nation's sporting base, this development will transform Bukit Jalil and the vicinity area as the new gravity centre of Kuala Lumpur's south.



An internal view of the hybrid mall, with the open-air central atrium and outdoor elements

To further distinguish it from other retail malls, shoppers and visitors will experience a unique alfresco dining atmosphere through the open rooftop food and beverage garden, while enjoying the panoramic view of the surroundings.

As the key component of the development, Aurora Place is a hybrid mall. Similar to a street mall concept, the hybrid mall advocates an open-air central atrium and outdoor elements within the built-in shop lots, with shared common amenities. The open-air central atrium has been designed to accommodate recreational and communal purposes. A large water fountain is fringed by a series of bench and indoor plants and trees, with pavement walkways connecting each pocket space that also acts as public ground for any activity.

Linked by a vertical glass lift shaft and a myriad of escalators, the expansive mall corridors ease internal circulation from the ground to the open rooftop floor. Overlooking the vast atrium area is a corridor bridging across the void area

with its elegant finishes of solid timber railings and ceiling strips, allowing for an ideal linkage of both sides of the atrium.

To further distinguish it from other retail malls, shoppers and visitors will experience a unique alfresco dining atmosphere through the open rooftop food and beverage garden, while enjoying the panoramic view of the surroundings. The floor is covered by a high structure roof with vivid light boxes, illuminated in the night time. In the day, the interior space is naturally lit through the expansive skylight roof.

Relying on natural air ventilation with its absence of an air-conditioning system, to ensure breezy and airy internal ventilation, Big-S fans are installed on the roof structure. The high roof level of the topmost floor improves the internal ventilation further, creating an ideal ambience for an alfresco dining experience.

With 64 retail units in the mall, the hybrid mall is also attached to the three, four and five-storey shop-offices, linked by internal roads and service access roads on the site. This further illustrates the concept of a hybrid mall – integrating the outdoor and indoor spaces of the retail mall with conventional shop-offices, while making sure they are connected by plenty of ingress and egress points.

Further unique features of the development are its 209 units of Smart Office, Versatile Office (SoVo) office suites in three-tower blocks. Located at the North, East and Southwest parcels of the development, the tower blocks are attached to the mall building but with separate access and respective lobby areas. The SoVo office suites are targeted to young professionals and start-ups ventures looking for smart, versatile multi-functional office spaces, and smart living spaces for the modern lifestyle.



Aerial view of Aurora Place and SoVo, with its neighbouring contexts, including Pavilion Bukit Jalil City located right next to it.



The main signage design of the development can be seen near the main entrance

More than just a nominal office space, Aurora SoVo also offers ample recreational and lifestyle facilities including a swimming pool, gymnasium, business centre, covered parking and 24-hour security.



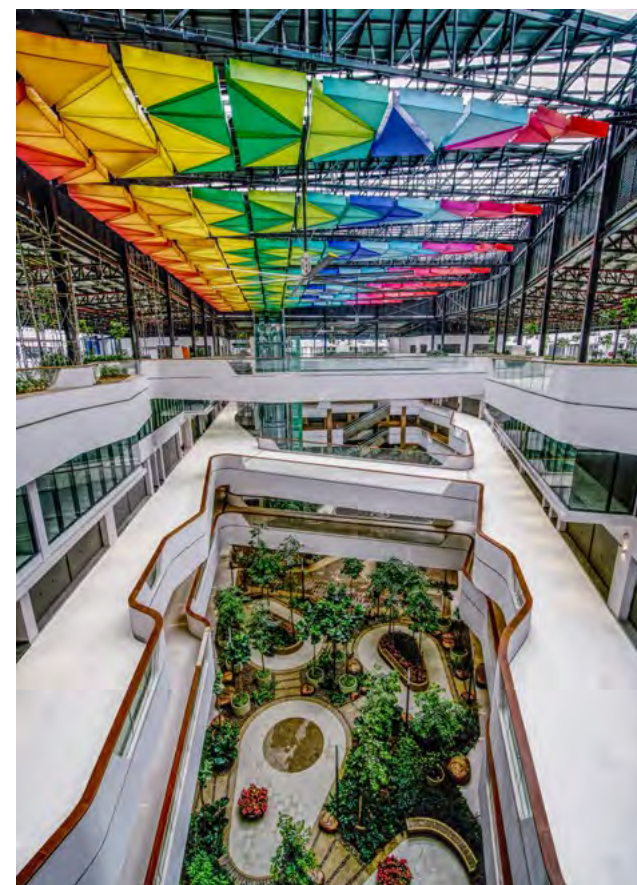
Site plan

The two 19-storey tower blocks and the 30-storey tower are easily identified by its full height glass walls. The dark-blue hues dominate the tower façade, accentuating the high-degree transparency of office space. On the lower part of the tower, perforated metal cladding are attached to the structural façade, giving it a commercial outlook with an abstract design and provision for advertising panels near the building corner.

As it sits atop Aurora Place, it is directly linked to the central atrium of the retail mall. Addressing the commercial and economic needs of the neighbourhood, Aurora Place will be serving

the existing local populace and the new residents in the upcoming Aurora Residences and The Park apartments of Bukit Jalil City. Easily connected via major road networks, with access to the neighbouring recreational park, the development will spur growth of the area as the next preferred destination for residential, commercial and recreational activities.

Together with the adjacent Pavilion Bukit Jalil development, as part of the integrated development of Bukit Jalil City, Aurora Place is set to be the next urban centre of Bukit Jalil. ■



View of the atrium area from the topmost floor where the open food court is located



View of the open sky and neighbouring areas from the infinity pool with timber pool decking at the recreational floor



The open-air central atrium is illuminated by an expansive skylight, finished with outdoor green plants



A night view of the atrium with the multi-coloured light show of the ground water fountain



A timber panelling wall in the main lobby of SoVo tower block



LOCATION Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur
CLIENT Bukit Jalil Development Sdn Bhd
PRINCIPAL USE Mixed-use Development
ARCHITECT FIRM NRY Architects Sdn Bhd
PROJECT PRINCIPALS Ar Yew Bu Hwa
PROJECT TEAM Ar Tan Ching Kee, Kamal Arif
DESIGN PERIOD 12 months
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 48 months
DATE OF COMPLETION June 2019
SITE AREA 23,800sqm
FLOOR AREA 118,913sqm
PROJECT COST RM400 million
CONTRACTOR Ho Hup Construction Company Berhad
CIVIL ENGINEER EDP Consulting Group Sdn Bhd
M & E ENGINEER JPK & Associates M&E Consulting Engineers
QUANTITY SURVEYOR JUBC Sdn Bhd
LANDSCAPING MLA Landscape Architects Sdn Bhd
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS NRY Architects Sdn Bhd (Interior Design - Retail Units)
PHOTOGRAPHY NRY Architects Sdn Bhd

TAKING

FLIGHT

Aemulus At The Runway
by Design Unit Architects Sdn Bhd
Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, Penang

As a high-tech manufacturing facility, Aemulus at the Runway romanticises and re-works the utilitarian fair-faced brick as a contemporary material.

BY KENNETH CHEONG

In Victorian London, large fair-faced brick buildings catering to the then burgeoning industrial production became eponymous of the first industrial revolution. This reminder of a time past continues to linger and retains a presence in areas such as Kings Cross, home today to the Googles and new digital technology enterprises.

As a new build, Aemulus at the Runway romanticises the utilitarian industrial building block as a contemporary material. Its fair-faced brick edifice, designed by John Bulcock and Ar Chin Kuen Cheng of Design Unit Architects Sdn Bhd, pays homage to the humble building material which fuelled the Industrial Revolution. As a high technology manufacturing facility, Aemulus is an exercise in translating shifts in the manufacturing process and work ethos towards the fourth industrial revolution.

Located on the fringes of the runway of Penang International Airport in the Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, Aemulus is a 50,000 sq ft manufacturing facility specialising in electrical testing equipment. Set against a backdrop of taxiing aircrafts taking off and landing, the site provides an animated vista which becomes the point of departure for the conceptualising and orientating the massing of the building.

The entire two-storey volume of the Aemulus is lifted off the ground with the weight of the brick and off-form concrete mass supported by a sea of concrete slivers to allow views of the runway to permeate through towards the street front. The underbelly of the building in turn provides a shaded parking area. The fair-faced brick volume is further bisected into two halves to allow for a vertical separation to fully embrace the runway aspect.

“We consider the runway elevation as the front elevation, that is the main elevation, even though it doesn’t face the main road and as we didn’t want to take cars right around the building in front of the main triple-height lobby facing the runway, which we wanted to be a green space. This meant we have to enter from the ‘rear’ of the building: the elevation facing the main road,” explains Bulcock.

The problems of this rear entry is resolved “by creating a ‘tunnel’ through the building, i.e. the building is entered via a ramped brick ‘tunnel’ with walls, floor and ceiling converging to one point - the main entrance door that is deep within the building. This takes us from the ‘dark’ tunnel into the light of atrium and the experience of the runway,” elaborates Bulcock.

On the façade, the brick wall skin is peeled away from the vertical plane of the façade to create directional armatures to view the runway. On the rear, as opposed to the solidity of the brick wall façade, are floor to ceiling soffit double-glazed low-e glass indented with deep balconies to fully take in the dynamic vista.

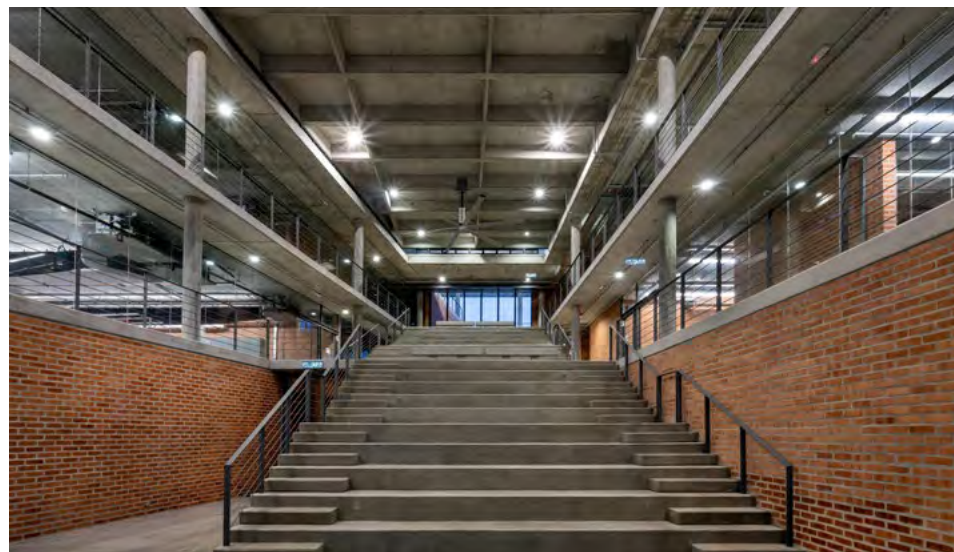
A lightweight steel and aluminium finned roof hover above the massing to terminate the building vertically and add lightness visually and shade to the roof garden.

“Local common clay bricks are used for all walls both internally and externally with wide mortar joints creating an organic texture and inconsistency of colour but achieving an overall distinctive tone - with the advantage that common bricks are inexpensive. The bricks are also low-maintenance, a trait that is shared with the fair-faced concrete columns and flat slabs. When natural light falls on bricks and concrete it brings the material to life and is very poetic – the façades come alive and constantly change throughout the day,” Bulcock adds.

It would seem odd that the ground plane of a high technology manufacturing facility is riddled with nodes of activity and play. A running track traces the perimeter to link a basketball court with a *sepak takraw* (a Malaysian court game) court on the opposite ends of the site.



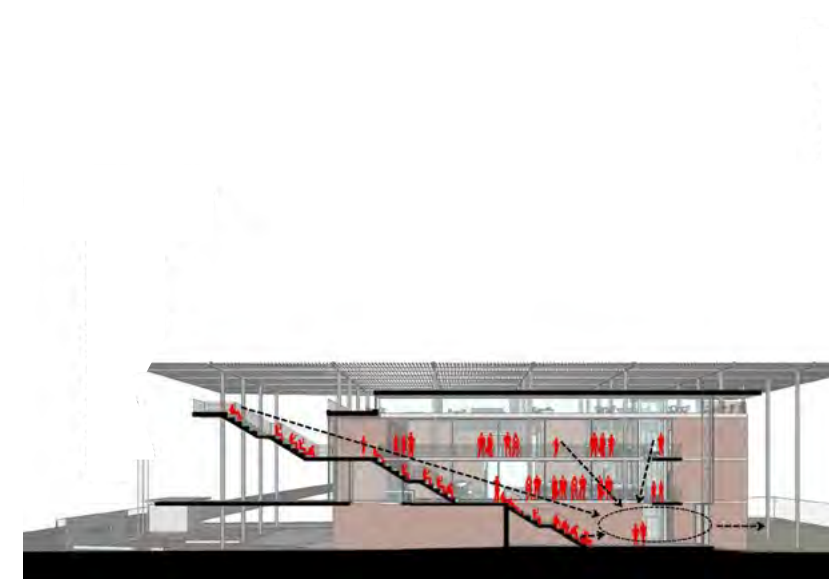
A large gathering space is created that connect all levels of the building. The atrium provides a flexible space for meetings, performances, theatre and dance



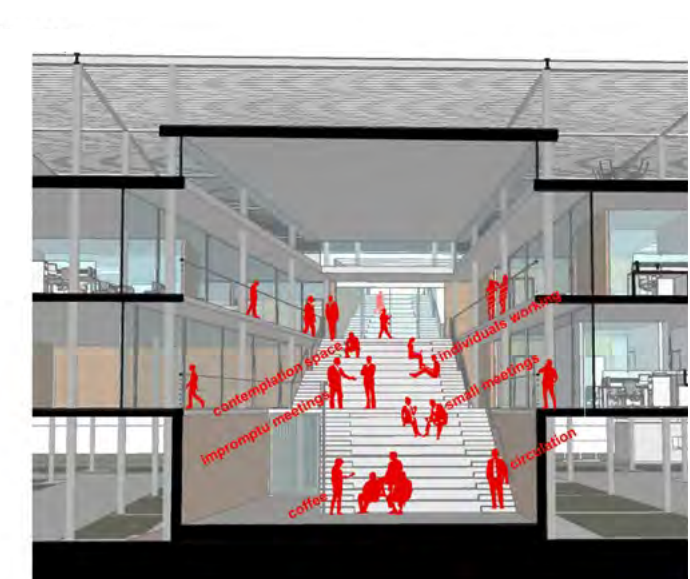
The space between the two brick boxes, reception and circulation, becomes multi-functional for meetings and activities over three levels

The World Economic Forum broadly describes the Fourth Industrial Revolution as the blurring of the boundaries between the physical, digital and biological worlds. A primary concern of this definition is the replacement of everyday jobs by machines. In an episode of the futurist BBC and HBO produced mini-series ‘Years and Years’, we see essential professionals of today being replaced by machines. And in the year we’ve had, accountants, bankers and all kinds of professionals have been reduced to courier bikers and burger vendors. If this dystopian vision is anything to live by, Aemulus offers a very alternate view.

“The brief from the client immediately interested us, in that it was clear that a hierarchy of creative and break-out spaces was required, and we could tell that this was a client we could build a strong, meaningful relationship with.”



Long Section



Section

The brief focused on encouraging staff interaction and chance meetings, quiet spaces for contemplation and larger spaces for collaboration and the challenge was how to interrupt this into a functioning building,” continues Bulcock. The bisected volume creates a delicious tension at the theatrical interstitial space. A monumental concrete staircase linking the three levels vertically sits facing the runway with concrete benches inspires chance meetings. Walkways crisscrossing the two volumes become vantage points to view and to be viewed from the staircase giving new meaning to vertical transition space.

“Air-conditioned areas are reduced with all circulation spaces naturally ventilated including the main triple-volume lobby where cooling is assisted by two large industrial fans. A continuous narrow ventilation slot under the main roof of the lobby exhausts rising warm air,” explains Bulcock on the green aspects of the building.

The office spaces on the top floor are a delight to work in with light wells puncturing the concrete roof slab flooding the deep open plan office space with natural light. From the interior, the peeled walls of the façade create indentations in the rooms with directional armatures to the animated runway. As a high technology manufacturing facility, the bulk of the investments in the building is directed towards a contribution to human capital. If Aemulus is representative of changes in the workplace in IR4.0, then perhaps we can take solace in knowing that the human workforce remains an integral component of the manufacturing process. ■

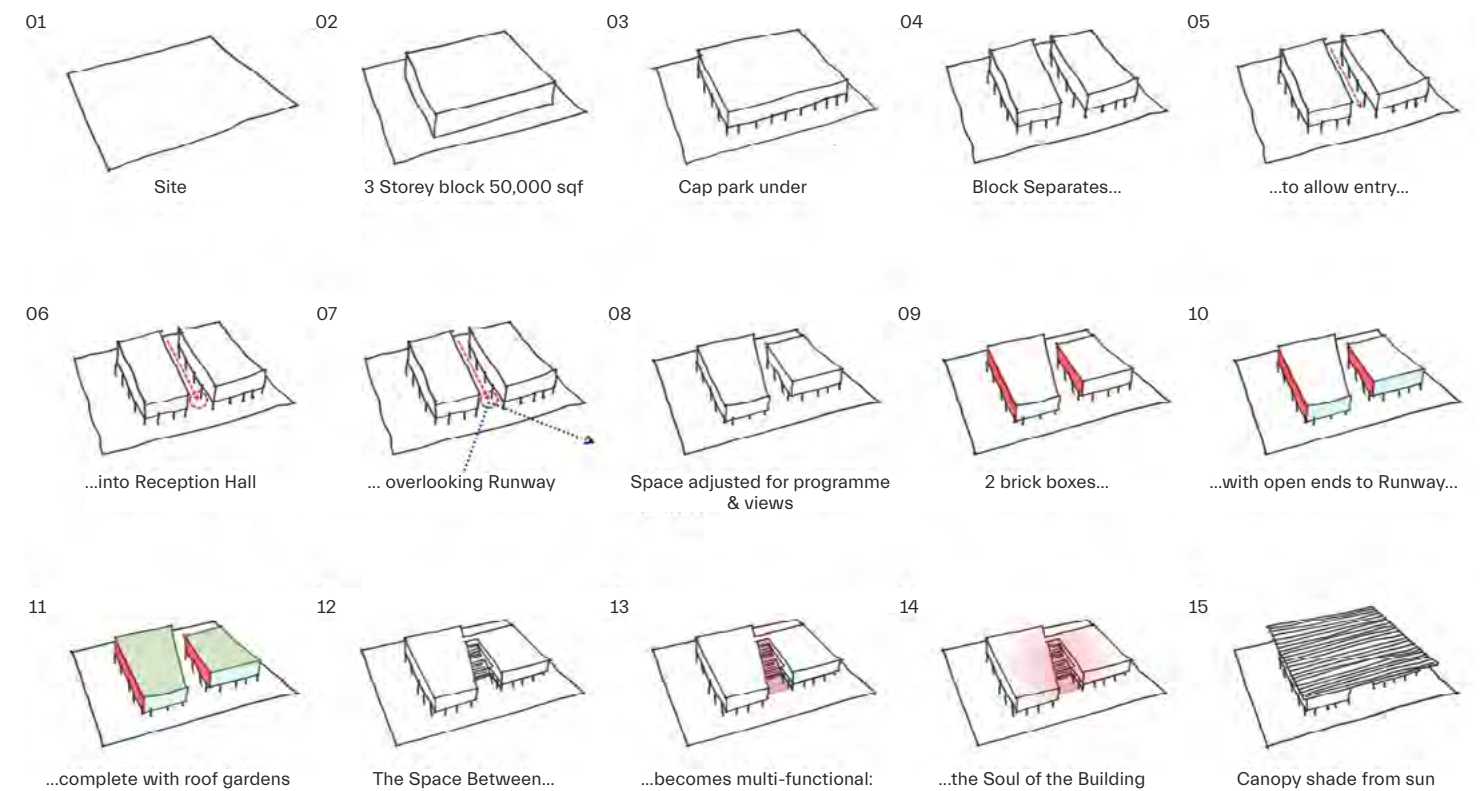
When natural light falls on bricks and concrete it brings the material to life and is very poetic – the façades come alive and constantly change throughout the day.



