

NEWS RELEASE

FURNITURE DESIGN AWARD WINNERS TO GET CAREER BOOST

SFIC Unveils Design Talent Incubation Incentive Programme For Talented Furniture Designers

SINGAPORE, 28 February 2006 – The Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) announced today a new design talent incubation incentive programme to partner leading furniture companies to hire and groom outstanding young design talents over the next three years.

The programme will leverage the annual Furniture Design Award (FDA) to identify 15 outstanding designers and award them with a one-year employment contract with some of Singapore's top furniture companies over the next three years. The SFIC will fund the salaries of the designers for 12 months while they are placed on a meaningful mentoring programme to hone their skills and work towards the commercial production of their designs at the next International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS) or other suitable trade events. The announcement was made at the FDA 2006 finals and results presentation at the Singapore Expo.

While outstanding arts and design graduands from the various local institutions and non-affiliated designers are welcome to apply for the incentive programme, top priority will be given to FDA finalists.

In addition to the new design talent incubation incentive programme, the SFIC will step up efforts to brand and market FDA to a higher profile. The Council will also develop new platforms

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to showcase the winning furniture designs locally and overseas. Over the next three years, the SFIC will invest up to S\$1 million in the FDA and raise design standards in the local furniture industry.

Mr Simon Ong, Chairman of the Design Development Committee for the SFIC, said: “The primary aim of our initiative is to establish design as the bedrock of the industry’s profitability by encouraging more local companies to incorporate original designs in their business models. The SFIC targets to increase the number of design-centric companies by about 30 per cent in three years. These companies will bring about an expanded pool of furniture design talents, which ultimately, we hope, will lead to a continued production of new innovative furniture and related products that can be marketed at premium prices. With this strategy, the Singapore furniture industry can leverage design as a sustainable and strategic advantage to anchor its growth.”

The FDA 2006, which comprises the Students, Young Designers and Open categories, drew a total of 365 entries from Singapore and 13 other countries across the world. The theme for this year’s competition was “*FLY*”, where students and young designers were challenged to think up innovative concepts that were truly “out of this world”.

The FDA 2006 also saw an impressive 37 per cent increase in the Open category entries compared to FDA 2005, with countries such as Belgium, Canada, Germany, Spain, Taiwan and Vietnam participating for the first time. The Students category for this year boasted 237 entries and they hailed from local secondary schools, design institutes, polytechnics as well as institutes of higher learning like the National University of Singapore and Singapore Institute of Management.

Mr Andrew Pang, Chairman of FDA 2006 Organising Committee, said: “The impressive showcase of creative works at this annual competition is clear testimony of the vast potential in the region’s furniture design industry and affirms the Award’s growing status as an effective career launch pad for talented designers. We are also heartened by the international furniture fraternity’s support and recognition of the Awards as a coveted mark of design excellence. With the FDA, we hope to provide budding designers with a platform to showcase their creativity and for the furniture industry, the opportunity to spot the next ‘Konstantin Grcic’ right here in Singapore.”

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The entries were judged on creativity, functionality and marketability by a panel of distinguished local and foreign judges comprising prominent industry personalities and reputable commercial designers. Entries to the Students and Young Designers categories were also judged on the participants' interpretation of the theme.

Commenting on the calibre of entries received this year, Mr Carsten Ovesen, Chief Judge of the FDA 2006, said: "This year's competition threw up some surprisingly inventive creations which exhibited both artistic value and commercial potential. The participants exuded remarkable creative talent and coupled with some industry grooming to 'smooth out the rough edges', I am confident that these individuals will do extremely well in the design profession in the near future."

The FDA 2006 is held in conjunction with the IFFS/AFS 2006, Asia's premiere design-led furniture trade exhibition. The winning designs will be showcased, for the first time, in Hall 1 of the Singapore Expo at the IFFS/AFS 2006 to raise visibility and to encourage networking between the designers and trade players, from 1 to 5 March 2006. As a part of the SFIC's design outreach efforts, the designer pieces of the FDA 2006 finalists will also be exhibited at the Esplanade from 15 April to 1 May 2006.

The FDA 2006 is supported by DesignSingapore Council, Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board Singapore (SPRING Singapore); International Enterprise Singapore (IE Singapore), the Designers Association of Singapore, Interior Design Confederation Singapore and Singapore Institute of Architects.

For more information on FDA 2006, please refer to the attached fact sheet or visit www.singaporefurniture.com. More information on SFIC's new design talent incubation incentive programme can also be found in the enclosed fact sheet.

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About Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)

Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) was established in 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture industry. It currently represents 95% of furniture manufacturers in Singapore, 65% of whom have subsidiary manufacturing plants in regional countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Vietnam and Myanmar. The Council's primary roles include promoting the interests of its members and the Singapore furniture industry, facilitating members' exposure to the world market, creating more entrepreneurs through human resource development and developing local talents. It also aims to introduce more cutting-edge and award-winning designs by organising competitions such as the annual Furniture Design Award and continue to forge strategic partnerships with the government and trade-related agencies, as well as harness knowledge for growth through the use of information technology.
