

Honouring the best in Singapore design

Among the recipients include the architects behind Pinnacle@Duxton and iconic project Jewel Changi Airport.
BY TAY SUAN CHIANG

HOMEGROWN architecture firm ARC Studio Architecture + Urbanism has made a name for itself designing upmarket condominiums, community spaces and also for designing Singapore's first 50-storey public housing development, Pinnacle@Duxton. But its directors Khoo Peng Beng and Belinda Huang say they do not see their projects as mere buildings but as spaces that hold lives.

Ms Huang recalled how residents at Pinnacle@Duxton would excitedly tell her how much they enjoyed living there. "That is what good design can bring – a sense of pride and belonging," she noted.

The husband-and-wife team received the Designer of the Year award at the President's Design Award (P*DA) 2020.

Jointly organised by the DesignSingapore Council and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the biennial P*DA honours designers and design projects that have raised the quality of life, contributed to economic, community and cultural development, and elevated Singapore on the world stage. The awards were presented by President Halimah Yacob on June 30 at the Istana.

Besides Pinnacle@Duxton, ARC Studio's design of The Tembusu condominium and 1000 Singapores – A Model of The Compact City, an exhibition that represented Singapore at the Venice Architecture Biennale, received Design of the Year in previous years.

Besides Singapore, the couple have also been involved in community and social projects in countries such as India, Rwanda and



Architects Belinda Huang and Khoo Peng Beng, founders of ARC Studio Architecture + Urbanism were lauded for developing socially meaningful, community-focused projects. PHOTO: ARC STUDIO

Kenya. Mr Khoo said that receiving the nation's highest design accolade will give them more gravitas in the work that they want to do. "As a design nation, we are making inroads," said Mr Khoo, who also mentors aspiring young architects.

The Designer of the Year award was also presented to Kelley Cheng, creative director of design firm, The Press Room.

Ms Cheng started the now-defunct *iSh*, a magazine that introduced

design to the masses and has also produced more than 1,000 design, art and architecture books. She described her work which span over two decades as "culture capital", adding: "I realised that a lot of my work has been about documenting, be it through the books or through *iSh*."

As an award recipient, Ms Cheng said that she sees herself in a better position to champion designers' rights, such as the refusal to give clients design ideas for free. She added



Kelley Cheng is the creative director of The Press Room. Over the past two decades, she has created a body of work spanning visual communications, exhibition design and publishing. PHOTO: THE PRESS ROOM

that she hoped to advocate change and "for designers to be treated as professionals."

One of this year's Design of the Year recipients is the AirMesh Pavilion, designed by the Architectural Intelligence Research Lab at Singapore University of Technology and Design. The pavilion created for the Gardens by the Bay's Mid Autumn Festival 2019 is one of the world's first fully functional 3D printed space frame

structures, and is held up as an outstanding example of how design can bring together the built and natural environments in a sustainable way.

Another recipient is EYEYAH!, an educational platform that uses bright and colourful graphics to bring across messages such as climate change, fake news and food security in ways that children can understand.

The other seven recipients are Jewel Changi Airport, Sparkletots



The AirMesh Pavilion was created for the Gardens by the Bay's Mid Autumn Festival 2019, and shows how design can bring the built and natural environments together for a more sustainable future. PHOTO: AIRLAB @ SUTD, ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY



EYEYAH! is an educational platform uses visual communications to break down social issues for young audiences. PHOTO: EYEYAH! LTD

Large Preschool at Punggol, Kampung Admiralty, Goodlife! Makan, The [Not-So] Convenience Store, Etania Green School in Sabah and Cloister House in Johor Bahru.

The award-receiving works will be featured in a travelling exhibition across Singapore, starting at The URA Centre before moving to venues such as National Design Centre, library@orchard, Temasek Shophouse and Singapore University of Technology and Design.

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