Perforated brick walls create magical lighting displays at production, staircases and WCs



View of entrance tunnel. Walls, floor and ceiling all taper and converge to the main entrance door





Break-out spaces along building facade differ in size and frame views to the runway



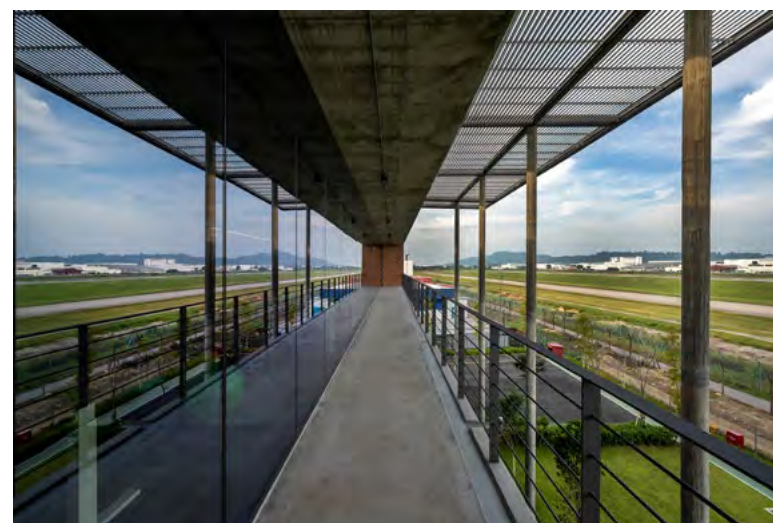
Brick fin detail



The fin detail help control natural light into the building



Roof lights at second floor provide diffused natural light across the office floor. Glazed meeting rooms allow views to the runway from deep within the building



Shaded balconies at the runway façade offer unobstructed views of aircraft, encouraging staff outside for coffee breaks



View from general office through meeting rooms out to the runway

The office spaces on the top floor are a delight to work in with light wells puncturing the concrete roof slab flooding the deep open plan office space with natural light.

KENNETH CHEONG is an architect and principal of KCA. He has worked on numerous projects on a variety of scales region- ally and internationally with SOM and T.R. Hamzah and Yeang. He also contributes regularly to a number of local and regional publications.



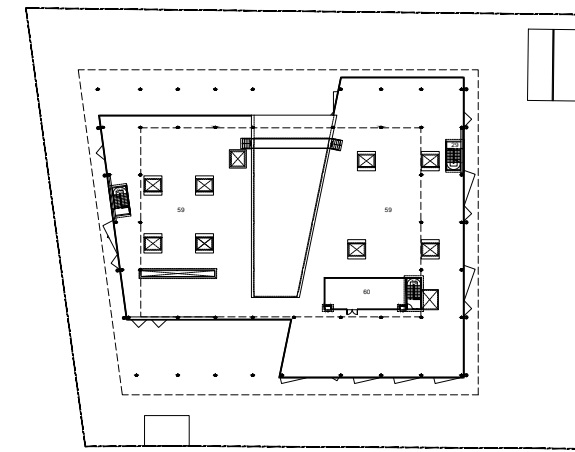
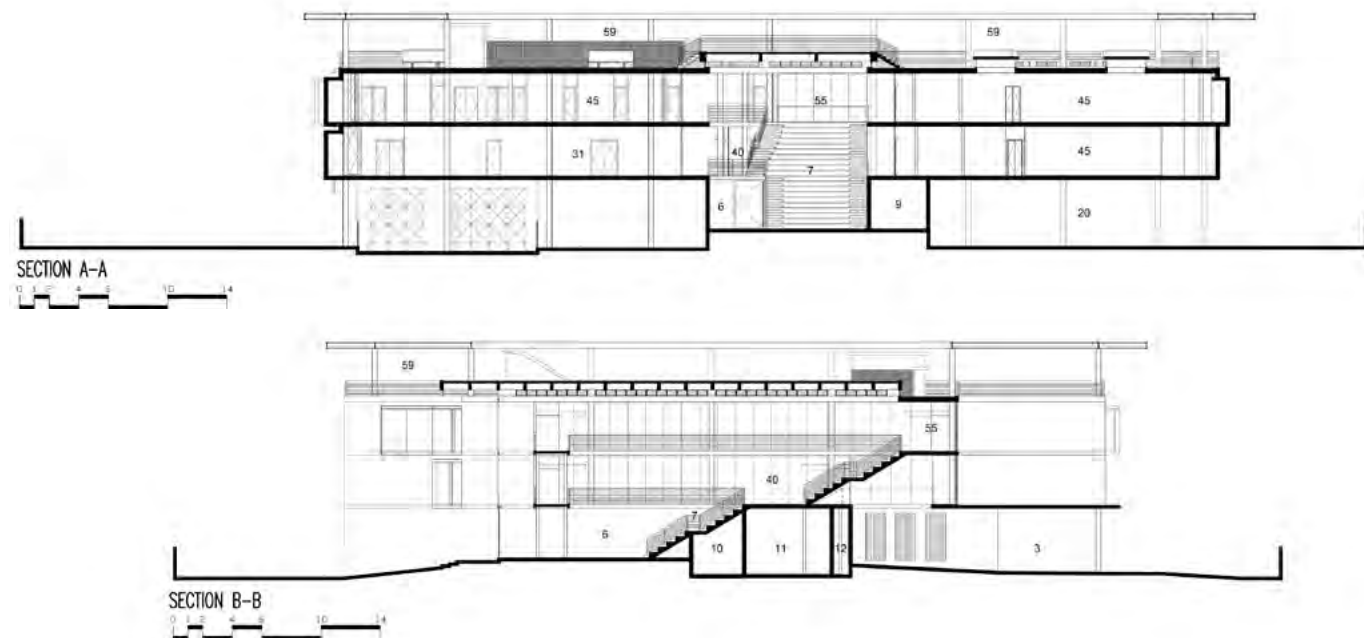
Day and night



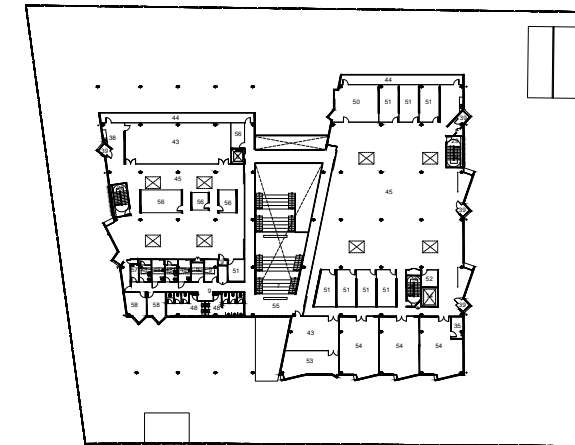
Runway views from shaded roof garden. The façade facing the runway is fully double-glazed and protected from solar gain by deep recesses and louvered canopy



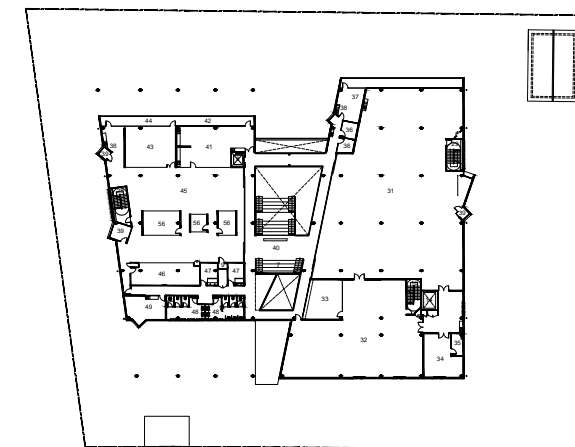
Roof garden view towards the runway is enjoyed by staff for evening functions, meetings and yoga. Skylights to office below are located around the roof garden



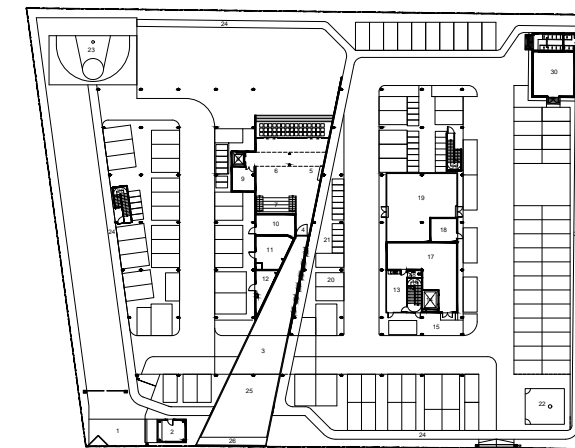
Roof Garden plan



Second floor plan



First floor plan



Ground floor plan

LOCATION Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, Penang
CLIENT Aemulus Corporation Sdn Bhd
PRINCIPAL USE Industrial
ARCHITECT Design Unit Architects Sdn Bhd
PROJECT PRINCIPALS Ar Chin Kuen Cheng APAM, John G N Bulcock RIBA
DESIGN PERIOD 2 months
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 16 months
DATE OF COMPLETION June 2020
SITE AREA 6,779.10sqm
FLOOR AREA 9,406sqm
PROJECT COST Withheld
CONTRACTOR MLG Design & Construction Sdn Bhd
CIVIL ENGINEER Perunding YAA Sdn Bhd
M & E ENGINEER HPM Consultant
QUANTITY SURVEYOR GKG Konsultant Kos
LANDSCAPING Landarc Associates Sdn. Bhd.
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS ISEO Asia / MTB Group, Johnson Suisse
FURNISHING Igreen Office Furniture Sdn. Bhd.
PHOTOGRAPHY Lin Ho Photography

OUTSIDE



IN

COMPOUND HOUSE
by Linghao Architects
Highland Road, Singapore

Born in Kuching, Sarawak, Singapore-based architect Ling Hao grew up in a 1960s concrete 'compound' house (derived from '*kampong*', the Malaysian word for 'village'). This building type, where the ground levels are liberated and opened apart, informs this atmospherically intimate yet exposed house for a couple and their three children.

On a Sunday morning, the three children are crouched over the entrance garden of gravel stones, bananas, gingers, pandans, marigolds... Dexterously, they are extricating caterpillars and throwing them into pails of water. Will it work? The previous weekend, the family devised a folding blind system out of straw

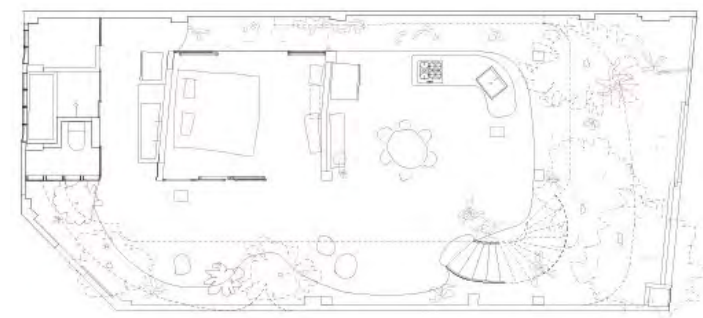
mats hanging them over the outdoor sink. Settling into the house is like slowly fleshing out how and what and where they should be in relation to this and that. Four weeks after moving in, the gourds are fruiting and the spinach leaves are being obliterated by a sea of caterpillars. Would they become a sky full of butterflies?

Doing the laundry at the innermost corner of the interior, a gentle breeze is suddenly felt. The ever renewing freshness is the perpetual reinvention of the monsoon or local winds. Even at this remote corner, the air flows. Left to accumulate, the house will be quickly filled with 10 bamboo poles of laundry hung out to dry. It's no wonder that the dry-fit T-shirt is popular – with the family and almost everybody else – breathable and designed to naturally dry.

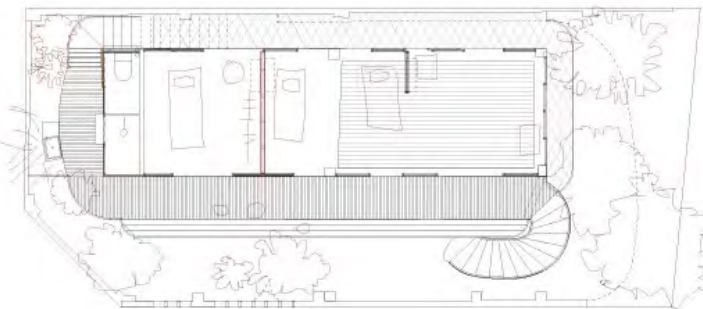
After starting the family and living here for the previous eight years, the remaking of this house was also finding out what could be a comfortable house, in what could be a natural way to go about the everyday. Rainwater that comes in and leaving puddles that would dry up would be in this vein. These openings also bring in the sunlight, the night street-lights, the freely flowing wind from a different direction and intensity at each time, the chatter of the passers-by, to be part of the house's world.

So far, these mean walking carefully when the floor is wet, living with the caterpillars and aphids, treasuring the sounds of the hanging pots and pans in the kitchen clanging against each other in the quiet and windy night, playing the smart-phone while doing homework on the timber corridor in the shade of the house while feeling the wind. ■

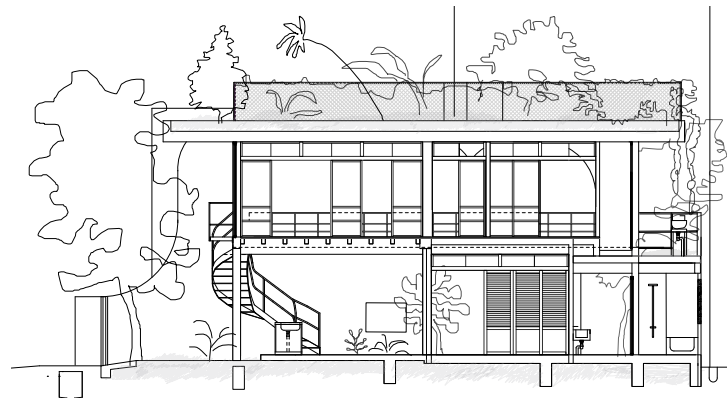
Text By Ling Hao



1st storey plan



2nd storey plan



Long section



Roadside and backlane elevation



The exterior



View from the garden of the kitchen living space



Looking down the stairs



The Compound House when first completed



At one end of the timber corridor with the afternoon sun



View from mesh corridor towards the front

These openings also bring in the sunlight, the night streetlights, the freely flowing wind from a different direction and intensity at each time, the chatter of the passers-by, to be part of the house's world.



View of the house from the backlanes



The home office



Garden and 1st storey



On the 2nd storey

LOCATION Highland Road, Singapore
PRINCIPAL USE Residential
ARCHITECT FIRM Linghao Architects
PROJECT PRINCIPAL Ling Hao
DESIGN PERIOD 2017
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 2018 to 2019
DATE OF COMPLETION June 2019
SITE AREA 106.14sqm
FLOOR AREA 152.67sqm
CIVIL ENGINEER KH Consultants
LANDSCAPING Stable Unstable
MAIN MATERIALS /FINISHINGS/FITTINGS /FURNISHING Timber doors and panels by Melcor Interiors Pte Ltd
CONTRACTOR Coreform Builder Pte Ltd
PHOTOGRAPHY Fabian Ong

PLEATED



SURFACES

Galasa Event Place by KUEE Architect

Jalan Caldwell, Ipoh, Perak

With its original design concept centred on black diamonds, this venue provides more than just a blank slate for memorable events.

Galasa Event Place is the brainchild of a successful Ipoh based food and beverage (F&B) owner and operator. Already the owner of a famous wedding hall and several restaurants, he saw that Ipoh was a city in resurgence and rapidly regaining its place among the top cities in Malaysia. Sensing an opportunity to create a premium events venue that can host high profile events, government functions and posh weddings alike in the quiet tin city, Galasa was the answer to the question posed to KUEE Architect.

The project is located in the prime locale near the Ipoh city centre, flanked by government residences and the state library. Its placement is slightly off one the busiest road, Jalan Tambun, but it is set within a very serene surrounding almost unknown to passers-by. Its discreet entrance high walls block direct views onto the event hall, providing visitors and guests with total privacy when attending an event.



The main entrance frame from the pond, with decorative ornaments in preparation for a wedding ceremony

Upon entering the site, visitors are first greeted by a series of gentle steps. These steps can be lit up at night — coupled with a misty effect — making it one of the key features of this venue. The client specifically asked for a resort-like outdoor settings, with the site filled with carefully picked trees, such as *Kayu Arang* and bamboos, with the ground covered with quality granite tiles. The altar, where vows are exchanged, is a platform floating above a tranquil pond within the garden setting.

