

Duo have President's stamp of approval for good design

Main winners of first President's Design Award which aims to spur local talent

BY TAY SUAN CHIANG

ARCHITECT Chan Soo Khian and creative director Theseus Chan now have the President's stamp of approval as good designers.

They were named Designers of the Year at the inaugural President's Design Award 2006, in a ceremony last night at the Asian Civilisations Museum attended by President S R Nathan.

The award is the nation's highest honour for designers, to be given annually to the finest Singaporean talent, products and projects.

Mr Chan Soo Khian, 44, who runs SCDA Architects, won for his distinctive tropical yet modern homes. Examples include Lincoln Modern, a condo in Newton with its mix of modern lines with timber strips.

This is his third award this year. He won the SIA-Getz Architecture Prize for Emergent Architecture in Asia last month, and was also lauded at the Singapore Institute of Architects' Eighth Architectural Design Awards in July.

The architect, who has been in the business for 11 years, joked: "Yet another, so tired already."

But on a serious note, he added that the award brings design awareness to a national level.

"It shows such design awards are on par with entrepreneur awards," he said.



PHOTO: CAROLINE CHIA

DESIGN DELIGHT: Mr Chan Soo Khian (left) and Mr Theseus Chan are also eligible for a \$50,000 award grant.

Mrs Cheong-Chua Koon Hean, chief executive of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and a jury member, said: "Soo Khian's work challenges us to be modern, yet rooted in the South-east Asian context."

To mark the inaugural award, the URA will commission him to design a public space in Dhoby Ghaut. Details will be announced in March next year.

Mr Theseus Chan, 45, founder of Work Advertising, won for what jury member Milton Tan said was experimental and unconventional work. Mr Tan is director of the DesignSingapore Council.

Besides creating advertisements for Tangs and multi-label fashion brand Club21, he designed the edgy graffiti that adorned the publicity materials for the recent Singapore Biennale 2006 art show.

He also brought in fashion brand Comme des Garçons, selling its designs not in swanky Orchard Road but in a heartland shop in Bukit Merah.

With the win, the two are now eligible for an award grant of \$50,000, which they can use for community or environmental projects.

There is also a second category of awards – Designs of the Year – for specific projects. Among the seven winners were the Church of St Mary of the Angels in Bukit Batok East, designed by Wong Mun Summ and Richard Hassell of Woha Architects. It won for architecture and urban design.

New Majestic Hotel won an interior design award for its designer, Mr Colin Seah of Ministry of Design.

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