

## **Yokan Chair beats 10 other finalists to win the 23th edition of Furniture Design Award organised by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)**

SINGAPORE – MARCH 10, 2017 – It was a S\$20,000 win for Hiroki Sakamoto’s Yokan Chair which was named the first-place winner of the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Furniture Design Award (FDA).

Inspired by confectionaries made from sweet bean paste, the Yokan Chair won the award despite stiff competition from over 250 entries received by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC), organiser of the Award.

The 11 finalists were chosen from the Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Switzerland, Italy and Netherlands and featured design prototypes of chairs, stools, benches, shelves and coffee tables.

All the prototypes by the 11 finalists will be on display during the International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS) from 9-12 March at the Singapore EXPO.

Mr Sakamoto received the cash prize as well as a certificate and trophy at the prize presentation and opening ceremony of the IFFS/AFS.

Mr Sakamoto said: “This FDA 2017 win is testimony of my deep dedication for innovation and design. For me, it is important to do things that I am passionate about in life. In the case of the Yokan Chair, it combines my love for furniture design with my love for sweet bean paste. I believe that this passion was noticed by the judges through my Yokan Chair design – which is based off traditional Japanese confectionary, Yōkan.”

SFIC President Mark Yong said: “The FDA is a well-established design competition that is recognised within the furniture industry. Having been around for more than two decades, we believe that the award will continue to motivate young and aspiring designers to express their creativity in furniture design and be given the opportunity to gain recognition and kick-start their career.”

Mr Yong added: “SFIC hopes that the FDA will continue to spur aspiring local furniture designers to participate and continue to hone their craft. We believe that furniture design is a respectable and important profession that can help young designers provide value-added inputs to both traditional furniture companies and manufacturers. In a challenging economic climate, we see design as one of the industries that will pave the way to the future.”

Other honourable mentions include Kiri by Ath Supornchai, a modular sofa-system and N-S Stool by Shen Yu-Hao, a magnetically-sculpted, laminated wood stool.

The chief judge, Patrick Chia noted: “We were all very impressed by the entries which were judged based on the degree of innovation, marketability, functionality, and environmental awareness. It was a difficult choice, but we went with the Yokan Chair for its combination of aesthetics, function and tradition.”

First launched in 1993, the FDA is aimed at recognition of outstanding industry individuals and/or enterprises who have made significant contributions to the furniture industry. It is a project of SingaPlural which is the anchor event of the Singapore Design Week.

The entries were judged on four criteria namely: Degree of Innovation / Marketability / Functionality / Environmental; by a panel of judges featuring prominent industry personalities and international designers from diverse backgrounds:

- Patrick Chia, Chief Judge (Singapore): Founder and director of Squeeze Design & the Design Incubation Centre at the National University of Singapore (NUS)
- Prof Byungkil Kang (South Korea): General director at the Design Research Institute and Seoul Design Foundation
- Colin Seah (Singapore) Founder and Director of the Ministry of Design (MOD)
- Jurgen Bey (Netherlands) Co-founder, Studio Makkink & Bey
- Shin Azumi (Japan) Founder of A Studio and Professor at the Faculty of Engineering Design, Hosei University
- Tony K.M. Chang (Taiwan) Chief Advisor, Taiwan Design Centre

### **About FDA**

The Furniture Design Award (FDA) is an annual furniture design competition organised by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC). It was first launched in 1993 as the Furniture Design Competition and was renamed FDA in 2003. The Award aims to uncover budding design talents and be a reputable showcase for the unique creations of the world's best creative minds. Increasingly, the Award has become a platform for exchange and networking amongst furniture manufacturers and designers internationally.

Organised by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) and supported by DesignSingapore Council (DSg), International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, SPRING Singapore, DesignS, American Hardwood Export Council and IFFS Pte Ltd, FDA 2017 is part of SingaPlural 2017 – the anchor event of Singapore Design Week.

A project of SingaPlural, the anchor event of the Singapore Design Week — an annual design festival in March which showcases the best design elements from the multi-faceted creative spectrum of advertising, architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture, as well as interior, furniture, graphic and fashion design — the FDA is held in conjunction with the International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS), one of Asia's premiere furniture trade shows.

For more information on the FDA and its finalist, please refer to the factsheet overleaf or visit <http://furnituredesignaward.sg/>

### **About Singapore Design Week**

The Singapore Design Week (SDW) brings together a collection of local and international design activities in Singapore. Held annually, the SDW is organised by the DesignSingapore Council.

Open to the design community, businesses, design students and the general public, the SDW aims to raise awareness of good design, deepen the appreciation and understanding of design innovation and encourage the use of design for innovation and productivity.

Through this platform, the DesignSingapore Council also hopes to enhance the synergy among its design partners, and in turn boost Singapore's profile and attractiveness as a global city for design.

SDW features local and international design trade shows, conferences, showcases, exhibitions and workshops that span various design disciplines.

Visit <https://new.designsingapore.org/sdw> for more information

### **About Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)**

Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) was established in 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture and furnishings industry. Its membership comprises furniture manufacturers, interior fit-out specialists, retailers, designers, as well as furnishings and materials suppliers. Currently, the council represents 95% of established furniture manufacturers in Singapore, of whom 65% have subsidiary manufacturing plants in various countries across the region, including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

SFIC's primary role is to promote the interests of its members and of the Singapore furniture and furnishings industry. For 36 years, SFIC has helped its members to adapt to changes in the business environment by introducing trade, talent, design development and business innovation activities, as well as upgrading business capabilities. Revolving around SFIC's 3i strategic framework – Improve, Innovate, and Integrate, all of the Council's programmes aim to grow the local furniture and furnishings industry and ultimately, to strengthen the 'Singapore brand' globally.

Visit [www.singaporefurniture.com](http://www.singaporefurniture.com) for more information

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