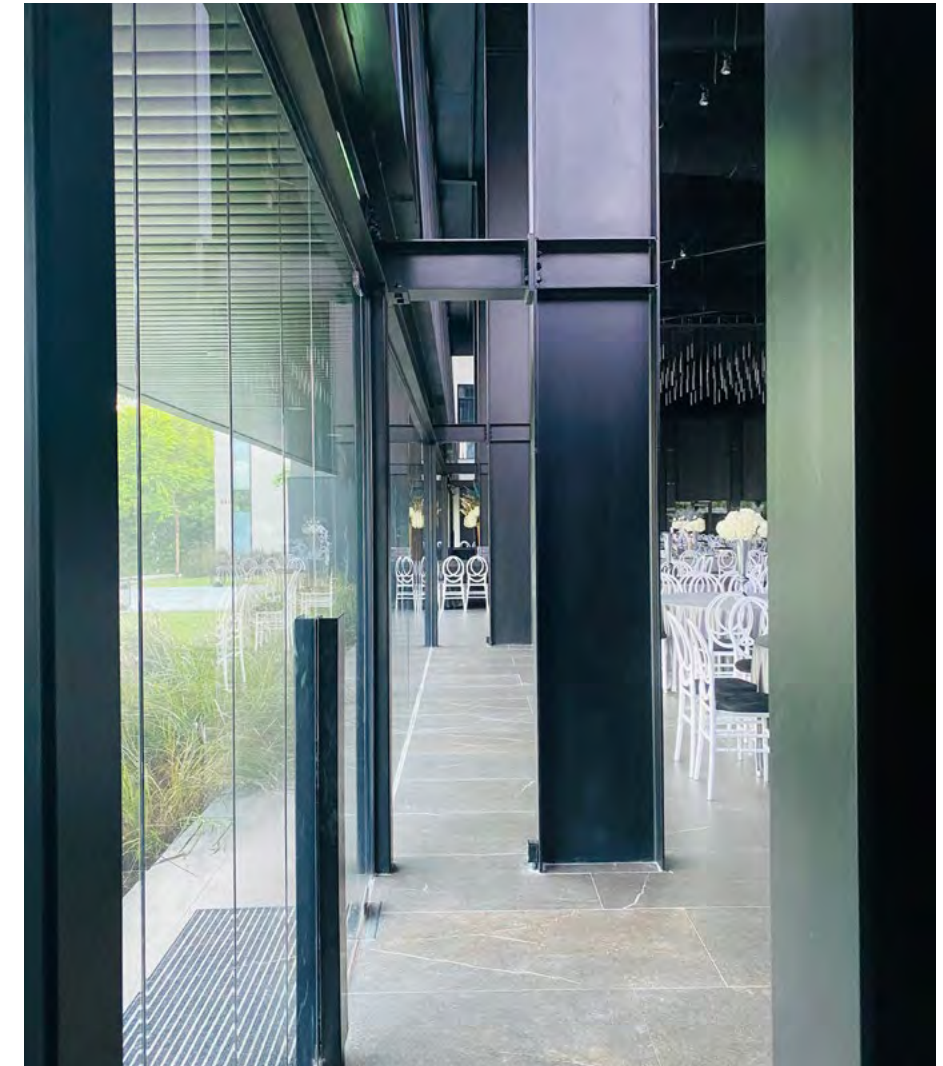
According to Ar Kuee, the design concept of Galāsa originates from black diamonds. Playing with the gemstone's geometry and its light transmission, the main facades of the hall is designed with gradually unfolded pleated black and dark grey glass surfaces. These pleated surfaces stand out as the main design feature of the place, giving the visitors a unique experience while looking at it from different locations of the site. Aluminium framed low-E laminated glass panels are used to create three various types of arrangements for the pleated surfaces — extreme zigzagged, zigzagged and minimal zigzagged, to symbolise the dynamic unfolding process of diamonds.



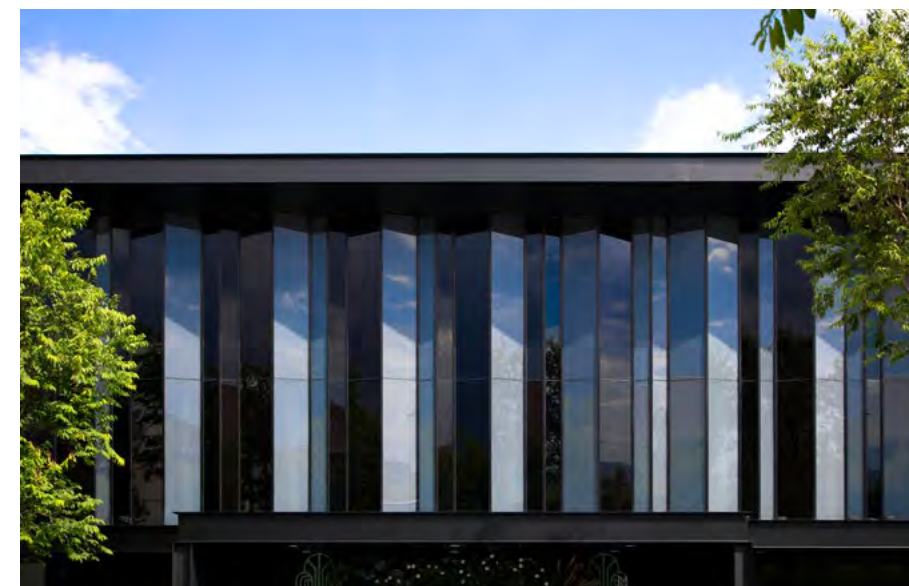
The serene pond with the clear reflection of the building's elements

With the glass façades facing directly west, Ar Kuee recognised the need to incorporate green building concepts by working closely with the consultants for energy efficiencies. A series of sun path simulation studies were carried out to show how much heat gain could build up in the afternoons. Three solutions were then employed to minimise heat gain: Low-E glass panels for the glass facades; a 50mm-thick insulated (maximum available in the market) metal roofing; and mechanical ventilation to extract hot air from the event hall. As a result, an average of three to five degrees can be reduced from the hall temperatures, reducing electrical usage. On a side note, rainwater is also collected and circulated back to irrigate the landscape to lower consumption of fresh water.

The interior of the hall was kept intentionally neutral with black and dark grey hues, to allow for various themed decorations to be put on by respective event organisers. Velvet and other fabric materials are used as wall acoustic treatments to absorb echos from hard surfaces such as the glass and tiled floors. The central aisle is lit up with randomly-placed 600 lighting tubes, which create a statement for the entry.



Internal view of the robust structural I-beam connections



Close up of the dynamic composition of gentle zig-zagged glass panels above the main entrance frame

As a result, an average of three to five degrees can be reduced from the hall temperatures, reducing electrical usage. On a side note, rainwater is also collected and circulated back to irrigate the landscape to lower consumption of fresh water.

With the glass façades facing directly West, Ar Kuee recognised the need to incorporate green building concepts by working closely with the consultants for energy efficiencies.

The events place can accommodate up to 1,000 people, with 800 people dining in the hall and the remaining 200 people at the outdoor garden setting. The generous size of the events place caters perfectly for the local Perak residents, with many of their weddings and events on a grand and large scale. There are also ancillary structures around the site, e.g. the orchid glass house and parlour flanking the main entrance, designed to host smaller events and to house VIPs when privacy is required. By proposing to construct the hall with large-spanned I-beams, the architects created a column-free space in the main hall to allow for a generously expansive unobstructed space. With many of the existing local halls in Ipoh built conventionally with RC structure, the unusual choice of building Galāsa with steel and glass made it the only event place in town with column-free design. The Galāsa project took only slightly above one year from design to completion. ■



A night view of the event space



An event set up at night



The place lit up at night in preparation for a wedding ceremony



- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 01 VIP & Drop off | 06 Parlour (Serres) | 11 Altair (Pavilion Altair) |
| 02 Hall (Vetro) | 07 Orchid Room (Kaew) | 12 Vehicle Parking |
| 03 DB Room | 08 Discussion/Preparation Area | 13 Compact Sub TNB |
| 04 Changing Room | 09 Bridegroom's Room | 14 Guard House |
| 05 Washroom | 10 Bride's Room | 15 Washroom |

Ground floor plan



Elevations



The central walkway lit up at night, in preparation for a wedding ceremony

LOCATION Jalan Gladwell, Ipoh, Perak
CLIENT Catteleya Caldwell Sdn Bhd
PRINCIPAL USE Event Hall
ARCHITECT KUEE Architect
PROJECT PRINCIPAL Ar Kuee Sheau Shyuan
PROJECT TEAM Tan Boon Im, Shukri Mohamed, Foong Wai Toh
DESIGN PERIOD 8 months
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 9 months
DATE OF COMPLETION December 2019
SITE AREA 5,381sqm
FLOOR AREA 1,404.78sqm
PROJECT COST RM3.2 million
CONTRACTOR Soon Leong Construction
CIVIL ENGINEER City Perunding Sdn Bhd
M & E ENGINEER Jurutera Perunding Setiakawan Sdn Bhd
LIGHTING Wakong Electric & Lighting Sdn Bhd
LANDSCAPING Awam Saujana Sdn Bhd
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS Aluminajaya Sdn Bhd
PHOTOGRAPHY Patrick Heart

BEYOND

THE FOLD

DESA SENTRAL GALLERY
by Zone Designworks Sdn Bhd
Taman Desa, Kuala Lumpur

Looking past the ordinary, this commercial property started with a mythical creature as its source of inspiration and what resulted is a site also suited for play and leisure.

The last building boom pre-COVID 19 saw the rise of the sales gallery as an effective marketing tool for the developments they represented, promoting the qualities and stature of the deals at hand. As they grew in scale, programme and ambition, the genre soon became an avenue for architects' imaginations as well as the developer's credentials.

Located along Jalan Desa, Kuala Lumpur, this sales gallery project is situated on the same plot of land that was the former Desa Water Park. Its strategic location is one of the key factors and selling points of this upcoming development by the clients of this project. The Desa Sentral development is set to be a new urban hub in the city for leisure and work, right in the epicentre of several main urban centres and large population catchments in its immediate vicinity.

According to the architects, the mythical Pegasus was used to draw inspiration for the layout and design process of the gallery. It symbolises power, immortality, and highflying imagination, all of which seeks to resonate with the client's business and fast growth as one of the leading developers. These elements of the Pegasus can be seen throughout the design of the gallery; from the planning to the building form, and in the flow of the internal spaces.

The wings of the *pterippus** are reflected in the design of the building's façades and at the welcoming gate at the main entrance. The cascading façade was integrated to symbolise the continuous growth of the client. The spaces within the gallery includes the main galleria, the pavilion which runs along the ramp, a sales office, a VIP lounge, a series of private pocket zones and a large open park.

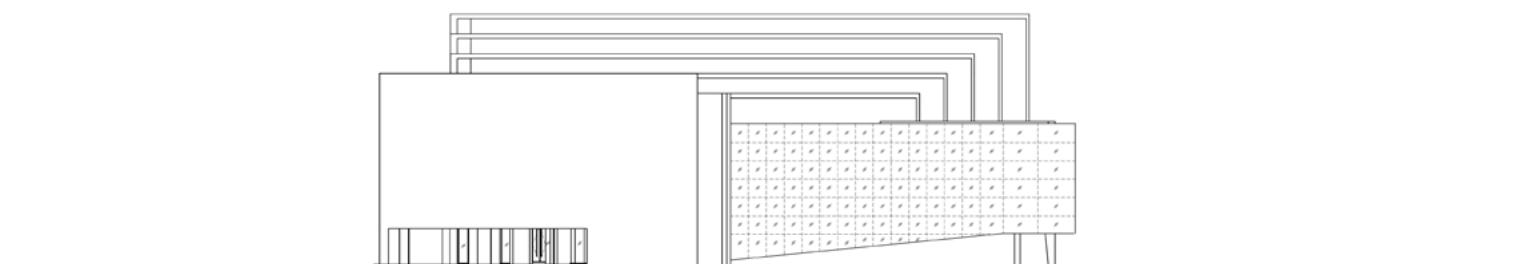
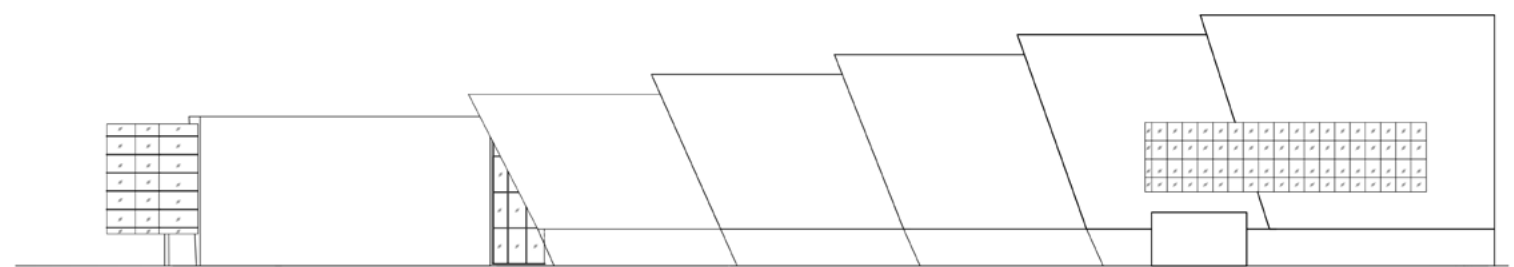
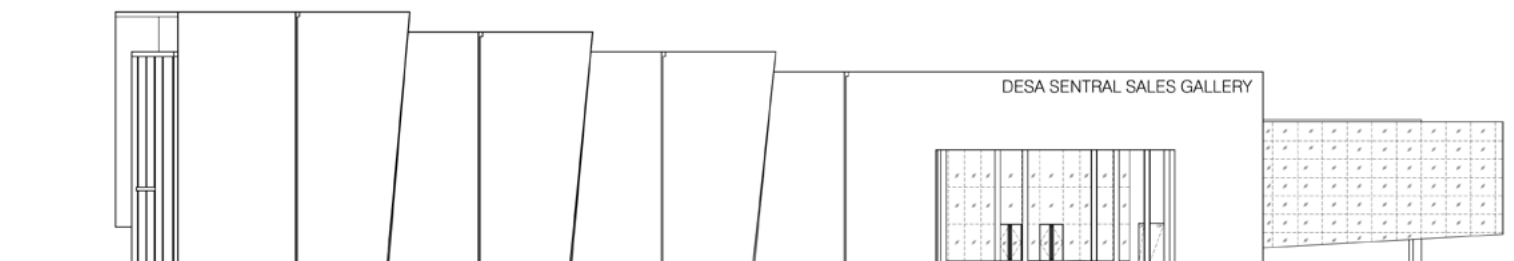
The gallery would become the strategic nodal point for residents from surrounding neighbourhoods and other interested visitors to visit and explore. The park at the centre of the development could be used as a work-out and sports zone, a meeting place for the public to gather for larger outdoor events, or simply for leisure.

The clean and sleek white interior of the gallery reflects the characteristics of the Pegasus: pristine and pure. Much thought was also put into the lighting design that illuminates the building in the evenings and after sunset. The beautiful, warm glows from inside the gallery gives the impression of a beacon in the open park.

The white canvas used is a soft silhouette to mimic the clouds in the sky, and inevitably draws the eye upwards so that that every visitor experiences the volume of the gallery in full effect. ■

* Pterippi, commonly known as a Pegasus, part of the animal group, are winged horses native to the lands of Equestria. They are able to walk on and manipulate clouds and weather.

The gallery would become the strategic nodal point for residents from surrounding neighbourhoods and other interested visitors to visit and explore.



Elevations



The facade feature: day and night



The front of the sales gallery



The welcome foyer



The solid form, juxtaposed against transparent glass

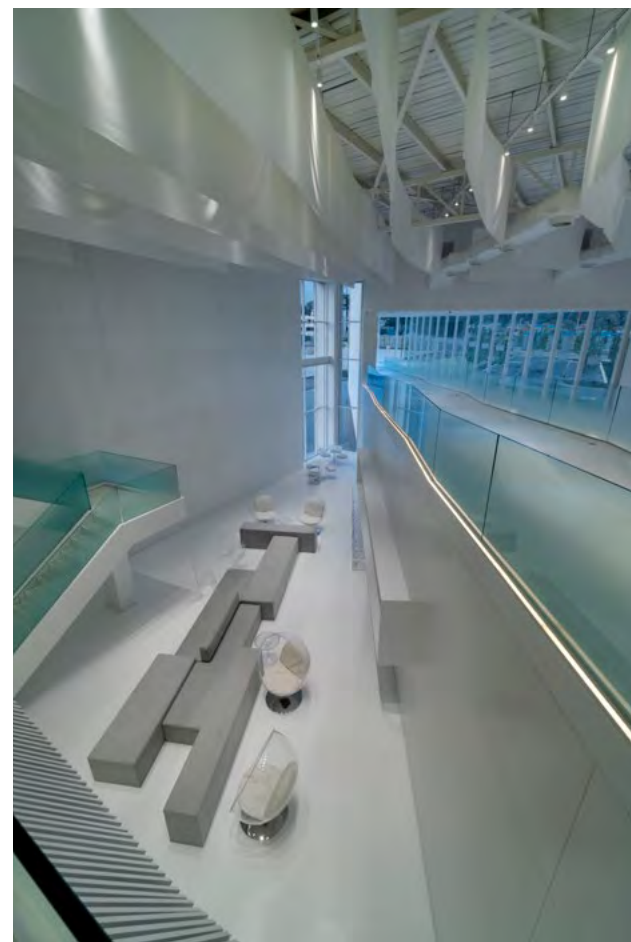


A view of the glass facade at night

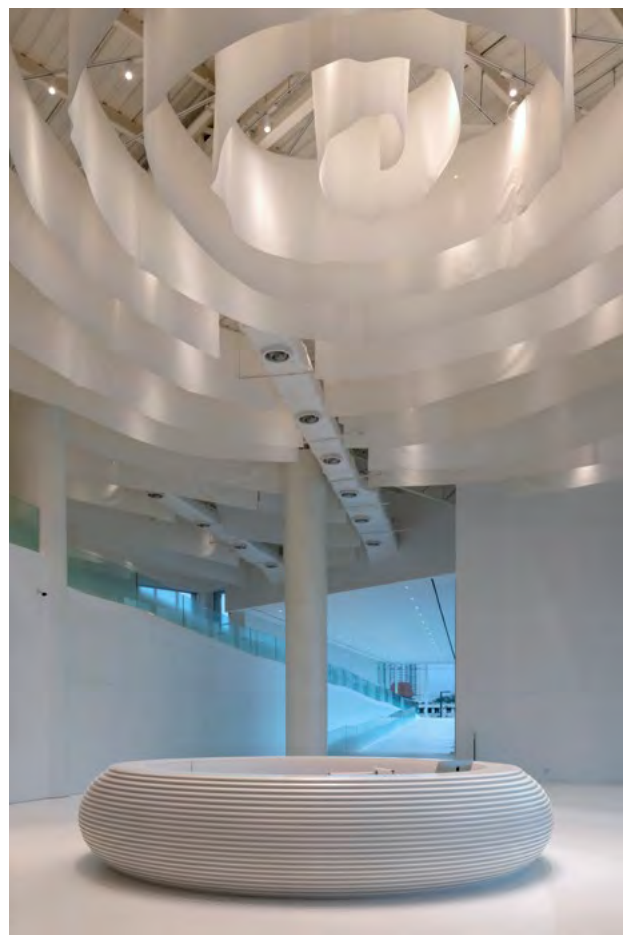
The clean and sleek white interior of the gallery reflects the characteristics of the Pegasus: pristine and pure.



