

FLIP Challenge - Creating Innovative Works of Art out of Furniture

SINGAPORE, 16 February 2005 – To encourage arts and design students to perceive and fashion furniture from a novel and unconventional perspective, the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) organised the first Furniture. Lifestyle. Innovation. Perspectives. (FLIP) Challenge. Apart from inspiring students to use their artistic and design talents to create innovative works of art out of furniture, the competition also underscores the Council's continuous push in making Singapore a hub of design excellence.

The Minister of State for Education, Mr Chan Soo Sen officiated at the FLIP Challenge award presentation ceremony held in conjunction with the Council's Lunar New Year celebrations at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel today.

The competition, rolled out in October 2004, was open to students of local arts and design-related institutions in Singapore. Participants were required to paint, innovate or transform unfurnished two-door cupboards (measuring 56 x 56 x 188 cm) into works of art while retaining their basic storage function. Kenas Pacific Pte Ltd, Hong Kong-based furniture company, sponsored the cupboards for the initiative.

Mr Simon Ong, Chairman of the Design Development Committee for SFIC, said: "With the FLIP Challenge, students were made to exercise their creativity within the given limitations of a cupboard. We wanted students to see cupboards not just simply as functional storage devices but as alternative lifestyle furniture which is why we named the Challenge, FLIP. For the competition, we needed the students to think out-of-the-box, harness the creative energy and ingenuity within them and come out with design gems. We are heartened by the quality of the entries and are glad that the participants have lived up to the challenge. We hope that these students will continue to build on their potential and contribute towards raising the design standards of our local furniture industry."

"We are also pleased and encouraged that Kenas Pacific, one of SFIC's long-time trade partners, mooted the concept of the FLIP Challenge. Such an initiative is testimony of the industry's recognition that design excellence is indeed the bedrock of the region's success in the furniture trade. With strong industry support, I believe we will go a long way in showcasing the best of Asia in the global furniture market," Mr Ong added.

A total of 32 entries was submitted for the competition, out of which 13 were shortlisted as finalists. A panel of eight judges, comprising both local and foreign representatives from the furniture and interior design industry, conducted the final round of judging yesterday. The students were assessed based on their ability to conform to the objectives of the competition, their degree of creativity as well as the magnitude of their innovation.

Two teams from the Inspiration Design School bagged the top and third prizes with the entries, I-Revolution and Cow, respectively. The first runner-up was Vibrant Glory, a one-person effort from the Temasek Design School. The merit-awards went to Reflection of Singapore by Raffles LaSalle Institute, Mondrain in Store by Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and Aspiring to New Heights by Temasek Design School. (For details on the prizes and the winning entries, please refer to attached fact sheet and concept papers.)

The top three winning entries will be showcased at the Esplanade from 9 – 25 April 2005 while the entries of all 13 finalists will be displayed at the International Furniture Fair Singapore 2005/22nd ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS'05) from 1-5 March 2005 at the Singapore Expo. These works of art will also be auctioned during IFFS/AFS'05 to raise funds for TOUCH Community Service, a multi-service voluntary welfare organisation that serves more than 3,500 needy persons across all ages and races in Singapore.

Mr Carsten Oversen, Chief Judge of the FLIP Challenge, said: "The judges have been pleasantly surprised by the ingenuity of the participants. The public exhibitions of the works will help build the students' confidence and more importantly, give them the due recognition that they deserve."

Mr Luay Al-Rawi, CEO of Kenas Pacific Pte Ltd, Hong Kong, added: "We had broached the idea of the FLIP Challenge and our sponsorship with SFIC as we envisaged it would be an excellent design initiative for arts and design schools in Singapore. We hope that this competition will contribute towards the overall development of design excellence in the furniture industry and play a part in furthering the growth of Singapore and the region as the hotbed of furniture design. I am highly impressed with the entries and I am

sure many will find willing buyers. I hope that the FLIP Challenge will inspire other furniture companies to partner SFIC in similar initiatives to further the cause of making our region a centre of design excellence.”

For more information on SFIC’s design initiatives, please visit www.singaporefurniture.com.