

Spotlight on workspace needs of millennials

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Leong speaking to participants about the competition guidelines and design tips.

THE Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) furniture design competition is back with a brand new challenge for 2019.

MIFF general manager Karen Goi said Malaysia's export-driven furniture industry needed design talent and innovative products that would make the winning difference amid rising global competition and encouraged participants to learn as much as they could from the seminar.

"When it comes to design, often people think of the glamour and success. But truth is you need a lot of hard work, ideas and discipline to see through a project from start to finish. And the process is not always smooth sailing," she added.

To kick start the competition, United Business Media (M) Sdn Bhd, the organiser of MIFF, hosted a seminar on the competition at Sunway Putra Hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

The theme of the MIFF 2019 furniture design competition is The Millennials Workspace Furniture, which will require participants to design workspace furniture for commercial and home office. A key element is to design furniture that will create a nurturing, dynamic and fun working environment for millennials.

The participants comprising students and lecturers from 14 design universities along with young working professionals attended the seminar to learn from industry experts on furniture design and production.



The audience at the seminar was made up of students, lecturers and young professionals.

The speakers at the seminar were Oasis Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd managing director Ralph Ong, his operations director Nathan Lam, Element Furniture (Hong Kong) design director Walter Tan, Terra Garden Design Sdn Bhd founder Desmond Ho and Malaysian design celebrity Dr Eric Leong, who shared their experiences and observations on the latest design trends in the market.

Ong and Lam shared there is now a growing trend of activity-based working (ABW) and encouraged participants to keep this in mind.

“Your designs should be able to provide users of the furniture the chance to work anytime, anywhere and on the move.

“The most important is user experience. Focus on the user.

“Users are looking for a purposeful workplace which is able to deliver effectiveness, productivity, efficiency, mobility, and creativity,” Ong said.

Ho, who grew up in a village in Melaka, has a deep appreciation of nature and his work revolves around bringing nature indoors.

He advocated incorporating aspects of nature into furniture.

“In order to be a green designer, you need to learn two things – you have to be real and sincere. No plastic plants, that defeats the purpose of going green,” he said.

Tan encouraged young designers to look past the typical grey tones and have more fun with their designs.

“This year, we are introducing a green factor into the competition.

“So participants have to consider the key elements – collaboration, community, flexibility as well as the green factor in their designs,” said Leong who is also the chief judge for the competition.

The furniture design competition is held in conjunction with MIFF to nurture design talent to sustain the future of the industry.

Targeted at talents aged 40 and below, the competition offers total winnings of RM10,000 and significant opportunities for 20 finalists to showcase their design artworks on a global platform.

MIFF 2019 will be held from March 8 to 11 next year.

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