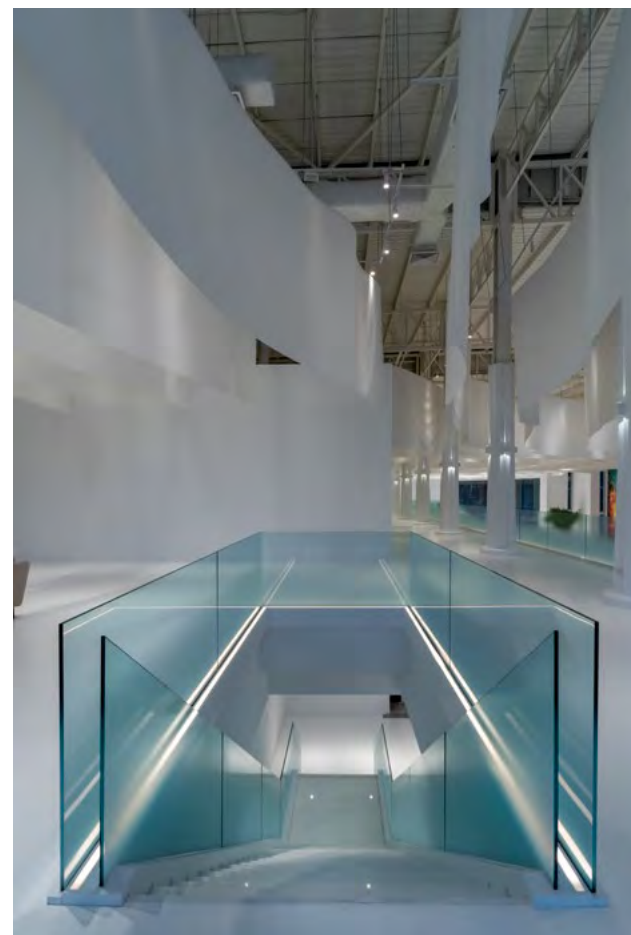
Light play through the glass panes



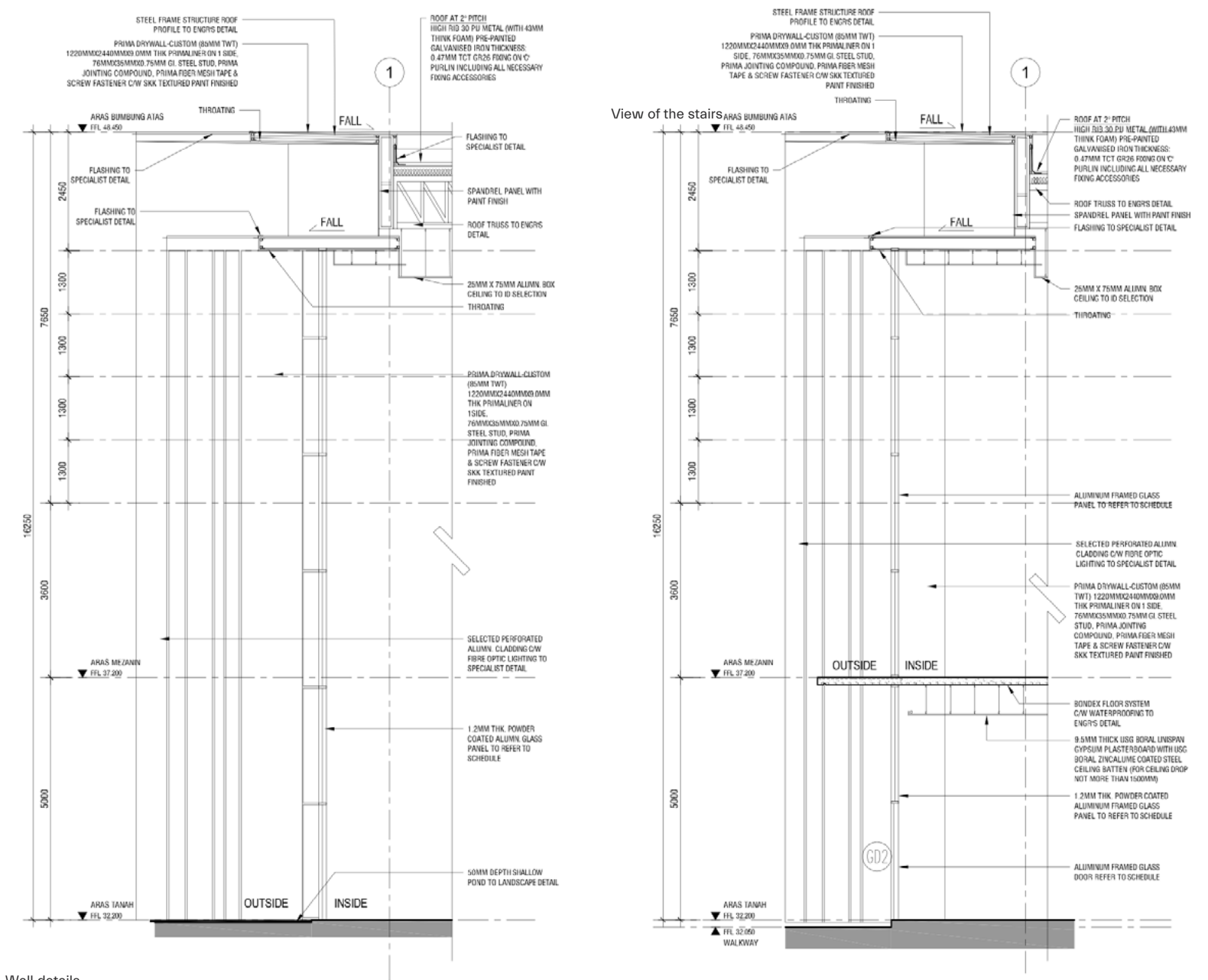
The design stayed minimal for the interior



The main concierge



View of the stairs



Wall details



A stunning exterior shot at night

LOCATION Taman Desa, Kuala Lumpur
CLIENT Garuda Searah Sdn Bhd
PRINCIPAL USE Sales Gallery
ARCHITECT FIRM Zone Designworks Sdn Bhd
PROJECT PRINCIPAL Hafiz Ismal
PROJECT TEAM Azim Kasroff, Peter Parakesh, Ng Long Nilson
DESIGN PERIOD 2 months
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 6 months
DATE OF COMPLETION July 2017
FLOOR AREA 2,601sqm
CONTRACTOR SinarImpian Construction Sdn Bhd
CIVIL ENGINEER SNA Consult Sdn Bhd
M & E ENGINEER JY Consult SdnBhd
LANDSCAPING Praxis Design Sdn Bhd
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS M2 Interior Sdn Bhd
MAIN MATERIALS /FINISHINGS/FITTINGS Phomi Malaysia
PHOTOGRAPHY Lin Ho photography



CATCH THE SEA

SPA BUBUS
by Richie Chiam Architect
Langkawi, Kedah

Inspired by local fishing traps — or ‘bubu’ — the design for this spa within a seaside resort has preservation value, while remaining aesthetically-aligned with its surroundings and fully functional for patrons.

It began as a vision, drawing inspiration from Malaysia’s local fishing culture of setting traps in the river to catch fish. This gave rise to the unique idea of designing external laminated timber curved to symbolise the local fishing ‘bubu’ — hence its moniker ‘The Spa Bubus’.

What followed was a design concept that was so inherently unique to its ecosystem, that the benefits were manifold. As the spas are situated on the seaside of a natural tropical rainforest, the goal was not to disrupt the ecology of the site, thus withstanding waves of change and reducing the human impact on land, respecting the site typology, and preserving nature to the best extent possible.

Located at the outermost tip of the Ritz-Carlton Langkawi's property, the Bubus are poised above the water, surrounded by forest and overlooking the Andaman Sea.

The resort holds preservation of this rainforest as utmost important, and thus no trees were removed. And instead of one large building to cater for all the spa services, the spa was laid out into a cluster of small elevated structures for individual services, and sited out into the ocean.

All buildings and walkways here are elevated above the ground and above natural boulders (all boulders and rocks were also preserved) so as not to disturb the natural contour of the land and to minimise impact on the site. By locating the structures out into the sea, trees in the rainforest were also preserved.

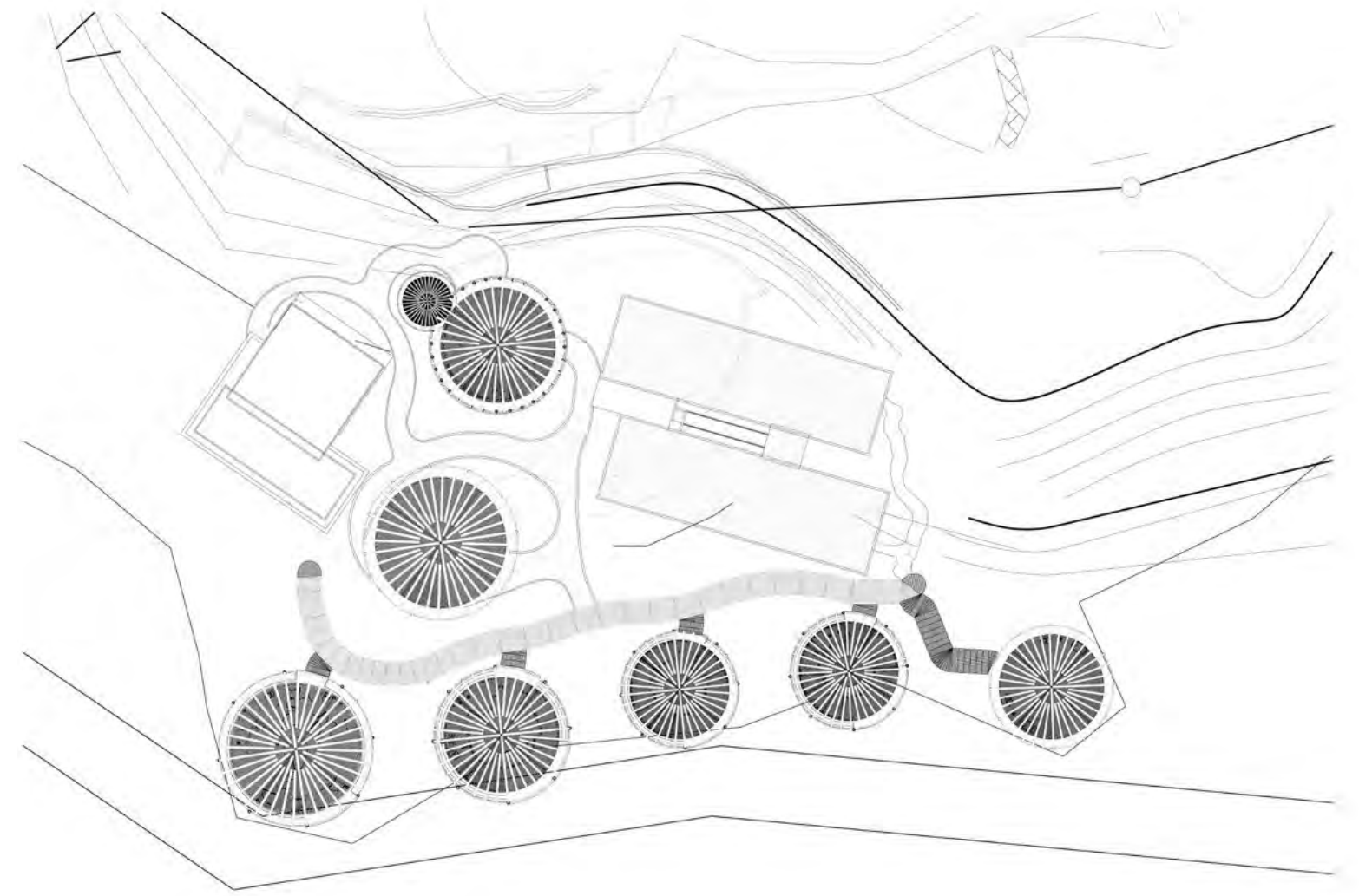
"By adopting a smaller footprint, each Bubu structure is elevated on a circular slab supported by four columns which are creatively designed using micro pile system where holes have been drilled into the boulders, steel rebar inserted and concrete poured in to form the micro pile system," says Ar Richie Chiam.

The use of laminated timber on the exoskeleton framing as a design element ensures that the bubus blend into the surrounding tropical rainforest. The Bubus are also arranged such that the spa clients, upon arriving at the entrance of the spa reception will have a glimpse of the unique bubu-shaped structures, thus piquing their curiosity and creating some excitement before they enter the premises. Also, as they protrude into the sea, the Bubus look like they're 'floating' especially when illuminated at night.

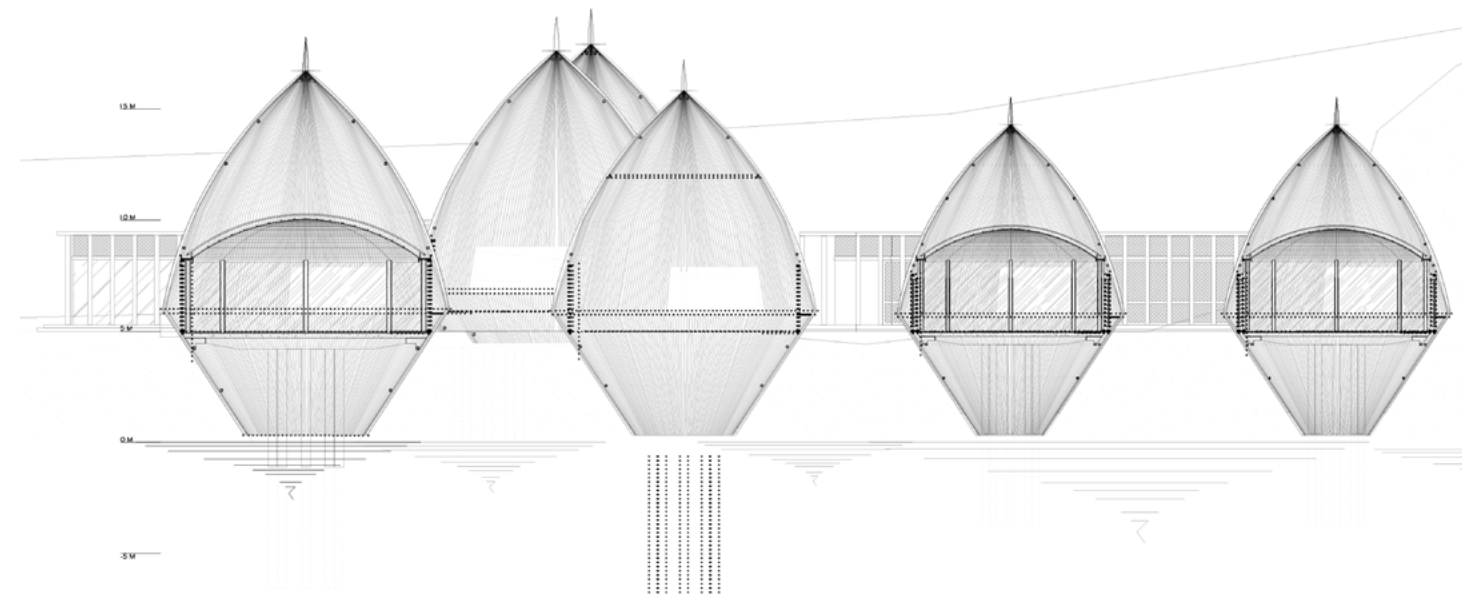
The functional spaces are housed within the internal circular area, made transparent using clear glass for an unobstructed view of the ocean.



External balcony area



Site Plan



Overall elevations

Attention was paid to details during the construction of the laminated curved timber, where they were individually screwed together. Handrails on the walkways have holes drilled out for screws to be installed to the timber posts, which were later covered up with solid timber dovetails for aesthetic reasons.

The functional spaces are housed within the internal circular area, made transparent using clear glass for an unobstructed view of the ocean. Construction challenges were resolved in a creative manner where circular curved internal areas are divided into massage area with ocean views, and solid curved and pocket spaces for showers, wash rooms and storage spaces, thus maximising space.

Other construction challenges were that construction of micro piles and columns could only be done during low tide, and scaffoldings had to be erected over uneven rocks. Elevated timber walkways were designed with minimal support columns thus reducing the footprint on ground and reducing the site impact.

What has resulted is that form, function, beauty and preservation has been considered all in one - creative design was used to solve unique environmental challenges of a site that sits between the ocean and tropical rainforest, while still respecting nature and reducing harm on our environment.

The design that pays homage to the local fisherman's traditional bubu also leaves a desired imprint in our heritage and history, satisfying the owner's vision of promoting local culture to tourists while appealing to the sensual and aesthetic senses.

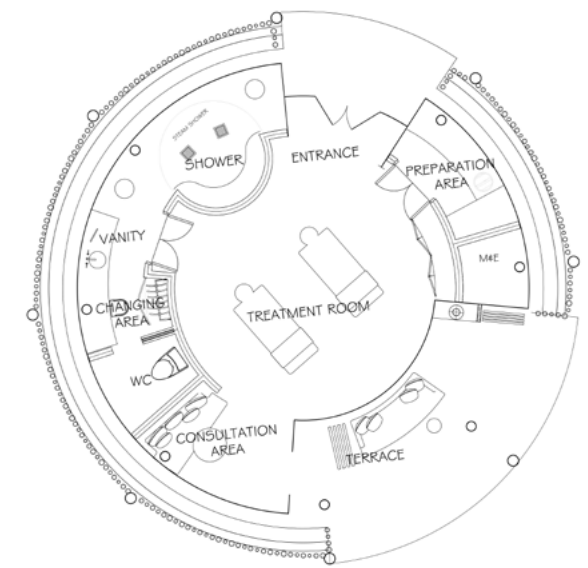
Indeed, it's a prized bonus that the design culminated in an outcome that also makes for breath-taking photographs. ■



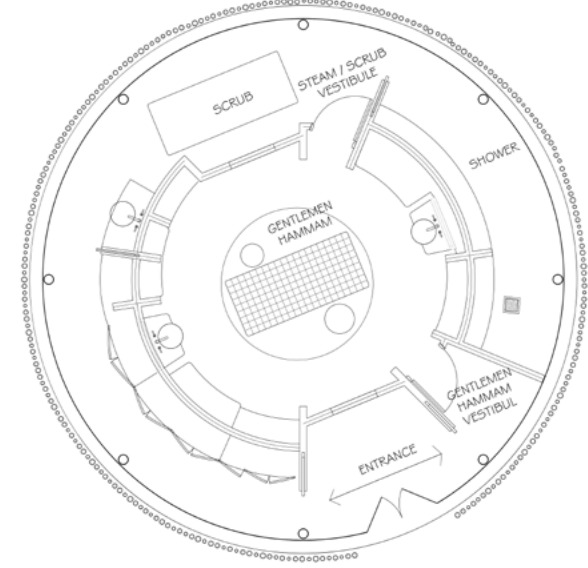
Spa bubu in site context of tropical trees



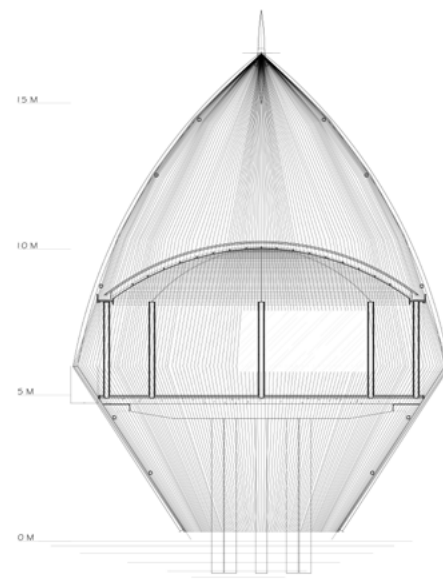
Single bubus at corner elevated over the sea



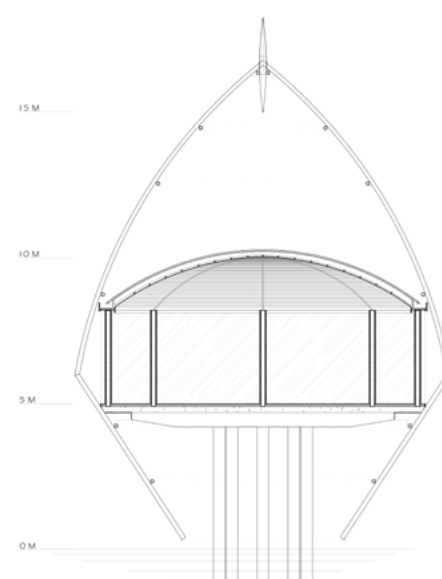
Couple spa suite floor plan



Hammam pavilion floor plan

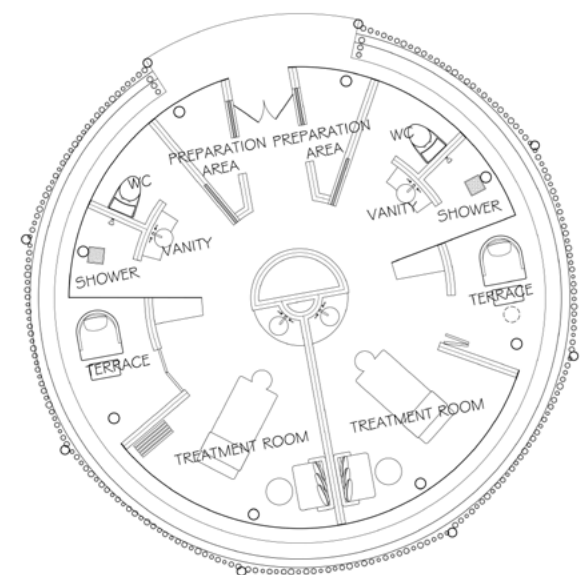


Typical Spa Bubus elevation



Typical Spa Bubus section

All buildings and walkways here are elevated above the ground and above natural boulders (all boulders and rocks were also preserved) so as not to disturb the natural contour of the land and to minimise impact on the site.



Single treatment floor plan



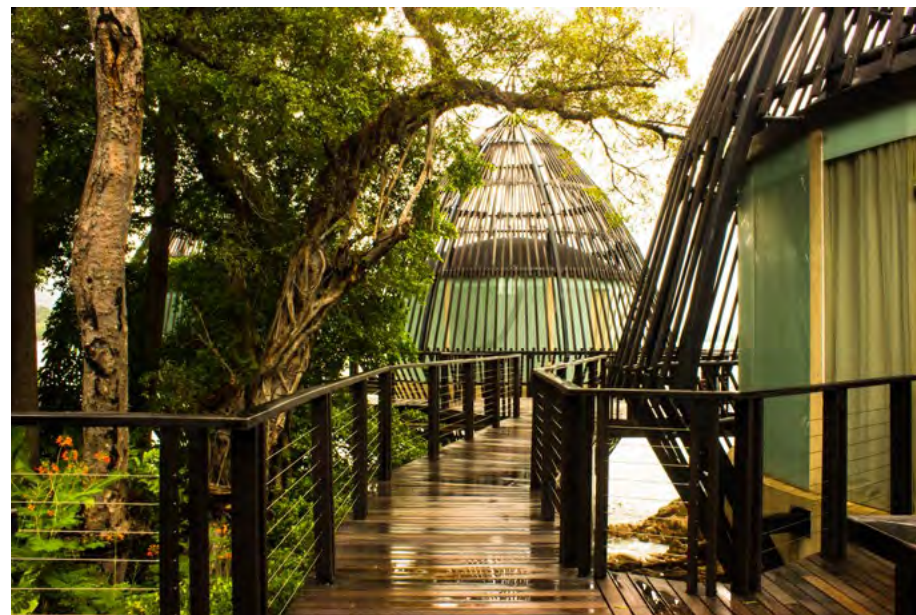
Curved laminated timber detail and connecting frame



Close up detail of yellow balau handrail



Internal shot of hammam hot stone massage area



Elevated yellow balau walkway and spa bubus

By locating the structures out at sea, trees in the rainforest were also preserved.



View at entrance walkway towards cluster of spa bubus elevated above natural boulders over the water



A sunset view from the water



Night view



View of spa bubu cluster



Night view



Aerial view of the spa bubu cluster against the backfrop of the rainforest

LOCATION Langkawi, Kedah
CLIENT AJ Resorts Sdn Bhd
PRINCIPAL USE Spa
ARCHITECT Richie Chiam Architect
PROJECT PRINCIPAL Ar Richie Chiam
PROJECT TEAM Hidi Lau
DESIGN PERIOD 3 months
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 16 months
DATE OF COMPLETION 16 August 2017
SITE AREA 2,500sqm
FLOOR AREA 830sqm
PROJECT COST (INCLUDING FITTINGS AND FIXTURES) RM8,600,000
CONTRACTOR Ng Enterprise
CIVIL ENGINEER Meinhardt (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd
M & E ENGINEER Meinhardt (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd
QUANTITY SURVEYOR Arcadis (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd
LIGHTING DJCoalition
LANDSCAPING P Landscape Co Ltd
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS Burega Farnell Pte Ltd (interior design)
MAIN MATERIALS /FINISHINGS/FITTINGS Brickworks with yellow Balau timber cladding; granite stone floor finish and custom designed fit- tings, laminated timber on exoskeleton framing
PHOTOGRAPHY Richie Chiam Architect



ROUND MID OFFE

FILLET HOUSE by Kee Yen Architect

Alam Sutera, Kuala Lumpur

This house's filleted design allows for openness and natural light, while its streamlined looks and external details elevate it to stand out against its surroundings.

Located in Kuala Lumpur, Fillet House is a three-storey private residence for a young couple, consisting of six bedrooms and a dance hall. The main four corners of the house are 'filleted' or rounded to soften the original structure. According to the architect, in design terminology, a fillet is a rounded corner or rounded edge. The fillet idea was central to this house's context in order to maximise the corner-lot building plinth through a series of design approaches in response to the client's brief. These filleted corners are utilised to achieve a wholeness while still streamlining the building form externally. "The building mass was configured in response to our climate and the tropics — with subtracted volumes for open terraces and voids to create openness which allowing for natural lighting and cross-ventilation," says Ar Lim Kee Yen. This is achievable in the layout when its glazed doors and windows are fully opened.

Natural light enters the house across the different floor levels, from the open terraces and master lounge on the second-floor to the living hall at the ground floor level through a tempered laminated glass floor and void openings at its first-floor level next to the dance hall. Meanwhile, the dance hall, living and dining hall occupy the centre of the layout, and all the other essential spaces in the house are connected. This minimises the need for long corridors by using the halls as transition spaces between the rooms.

The bedrooms and open terraces face northwest, towards the setting sun. These were designed with minimal strips of openings. The high-volume air well where the sculptural spiral staircase sits faces northeast, with a large glass panel. The southwest-facing front offers horizontal sun shading devices; aluminium fins running through as a design feature.

The recessed space at the front of the house becomes a garage and can double as a verandah for family activities. Externally, the sliding timber screens function not only as shades, but also for security and privacy for the occupants. Together, they combine and orchestrate the different layers and screens to construct various architectural specialities and experiences.

From street level, the staggered 'filleted mass' is elevated vigorously from its surrounding.

The design of the roof reinterprets the typical pitch roof found in tropical houses. It comes cast with enlarged concrete gutter at its edges rather than long overhang as to achieve the completeness of the filleted geometry, while effectively accounts for rainwater run-off.

The sculpted spiral stairs with a backdrop of large glazing frames the interior and invites the greenery of the outside in. The shadows fills the internal volume poetically, especially in the morning. The metal railing wrapping the concrete spiral staircase crafts a continuous flow of the external filleted corners. Laser-cut metal plates were welded on-site to form and craft the curvatures. The layers that were apparent on the outside are translated inwards. The solidness of the staircase spiral form, isolated with random vertical metal plate rails, adds a layering effect to its interior space.

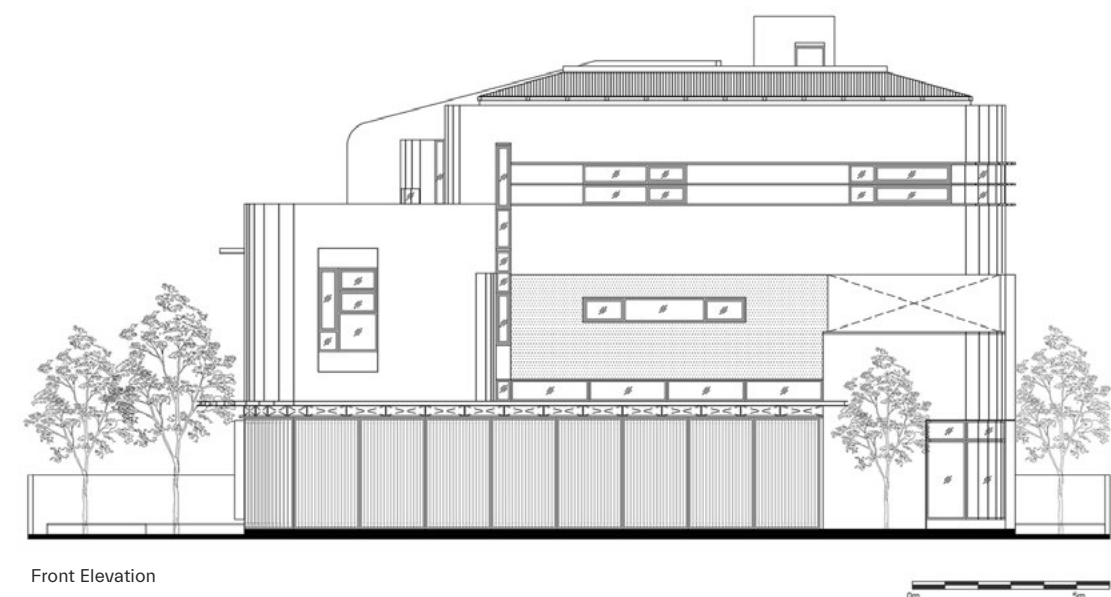
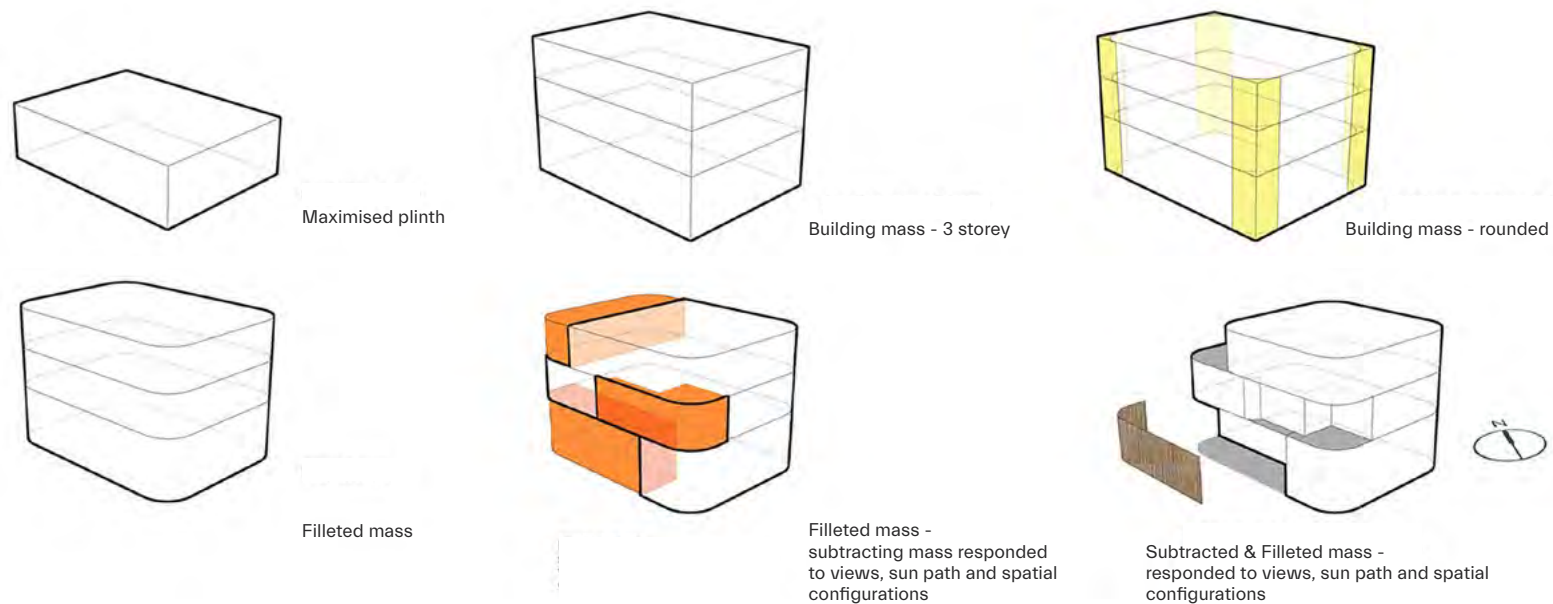
The materials palette combines white, black and grey curved solid planes with touches of timber and transparency of glasses. While it streamlines within its own form, it mainly stands out in the neighbourhood, asserting its presence. ■

The fillet idea was central to this house's context in order to maximise the corner-lot building plinth through a series of design approaches in response to the client's brief.



Front facade of the house

The conceptual approaches



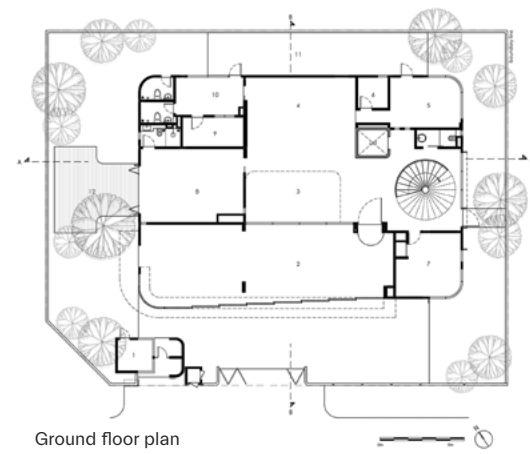
Front Elevation



Facade detail with fillet corner

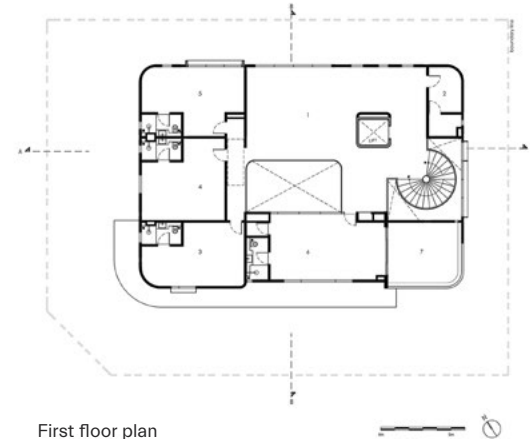


House number plate detail



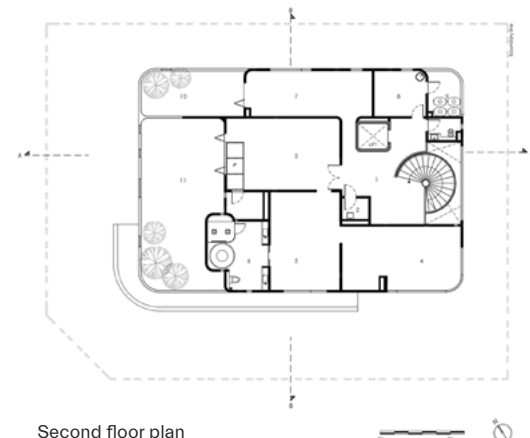
Ground floor plan

- 01 GUARD HOUSE
- 02 CAR PORCH
- 03 LIVING
- 04 DINING & DRY KITCHEN
- 05 WET KITCHEN
- 06 STORAGE ROOM
- 07 PRAYER ROOM
- 08 THEATER ROOM
- 09 HAD'S ROOM
- 10 YARD
- 11 BACK APRON
- 12 OUTDOOR DECK



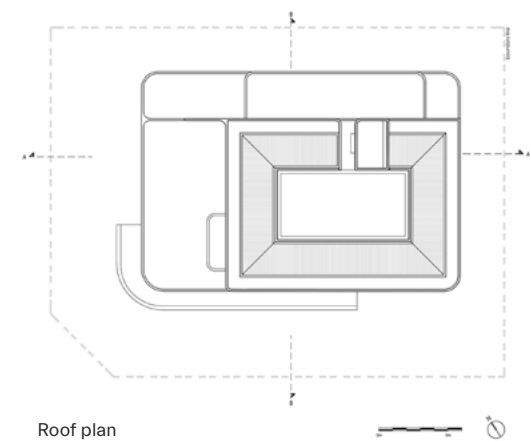
First floor plan

- 01 DANCE SPACE
- 02 FITTING ROOM
- 03 BEDROOM 1
- 04 BEDROOM 2
- 05 BEDROOM 3
- 06 GYM ROOM
- 07 TERRACE

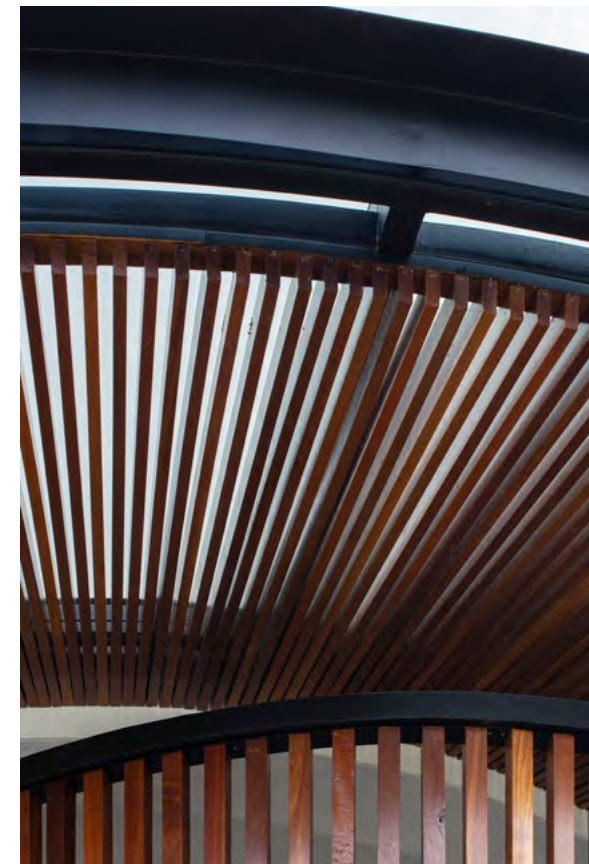


Second floor plan

- 01 LOUNGE
- 02 PANTRY
- 03 MASTER LOUNGE
- 04 MASTER BEDROOM
- 05 MASTER WALK-IN
- 06 MASTER BATH
- 07 LIBRARY
- 08 MANICURE ROOM
- 09 BALCONY
- 10 ROOF TERRACE 1
- 11 ROOF TERRACE 2



Roof plan



Balau timber screen detail



The northwest facade, facing the setting sun, was designed with minimal openings



A carved out space to reflect

From street level, the staggered 'filleted mass' is elevated vigorously from its surrounding.



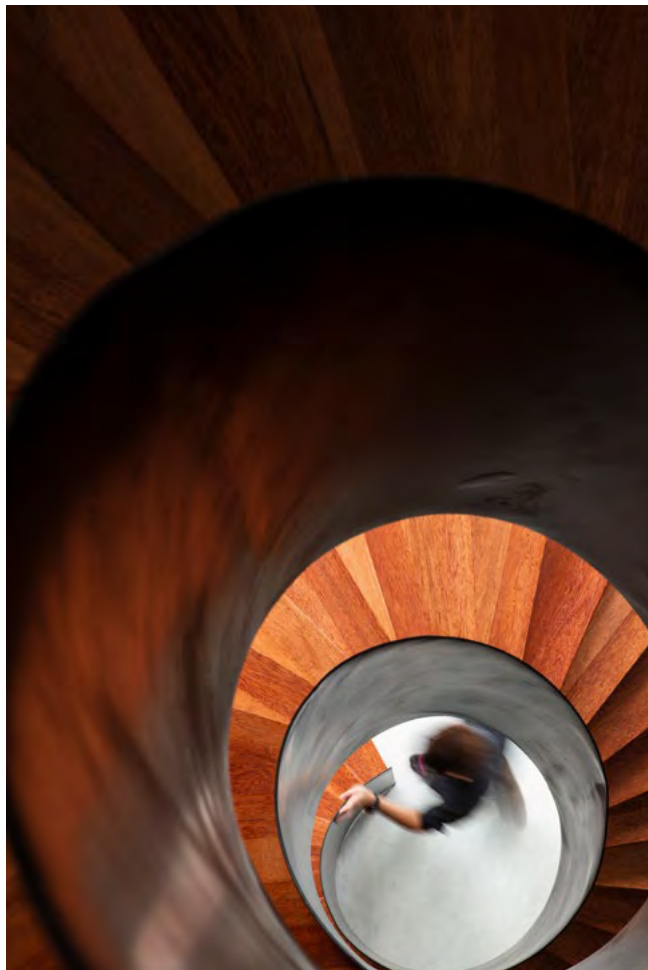
The spiral stairs with flat metal plate railing



A dramatic solid curved plane of the stair's railing



A shot of the neighbourhood



Spiral staircase detail



The master bathroom



The bathtub detail



LOCATION Alam Sutera, Kuala Lumpur
PRINCIPAL USE Residential
ARCHITECT Kee Yen Architect
PROJECT PRINCIPAL Ar Lim Kee Yen
PROJECT TEAM Asraafizie, Ong Zhi Xin
DESIGN PERIOD 2 months
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 2 years
DATE OF COMPLETION December 2020
SITE AREA 824sqm
FLOOR AREA 1,100sqm
CONTRACTOR Zhen Ye Projects Sdn Bhd
CIVIL ENGINEER THCS Engineering Studio
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS Trend Thermal Windows & Doors Sdn Bhd
PHOTOGRAPHY Lawrence Choo

GOING THE DISTANCE

SELINDUNG DAUN GALLERY
by Malek Hassan Architect

Hulu Yam, Selangor



By incorporating shipping containers in horizontal and vertical configurations within a texturally-rich design, this property sales gallery has achieved versatility and room to play in use of its space.

Shipping containers have long had their industrial charm; as iconic steel boxes that traverse the earth, in the last few decades, they have been repurposed and upcycled for use in construction. Most times, these logistical relics have with them dents and scrapes that are symbolic of their journeys and travels around the world — and these 'battle scars' imbue them (and consequently the site upon which they sit) with character. Selindung Daun Gallery experimented with shipping containers in horizontal and vertical formations with the view of creating colourful mosaics to intrigue the public and bend the notion of what is typically seen in property development sales galleries. The idea was also to

experiment with different positions of the containers, providing transparency with lightness to the building with glass and creating virtual dialogue between indoor and outdoor spaces. What results? A design that's aesthetics and practicality at once — and a property sales gallery that's instantly 'Instagrammable'.

A winding road access to the building creates multiple vista points while it functions to slow traffic into the development. There are three main components of the site: The main gallery, two sample house units, and an annex building that consists of washrooms and *surau* (prayer room).

All of these are interlinked via a covered walkway. A 'sunken plaza' is located in the centre, with a theatregoer terrace, making it fit to hold events and functions. This sunken plaza forms part of the pedestrian trail from the entrance to the main building. Two beacon towers topped with skeletal steel rise from the ground to flank the site. These towers are in fact 40-foot containers turned on its side to stand upright, and were painted in a bold 'Ducati yellow' as a sculptural architectural landmark.

The main building is skewed towards the main road to maximise exposure to passers-by, and this slanted position gives an advantage to façade displays, while showing off the containers and the iconic doors at the end of the box.

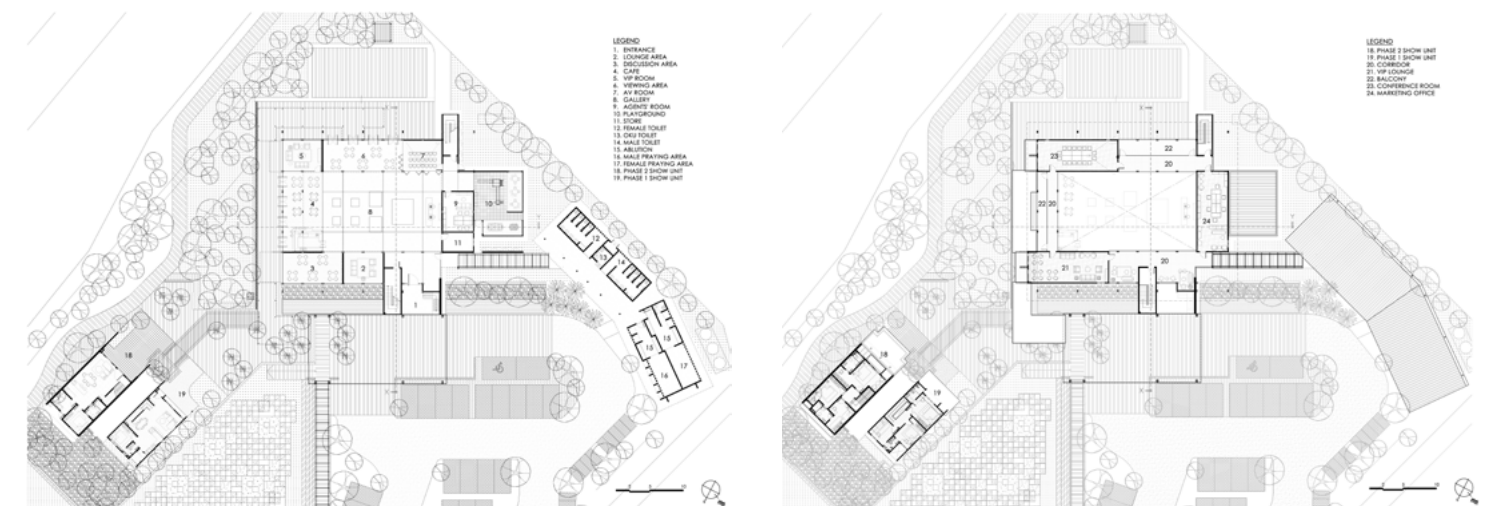
The main building is skewed towards the main road to maximise exposure to passers-by, and this slanted position gives an advantage to façade displays, while showing off the containers and the iconic doors at the end of the box. In the main gallery, its double volume is flanked by three-sided containers. There are three shipping boxes retrofitted into three pairs to accommodate a conference room, discussion niche with lounge, and project office interlinked via elevated walkway. The approach was to create an independent primary structure to support the containers, driving freedom for composition and allowing interplay with volume. The containers' steel doors are integrated into the design — by keeping them open they act as extensions to lengthen the profile of the container, as well as to allow for natural light and ventilation. The extended profile was accomplished by introducing a cantilevered balcony and stretching the floor plate.



A view of the facade

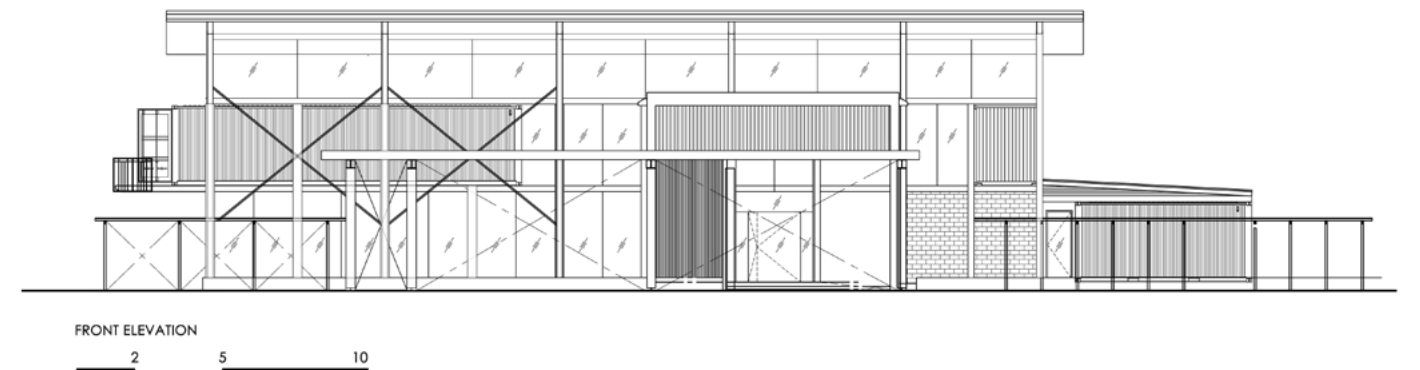


Boxes in layers for the main elevation



Ground floor plan

First floor plan



FRONT ELEVATION

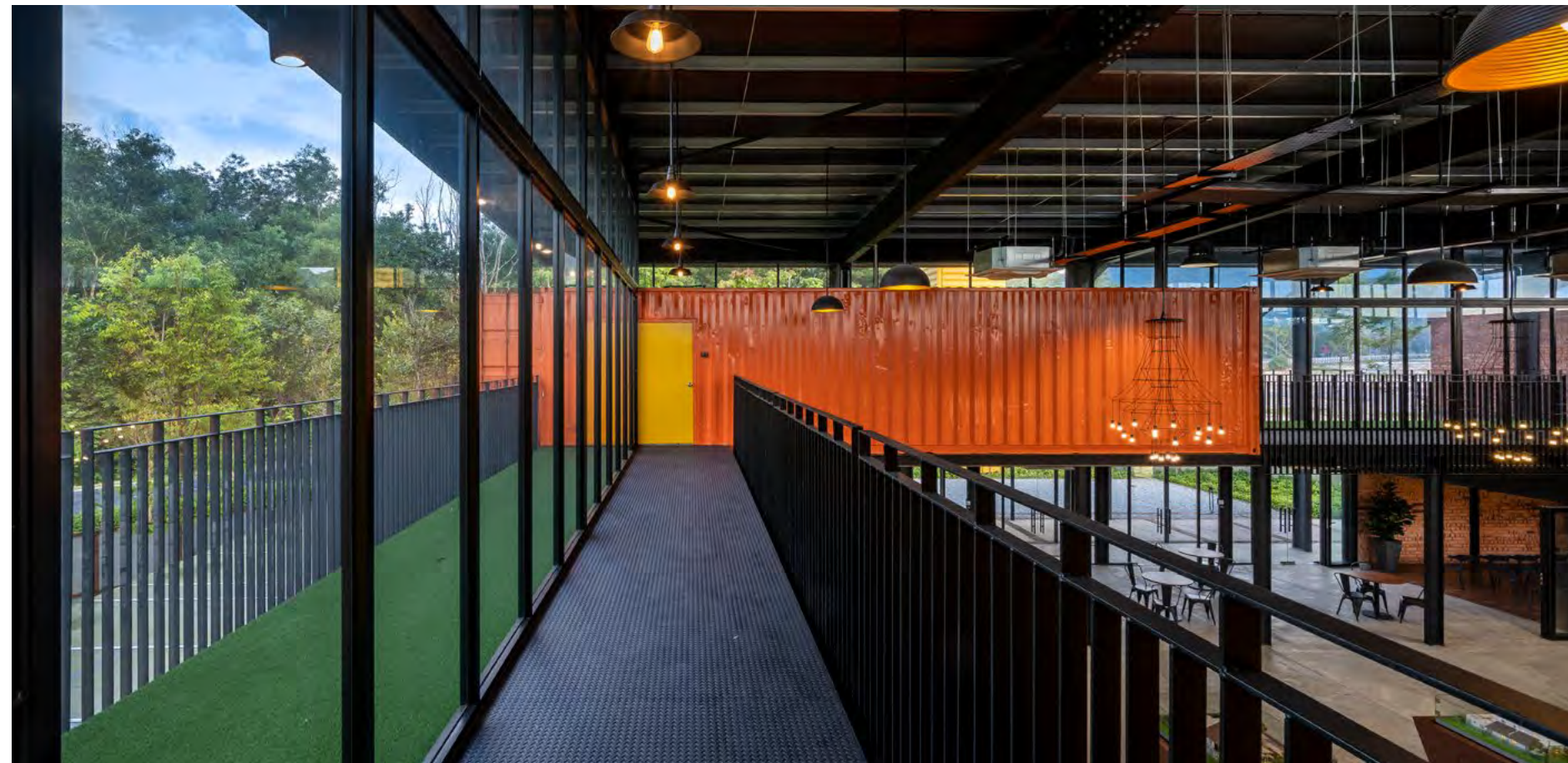
Front elevation

The elevated walkways that connect them are multi-functional and are more than just floating corridors. With their glass walls, they grant visual connectivity between indoors and outdoors and act as vertical and horizontal visual communications. These elevated walkways create interplay between solid box and void in translation for building depth, rhythm, and shadows. The internal walkways also work as a walking gallery, stage, atrium audience in relation to the double volume space; while the external walkways serve as linear balconies to hold outdoor activities.

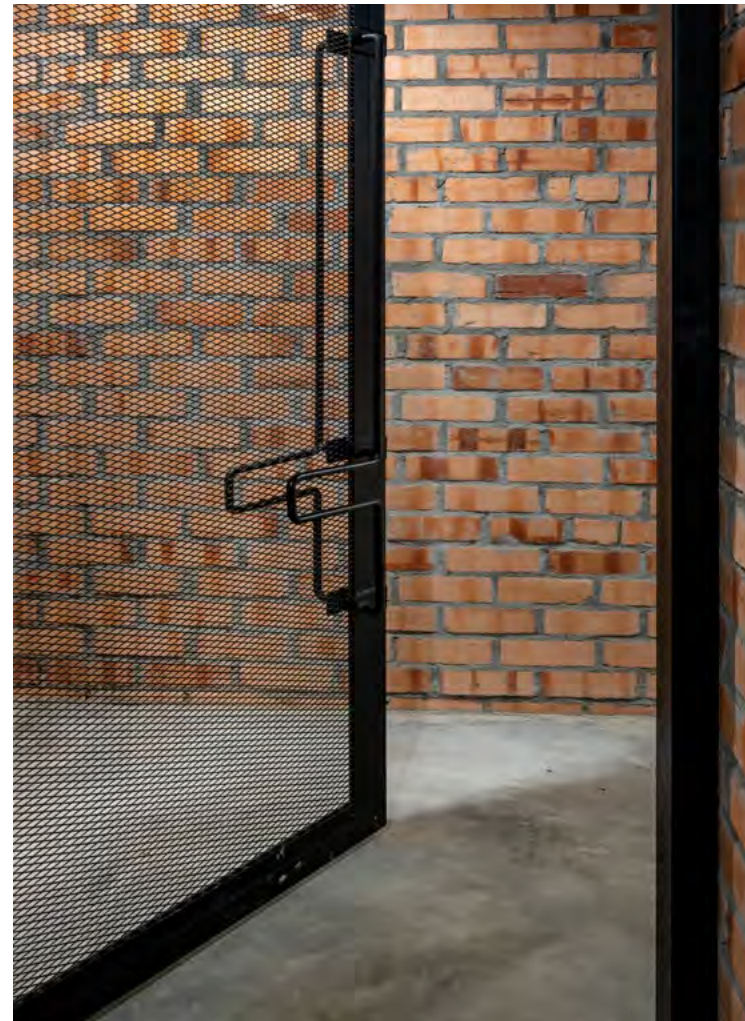
The ground floor was designed for public use and it consists of an exhibition concourse, lounges, cafes, discussion niches, children's playroom, reception, sales office and private lounge. An expansive *porte cochere* welcomes visitors and keeps them protected from the elements of nature. An annex building was designed for the washrooms and prayer room, connected via a covered walkway from the main building. By using clay bricks and vent blocks as the main construction material it allows controlled natural light into the spaces with maximum cross ventilation. This was built to enhance the central green enclave, comprises the same architectural language of the main building industrial image and theme.

At dusk, the box shines from within, warm light reveals the rich texture of the timber strips on raw clay brick walls, vent block in shadow lines and creating a striking contrast to its external frame. All the chosen materials from its beacon towers, buildings and landscapes are assembled in the same language, to reflect integration of texture richness, contrast, lightness and versatility, with the hopes to stimulate the senses in celebrating the outdoor experience. ■

The idea was also to experiment with different positions of the containers, providing transparency with lightness to the building with glass and creating virtual dialogue between indoor and outdoor spaces.



The external and internal linear balconies



Detail of the door for the surau



The beacon tower, made from a shipping container turned on its side



A view of the gallery's interior



The contrasting interior material



A floating yellow box, as the materials interplay



The main entrance at night

LOCATION Hulu Yam, Selangor
CLIENT Ringgit Muhibbah Sdn Bhd
PRINCIPAL USE Sales Gallery
ARCHITECT Malek Hassan Architect
PROJECT PRINCIPAL Ar Abdul Malek Bin Hassan
PROJECT TEAM Ar Noor Azizie, Haikal Hamidi, Nizan Ramlan
DESIGN PERIOD 2 months
CONSTRUCTION PERIOD 4 months
DATE OF COMPLETION 31 December 2019
SITE AREA 8,090sqm
CONTRACTOR Nadi Cergas Sdn Bhd
CIVIL ENGINEER Perunding SKM Sdn Bhd
M & E ENGINEER Synergy Alliance Consultants (M) Sdn Bhd
QUANTITY SURVEYOR PCM Kos Perunding Sdn Bhd
LANDSCAPING SD2 Landscape Architecture
OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS DRTAN LM Architect (interior design)
MAIN MATERIALS /FINISHINGS/FITTINGS Shipping containers, steel, concrete, clay bricks
PHOTOGRAPHY H Lin Ho Photography, Ar Malek Hassan



A STEP UP

MAKIO HOUSE
by Fabian Tan Architect
Kuala Lumpur

A radical re-interpretation of a staircase made it a central sculptural piece, transforming it into a unifying element for an entire home.

BY KENNETH CHEONG

A developer's cookie-cutter residential products are regularly designed to economically meet the marketing team's lofty domestic aspirations. In its previous incarnation, the Makio House offered dark stained timber skirting outlining a beige-tiled double height living space upon entry. Central to the living space was a dark timber staircase which linked the living spaces to the back of house areas consisting of the maid's quarters and wash area on the mezzanine floor. A central column flanking the dogleg staircase pierced the open plan space. The original mild steel balustrades painted in black and the dark stained timber footer of original staircase, although striking, overwhelms the existing open plan living space as a clamouring interjection. In the interiors of the Makio House, Ar Fabian Tan re-interpreted the dog-legged staircase to unify the spaces of the house harmoniously. "The client wanted a minimalistic and comfortable home to suit his family and personality," explains Tan of the incongruent interior.

“The idea was to unify the original architectural elements in the house,” he continued. They did so by refinishing the entire staircase in maple veneer and replacing the footers with solid maple timber. The striking staircase and central column recede in minimalist detailing only to highlight the materiality and muted tone of the maple as a central sculptural piece, and as a unifying element transforming the interior of the entire house. To highlight the warm tones of the timber, the existing interior finishes were white-washed to create a *carte blanche*. The existing beige floor tiles were removed and replaced with white in-situ terrazzo. Additional architectural accoutrements like the television console and an island counter is finished in Carrara marble to recede into the background. An exterior timber deck to the side was removed and turned into a minimalist rock garden to match the neutral interior. In its original incarnation, the back-of-house was located on the mezzanine floor to free up the ground floor for entertaining. Tan replaced the enclosing walls to the Asian kitchen with sliding doors for generate a free flow of space: from cooking to dining to living.



Main entrance view



Staircase detail



An interior look - where straight lines define the space

The concept was derived from the original space: to embrace the light and views, then heighten spatial experience through materiality.

What was once a mere standard element for vertical movement was turned into an integral part of the social space of the Makio House. With an Escher-like quality, it seems to turn in on itself in odd ways engulfing the central column, and it takes a sudden turn on the ground floor into a platform to define a play area. On the mezzanine floor, the timber monolith traces the mezzanine floor and takes an unexpected turn to become a galleria which pierces the double-height living space to reach towards the double-height glazing just to catch a glimpse of the treetops of the central communal garden on the outside.



The mezzanine floor view from ground level

“The space serves as a walkway with shelves, windows and storage. At the end nook, a daybed-cum-study area floats close in view of the tree-tops,” elaborates Tan. The ribbon of maple traces itself into the upper floors and into the cabinetry of the bedrooms. The unusual window placements of the original house become datum points for the maple ribbons to navigate.

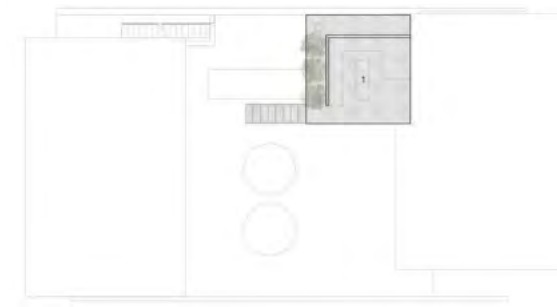
The master bedroom was enlarged by combining another existing bedroom to form an open plan sleeping, changing and wash space. “The interior walls of the maple veneered wardrobe was intentionally built below ceiling height to allow the light to diffuse into the wardrobe area,” explains the architect. The light-filled contiguous ceiling amplifies the expanse of the large room terminating at a low window which becomes the anchor for a daybed platform.

“The concept was derived from the original space: to embrace the light and views, then heighten spatial experience through materiality,” elaborates Tan. The living space on the ground floor is miniaturised in the children’s bedroom with double decker beds and an intermediate mezzanine. “The kid’s bedroom was reimagined as a hide and seek play of levels – a three-tiered bunk bed with a pull-out bed and an alcove to peek out into the neighbourhood through an existing clerestory window,” adds Tan.



Kid's room

Overall, echoes of maple, marble and white interplay with the existing elements and nature offer an environment of balance and serenity.



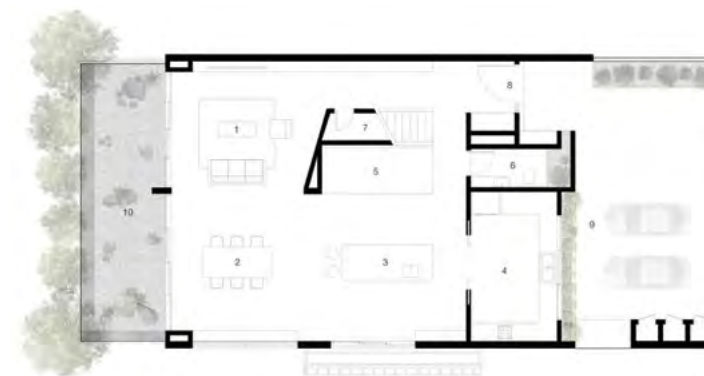
Roof plan



First floor plan



Mezzanine floor plan



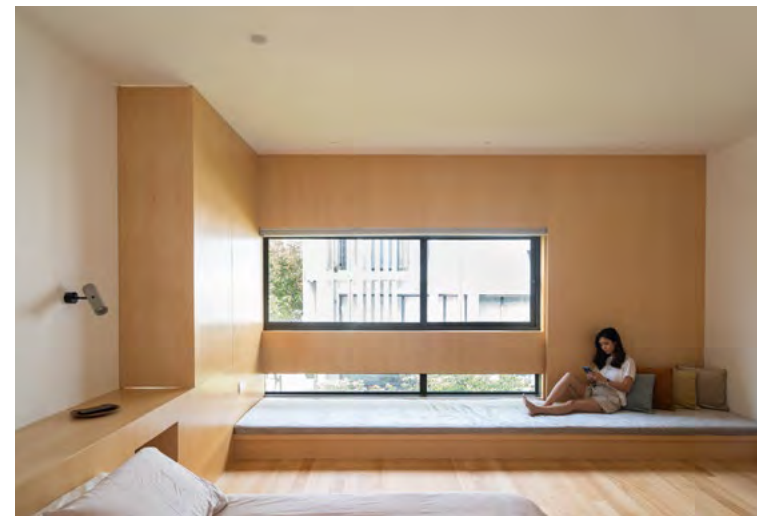
Ground floor plan



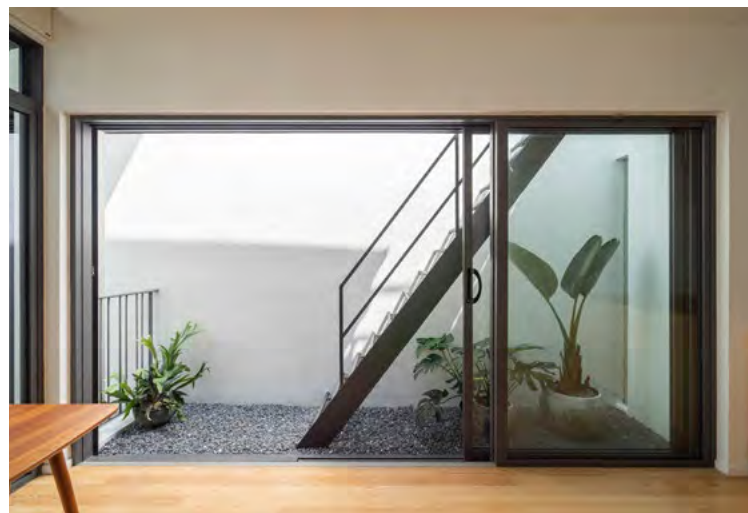
Looking into the master bedroom



View of the new mezzanine



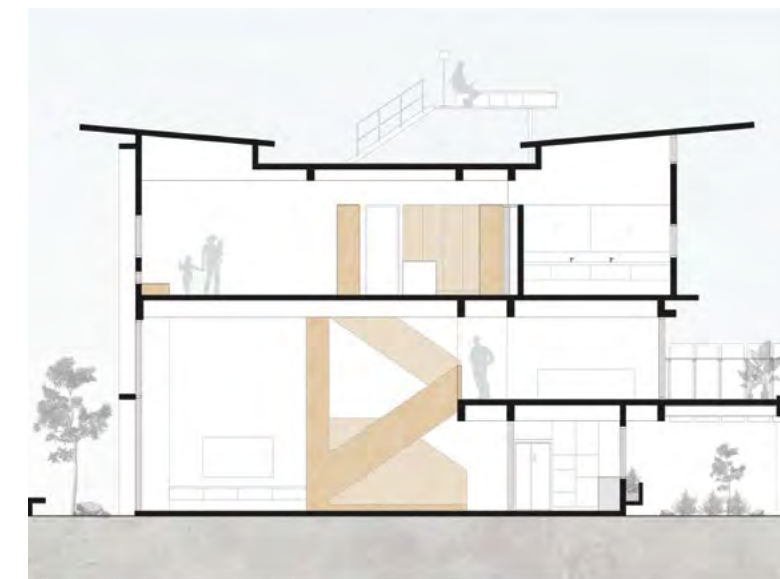
Master bedroom corner



Steel stairs that lead to the rooftop



The living area



Section

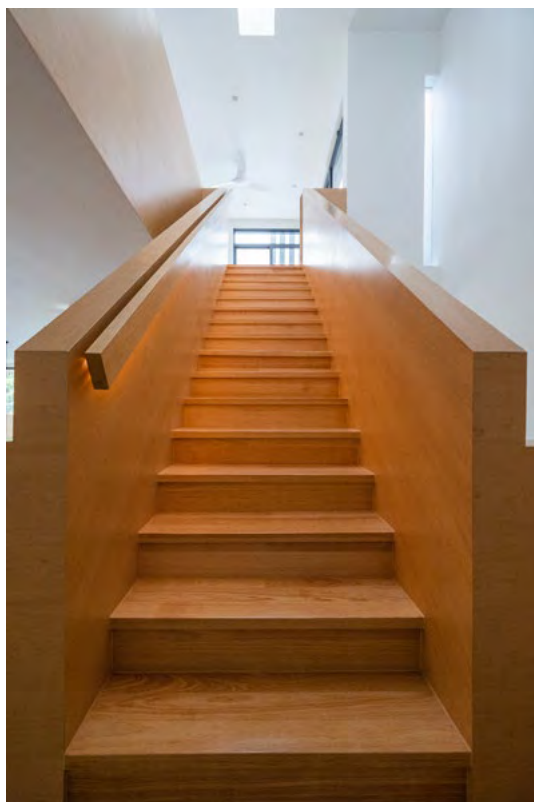


The open-plan kitchen



Powder room

The extent of the interior renovations terminates at a metal roof deck. "A steel stairway was added in the light well leading up to the roof level. Here a platform is raised over the roof and acts as a viewing deck and outdoor living room overlooking the city skyline." "Overall, echoes of maple, marble and white interplay with the existing elements and nature offer an environment of balance and serenity," says Tan. When the desire for, and impact of such transformation is so radical, it brings to mind the question: Do developer marketing teams ever truly meet the needs of the future homeowners? In the case of the Makio House, developer-driven castles in the sky were spirited away, leaving the whisper of a ghost in the shell. ■



View of the stairs



The kitchen



Staircase view from nook



The living and mezzanine areas

LOCATION
Kuala Lumpur

PRINCIPAL USE
Residential

ARCHITECT
Fabian Tan Architect

PROJECT PRINCIPALS
Ar Fabian Tan

PROJECT TEAM
Bong Jie Si

DESIGN PERIOD
2019–2020

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD
8 months

DATE OF COMPLETION
February 2020

SITE AREA
260sqm

FLOOR AREA
420sqm

ENGINEER ON ADVICE
Projurutek Sdn Bhd

LANDSCAPING
Sputnik Forest

PHOTOGRAPHY
Ceavs Chua of BricksBegin

DINE EX MACHINA

THE FARM FOODCRAFT by Seshan Design Sdn Bhd

The Sphere, Bangsar South City,
Kampung Kerinchi, Kuala Lumpur

Go green at The Farm Foodcraft in more ways than one, as the restaurant's tilt towards growing produce on-site and dining sustainably became its points of salience.

Urban diners have become more discerning, with more and more boxes needing to be ticked to satiate their appetite and satisfy their dining experience. They would want for nothing, as there is often a crew of people already ahead of the curve. For one, the Farm Foodcraft is a 'farm to table' (or rather, 'garden to plate') restaurant where the produce used in the cooking served are wholly grown and harvested within its premises. The clients are farmers and horticulturists themselves, and also own other smaller cafés and eateries. This project was a unique opportunity to marry the two worlds of horticulture and F&B. Having the plants on-site resulted in lush greenery, crafting an atmosphere of dining in a garden-slash-farm — with edible and non-edible foliage.

Not only does this elevate the diner's experience, it's sustainable (and slashes the dreaded carbon footprint by a whole load) and somewhat functional (for COVID-19 social-distancing measures, the plants can be used as separators). It also makes crazy business sense.

Dining by design at The Farm Foodcraft wasn't by accident, yet some of the happy happenstances were not intentional. "The clients had hoped to sell the surplus produce they harvest — fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs — to customers but since they've opened, demand has been so good that everything they produce has been used up for the preparation of the food served!" shares Ramesh Seshan, Managing Director of Seshan Design Sdn Bhd, designers of the project.

"During the first lockdown in early 2020, when supply from wholesalers were affected, other F&B outlets in the surrounding area in Bangsar South actually came to them to purchase fresh vegetables which they had harvested on site," Ramesh continues.

Whatever can't be grown on site, or runs out, will be sourced directly from local farmers and vendors, ensuring there is still a local focus on our agriculture.

The ethos of The Farm Foodcraft — as the website states — is returning to the roots of healthy living and



The communal high table at the main dining

embracing all that is fundamentally 'good'. As they aim to finish the produce they serve on the day itself, you'll know that you'll get nothing less than fresh. From light bites and salads to burgers, pasta and local Asian delights, The Farm Foodcraft carves out some fare that caters to anyone. And if patrons wish to have something off-menu, all they have to do is enquire and they may even discover hidden gems.

The original site was two smaller lots combined — 2,000sqft in total, with a double volume height of 5.2m and clad with glazing on three sides. The building management, knowing the client's intention to incorporate landscaping and plants in and around the site, allowed the client to lease the front of the site for *al fresco* dining and to also use the existing planters immediately adjacent to the site.

As with any double volume site, the immediate response is to build a mezzanine. The mezzanine level occupied the rear half of the site above the kitchen, and a hydroponic farm was installed in the space directly above the kitchen. That left the rest of the mezzanine for a private dining lounge/bar — called the Curious Gardener.



The new stairs leading up to mezzanine in the extended area

As with any double volume site, the immediate response is to build a mezzanine.



The entrance, from the front deck

The challenge of course was to manage the height of the kitchen, with all its services, hood and exhaust ducts to have sufficient space for both the kitchen and the hydroponic farm.

A staircase was required to access the mezzanine, but a feature stairway in the double volume would have taken up too much valuable space for diners. When asked if an external staircase could be built, the building management was pleased to agree to an annexe steel and glass structure. The plants were the main players in this project, but there was a need for a few focus pieces. "The clients came up with an idea to do a customised planting chandelier so we worked with them to create three suspended planter rings in steel which they curated and planted themselves, creating the feature plant chandelier in the double volume dining," explains Ramesh. The second smaller double volume space was in the annexe structure next to the stairs. "The clients sourced a big piece of driftwood which they also curated with ferns, and suspended it next to the stairs. We worked closely with the client's planting and farming experts to create various trellises and planting structures, and devices to cater for different plants," says Ramesh.

Having the plants on site also posed a larger issue: What was the best way to create a suitable internal environment that would be comfortable for diners, and also care for the welfare of the plants since different plants require different conditions? Natural light was fairly sufficient in the site and they could always be compensated with additional UV lighting (like in the hydroponic farm zone). Watering and fertilisers were mostly done mechanically via irrigation tubes as much as possible.

Almost everything was done in mild steel for its light weight, flexibility and ease to put up. It also seemed to match seamlessly with the existing building's structural components, which were also steel.



Private dining event with hydroponic farm in the background

According to Ramesh, the major challenge was ventilation and cooling. Thus, it was critical to balance the mechanical cooling and ventilation within this building around the clock. As with any restaurant, there has to be a sufficient exhaust in the kitchen to suit the cooking needs and ensure sufficient fresh air pumped into the kitchen and to ensure a net positive pressure within the kitchen (so air conditioned air within the dining area doesn't get sucked into the kitchen).

In addition to that, there are also small exhausts and air intake fans on opposing ends of the restaurant to create fresh air movement within the space. Smaller ceiling mounted centrifugal fans were also installed to facilitate air movement internally — outside operating hours, these fans are still running to create air flow, and smaller air-cond units stay turned on to lower the temperature slightly for the plants. The hydroponic farm itself is a closed system with its own mechanical cooling and ventilation (also requiring fresh air intakes and air movements) and lighting.

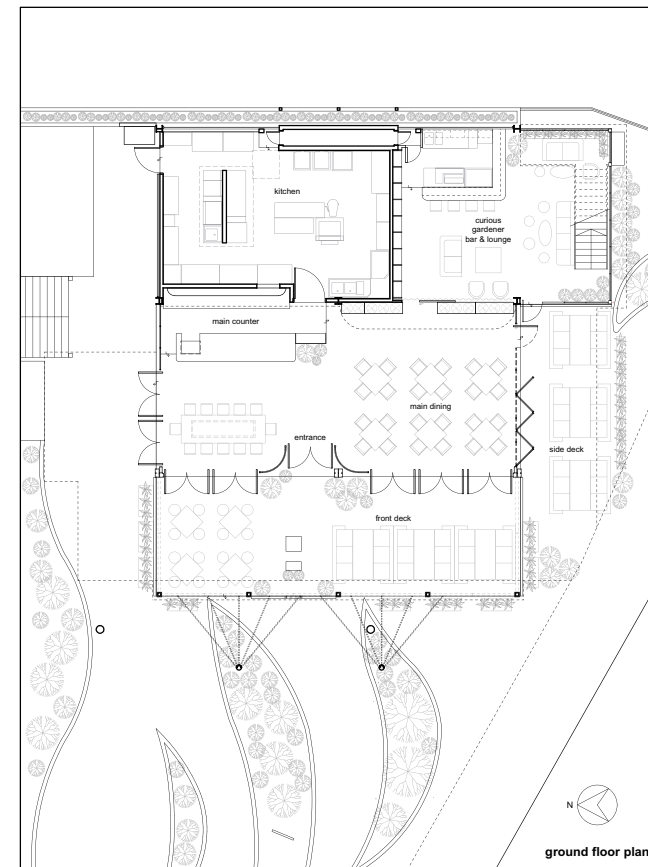
The *al fresco* area was another issue, especially when the doors of the dining area needs to stay open to cater for events. “How do we keep the cool air in? The solution was having huge semi-transparent roller blinds around the perimeter of the front deck. These blinds help to trap the cool air within the restaurant,” explains Ramesh. The three industrial fans in the deck area also provide sufficient circulation to create comfort. These fans can also be adjusted manually to reverse their rotation: During hotter afternoons, the two outer fans will be pushing the air downward, but the middle fan would be reversed so it ‘sucks’ the air upwards,

thus creating a vortex, increasing the overall air flow in the area.

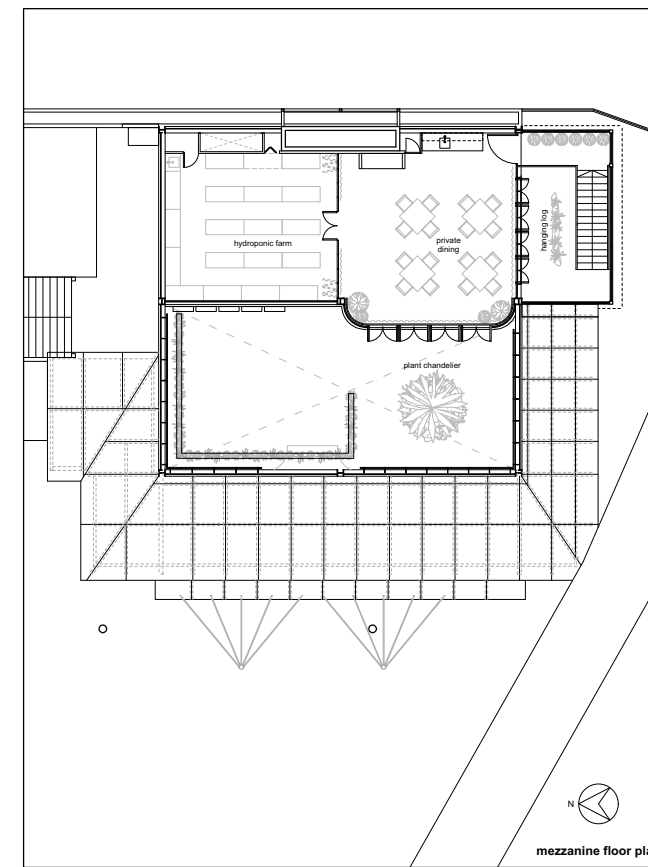
The clients also placed six sensors around the restaurant to monitor the environmental conditions: air quality, air movement, temperature, humidity, and more. By observing how the plants thrived or didn't in some cases, the client would study the data in those areas and make certain tweaks to improve the conditions for the plants. So during the first few months, there was a period of trial and error to get the optimum conditions for the plants. With this valuable data, the client would be able to know which plants and where would thrive best with the least maintenance. “This was a



External view of the extended glass and steel box for the stairs



Ground floor plan



Mezzanine floor plan



Entrance to the “hidden” Curious Gardener Bar below and the private dining area



Planting at the lounge with hanging log from above



Al fresco dining at the front and side decks



The hydroponic farm

very big education opportunity for us as well, which we could later use for our future projects," explains Ramesh.

Overall, the fit out was kept simple to minimise cost as much as possible. Almost everything was done in mild steel for its light weight, flexibility and ease to put up. It also seemed to match seamlessly with the existing building's structural components, which were also steel. An advantage of the premises located at the Sphere is that the F&B lots are fully covered by a glass roof, protecting them from rain. This meant that there was no need to fully seal or weather-proof the doors and windows, allowing for the use of simpler, custom-made mild steel framed doors and windows.

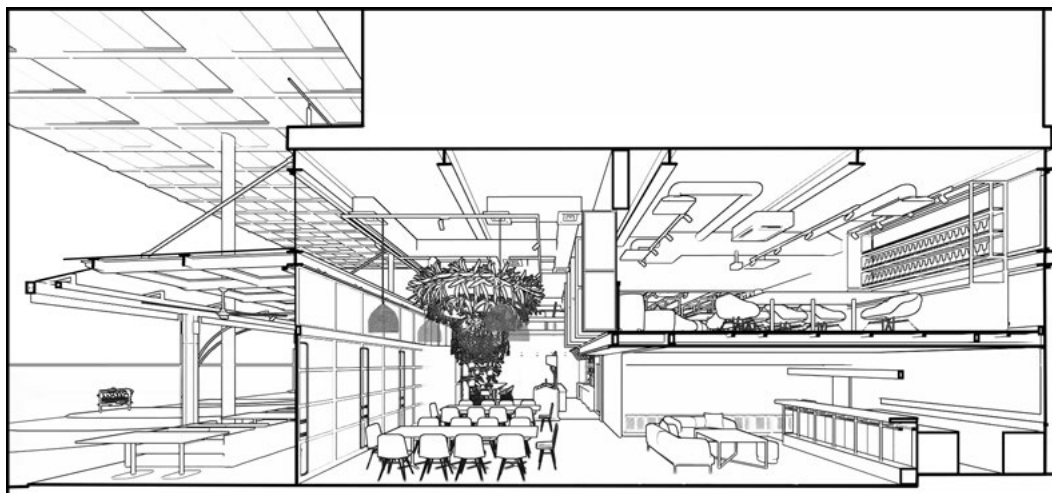
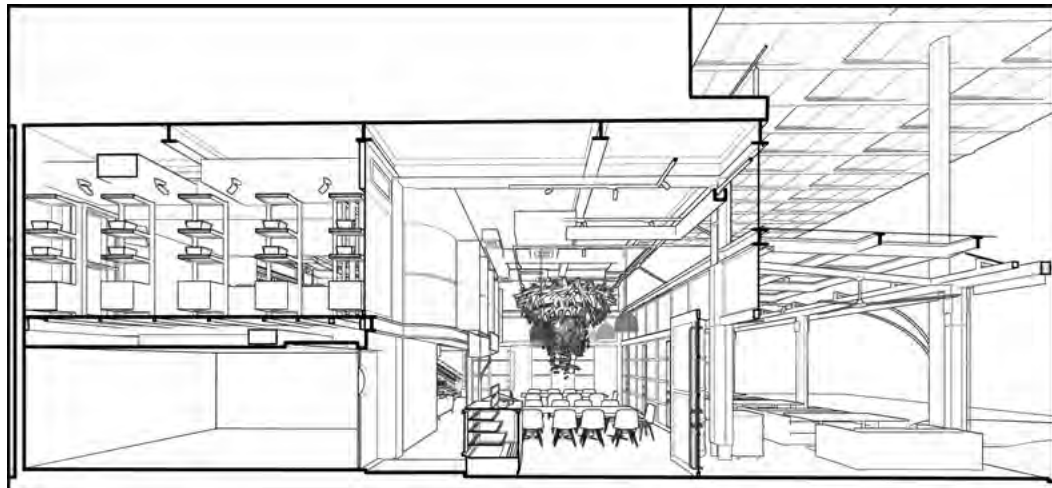
From design to operations and even in caring for the plants, the focus is on the details. For the finishing touches, Ramesh indicates, "the interesting element we tried was using glass as floor inlays. Quite an interesting effect was created with the glass' natural green tint." Ready-made rattan furniture and light fittings were also sourced to complement the interior. The clients are now looking to expand their premises to incorporate a larger area dedicated to urban farming. ■



Angles of the Curious Gardener Bar & Lounge



The private dining area at night



Sections

The clients came up with an idea to do a customised planting chandelier so we worked with them to create three suspended planter rings in steel which they curated and planted themselves, creating the feature plant chandelier in the double volume dining.



A night shot of the entrance



The main counter with the hydroponic farm partially visible at the mezzanine above



The front deck with the roller blinds fully retracted

LOCATION
Unit G-01 & G-02,
The Sphere,
Bangsar South City,
Kuala Lumpur

CLIENT
Fine Diners Sdn Bhd

PRINCIPAL USE
Restaurant & Bar

ARCHITECT FIRM
Seshan Design Sdn Bhd

PROJECT PRINCIPAL(S)
Ramesh Seshan
(Managing Director),
Vincent Boo Chie Ping
(Design Lead)

PROJECT TEAM
Chan Xiu Ming,
Syaf Selamatt, Scott Lu

DESIGN PERIOD
4 months

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD
3 months

DATE OF COMPLETION
May 2019

FLOOR AREA
320sqm (internal)
110sqm (al fresco)

PROJECT COST
Undisclosed

CIVIL ENGINEER
Perunding ACE Sdn Bhd

LANDSCAPING
Farm Establishments
Sdn Bhd

**OTHER BUILDING
CONSULTANTS**
Despace Sdn Bhd
(custom furniture)

**MAIN MATERIALS
/Finishings/Fittings**
Triple-S Concrete Stain
by Suriwong (floor staining
for coloured concrete)

PHOTOGRAPHY
Rupajiwa Studio

A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE HOME?

It was the strangest of times: in the past year, we've seen a return to the abode and a merging of work/life, regardless of gender. Here are the experiences of Malaysian women architects who do it all and more in the new normal.

BY YEOH EE-LENG

Some of us recall a time when the norm was for women to stay home; to cook, clean and mind the children; or we may have heard such stories from our grandmothers and mothers. The home economics books of the 1950s provided guidelines on how to be a good wife. Accompanying illustrations invariably showed a tidy house, clean children and a woman with impeccable make-up and perfect hair ready to attend to husband when he returned from work.

These days a woman's work (and worth) is far from having to look pretty for a man. What has not changed is women needing to draw upon their multitasking superpowers, juggling careers with her family's needs.

A woman is a mother, a daughter, a wife, a niece, an aunt, a grandmother... and she is also an architect.

Many men are now involved in parenting, but we are told that women remain primary caregivers and shoulder a disproportionate amount of housework, even when they have successful, active careers. Mothers are typically our first teachers. We learn many things from them before we attend formal schooling. We are therefore not surprised to learn that many mothers during this pandemic have also had to assume the role of the schoolteacher.

Against this backdrop, we decided to re-visit the common yet stubbornly held notion that *"a woman's place is in the home"*, which reinforces antiquated prejudices that women are only suited to domestic activities and concerns. Evidently, this idea is one that is no longer valid given that women today head entire governments, run businesses and comprise half the world's workforce.

In addition to COVID-19 upending life as we know it, it has also caused us to consider the after-effects with some irony. We wanted to explore the idea of WFH (work from home) in the current lockdown scenarios, and issues confronting women on *'returning to the home'* with the merging of the workplace and home into a single spatial-cultural unit, and what that has meant for our women architects. *Does the New Normal mean a return to old norms?*

For International Women's Day (8 March), we decided it would be timely to document the experiences of Malaysian women architects in this past year of the strangest of times. We wanted to capture a range of experiences across the diverse spectrum of women architects from different backgrounds, practices and experiences; and who are at different stages of their lives and careers. An opportunity to glimpse into the post-pandemic world as they envisioned.

We spoke to the following six architects, and would have liked to hear from more if time and space permitted. Due to lockdown SOPs, we were mostly unable to meet or have a normal photoshoot. Instead, conversations were via email and videoconference. All in all, we hope you enjoy the voices and portraits of these architects. Our architects. Stay safe.

An interest in buildings and people drew EE-LENG to architecture. She planned to study medicine but encountered IM Pei's Gateway while on a bus in Singapore during her high school days. She also realised she did not enjoy being in a hospital which is ironic because she spent 6 years after graduation designing healthcare facilities in the US. She is a proud graduate of the University of Sydney and a small-town Miri girl at heart. Ee-Leng is currently on sabbatical while preparing for the dreaded Part 3 exams.

"The industry is now beginning to accept that much of the work can be done virtually."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WINSTON KHOR

AR LOKE CHEW PING

Director, GDP Architects

I appreciate that I have the option of using the quieter study room when I am required to be in an online meeting, or to sit in the family room with my son to monitor his schoolwork. I cannot stress enough how important ergonomics is. It is necessary to be in a comfortable yet productive seating position especially over long hours at a time.

While I take on the challenge of multi-tasking as mother, wife and architect, there are daily challenges that require conscious management. At work, tracking deliverables can be a challenge. On the home front, the downside is sometimes the working hours can be muddled and you find yourself working at odd hours just because it is convenient.

The industry is now beginning to accept that much of the work can be done virtually – ranging from meetings to drawing preparation and submissions. The pandemic has encouraged the industry to amplify the use of technology such as new project management software and digital filing to promote efficiency. Along with site safety practices, I have noticed great improvement with increased vigilance to cleaning, sanitising, and disinfection on construction sites.

“Sharing a space with a kid often changes how an adult utilises the space.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY FISH QUAN, STUDIO 21 PHOTOGRAPHY

AR QUAN HWAI TENG

Principal, Cheryl Quan Architect

Homework, office work or housework, every task has to be broken down and tackled in the most efficient way. It is fulfilling as there is no time wasted on social media; whatever time left is spent on the family and building a quality lifestyle.

Sharing a space with a kid often changes how an adult utilises the space. Comfort and convenience are the foremost values for the space. However, the play elements, which are often overlooked or ignored by adults, should be core. It breaks the conventional and rigid approach of how we normally use a living room or kitchen. A space that can stimulate creativity in a kid is a healthy environment for them to grow in. Happy children, happy working mum!

Time and focus were the main challenges with WFH. My work time has shrunk as I had to shift my focus to my son. He is in his toddler stage and deserves my attention. I take this time at home to charge my creativity. A kids' world is amazing, they are creative in so many ways. As an adult/architect, we can un-learn what we have learned, and re-learn from their pure minds.

“Philosophically, all good things need not come to an end.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ACACIA MARDIANA DAUD



AR DR MARIAM JAMALUDIN

Principal, MJ Architect; former Assoc Professor UiTM

I like the convenience of Zoom, Google Meet, etc. There is no need to travel to a meeting and dress up for it. The only drawback is sometimes, putting an idea across may be a bit tricky. I also miss meeting my colleagues, staff and friends, face to face, for coffee. Humans are social animals.

You need a clear filing system. A cluttered desk will result in time spent finding missing things, especially when one is over 60.

I see my family more often now. One of my children works for me. The other staff comes to the house every now and then to get my approvals or other things. It works fine as I am slowly easing off from architectural works and doing other things in life.

Philosophically, all good things need not come to an end, one just has to accept the different aspect of working life, family life and so forth. In this digital age, almost everything is at the fingertips, on your phone or laptop. Even at this moment at 4.45am, sitting at my dining table, at my holiday apartment in Cameron Highlands. How flexible can it be? Life is great. Alhamdulillah.

“Subconsciously, I am a ‘manager’ in all aspects of home and work life.”



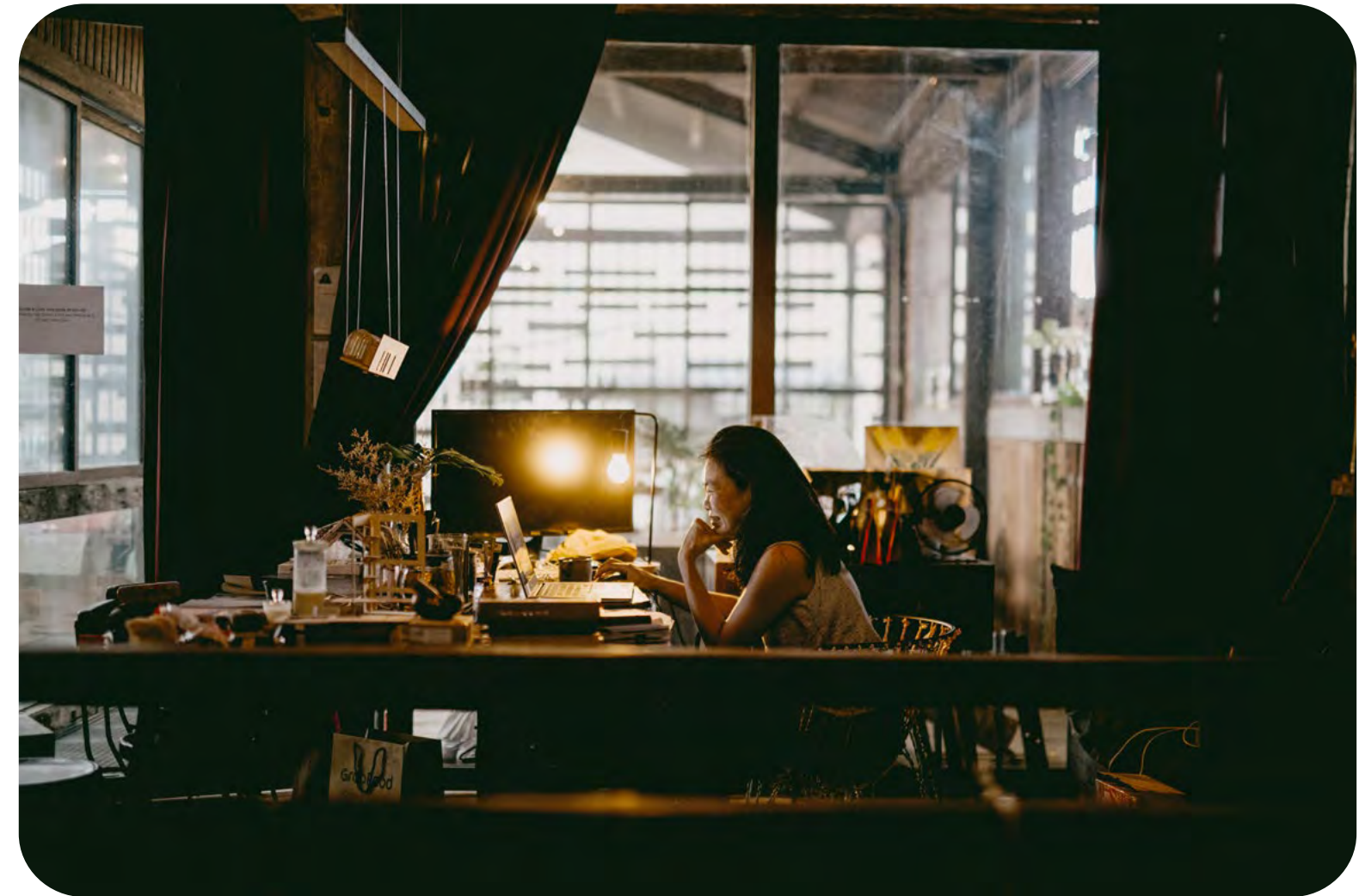
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SABER KAMAL

LIYANA HAIRI

Architectural Design Manager

The most challenging part of WFH is wearing two hats — being a mother and an employee at the same time. Being in the construction industry, managing development projects and nurturing a toddler at home, I need to be able to make the right decisions for a project and look after my child's emotions. Subconsciously, I am a 'manager' in all aspects of home and work life. From household errands, managing a two-year-old and planning business meetings. Each event needs to be slotted within its own timeline. Doing this gives me the peace of mind to be able to juggle thousands of things in a day. Waking up in the morning putting your best work apparel to go to the office... I did not expect to miss that. I try to dress up a little bit once in a while, just to have the feel of being in the office. From my observation, people are now beginning to appreciate outdoor activities more. We have been asked to avoid crowds and enclosed spaces, and this has resulted in a positive impact within society. I really hope that in future there will be more public parks interlaced between big developments to create indoor-outdoor balance.

“People are more open-minded to changes.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHON FAN BONG

WENDY TEO BOON TING

Designer and Principal, Wendy Teo Atelier;
Curator/Founder, Borneo Laboratory

The constraint that challenged me the most was moving back home to set up an ecosystem that I can be doing, expressing, and researching whatever I am truly interested in, in a relatively small city. The challenges are different when reviewed in stages, but the process of overcoming them are always authentic and rewarding. In terms of work, I moved a lot of things online, cross regional collaboration, workshops so we can continue with the conversation and stay productive. In fact, I always have been a rather introverted person, therefore not meeting a lot of people physically is not new for me. I see the pandemic as a collective contemplation about how we can live, consume, produce, and learn differently. People are more open-minded to changes. For us, people around us seem to understand better what we have been trying to achieve before the pandemic. I see all is good and timely.

“Value life more and waste less time on negative energy.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ACACIA MARDIANA DAUD

AR DATUK TAN PEI ING

Principal, PI Architect;
Past President (PAM, ARCASIA)

When the pandemic hit, we had to scramble as it was unprecedented times. I was actively involved with industry stakeholders and government in drafting proposals to be included in the Covid-19 Act to address the impacts on the construction industry. Our group was also busy drafting guidelines to assist members with regards to contract administration during this period. Architects were also hurting and we tried to help in any way we could.

The pandemic did cause me to rethink my priorities in life. To value life more and waste less time on negative energy. As for work and life matters, boundaries were already blurred for me from before the pandemic. The biggest change I had to deal with was interaction with my family as I could not meet them as often as I used to. We made up for this by having regular video conversations. As for my children who are both in Australia, I missed them dearly and we chat online daily.

After the year we had, as part of my New Year wishes, I embarked on a personal project to fold origami paper cranes. Japanese legend has it that if you folded 1,000 paper cranes, you will be granted a wish by the gods. Upon reaching my goal, my wish was for the world to heal from the pandemic. A hope of healing...