

MIFF: All Points East

Enthusiastically returning to form, MIFF opened its arms and gladly welcomed the design world back to Southeast Asia.



By Peter Sobchak On Oct 31, 2022

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Relaxing global COVID-19 restrictions have led to waves of relief and enthusiasm in the international tradeshow circuit, sentiments that were palpable in equal measures along the aisles of the **Malaysian International Furniture Fair** (MIFF) in Kuala Lumpur, which re-introduced in-person tradeshow business dealings in July after a two-year pandemic hiatus.

The largest export-oriented furniture tradeshow in Southeast Asia, MIFF is highly regarded for showcasing the widest collection of made-in-Malaysia home and office furniture designs. MIFF 2022 hosted 192 exhibitors from 11 countries and regions. Post-show reports announced the visitor tally at 10,017 from 94 countries and regions. Interestingly, first-timers made up 40 per cent of the visitor traffic. Exploring the breadth of exhibitors, all major interior furnishing trends typically seen at American or European tradeshow were represented here as well, but more intriguing were an energetic crop of bespoke Malaysian furniture designers, commanding attention like diamonds in the rough.

Flatpak

This is a young company with an interesting focus: self-assembled furniture that is locally designed and digitally fabricated inspired by the Malay tradition of **Tanggam**, a timber joinery technique typically seen in the construction of traditional Malaysian buildings. All their products – from the **Bangku** seating systems to **Peggy** pegboard shelving units – are made from 18mm thick plywood with a smooth birch surface, tropical hardwood core and finished with clear matte lacquer designed for easy assembly with no use of nails, screw nor glue.



Dad's Woods

As the company's name makes clear, wood figures prominently in its furnishing lines, specifically hardwood sourced locally from Peninsular Malaysia. Two recent collections that embody a love of the unique texture of Malaysian timber include **Premam**, a modern take on South Indian culture with a specific nod to houseboat living. The nine unique pieces are constructed from kayu cengal, a species endemic to Peninsular Malaysia and prized for its natural durability and longevity. The **Animal** collection is crafted using Malaysia teak known for its opulent golden hue and includes 15 pieces that reference indigenous animals from folklore such as Sang Kancil (mousedeer), Sang Buaya (crocodile) and Si Monyet (monkey).

Stephanie Ng Design

This multi-award-winning industrial design studio focuses its considerable creative skills on artisanal lighting solutions for residential and commercial applications. A modern material palette of colour, form and texture was dominant in two eye-catching collections shown at

MIFF. **Caballo Lito**, a contemporary lighting décor item, has but one purpose: to light up both the room and everyone's mood in it. Not as overtly humorous but still whimsical is the ice cream cone inspired pendant lighting **Scoop**, a simplistic but elegant form crafted from American Oak with clean lines around its globe and a seamless transition into a sleek aluminium body. Awarded a Malaysia Good Design Mark in 2015, this collection has been tweaked ever since and now includes a Desk and Wall Lamp version.



Merryfair Chair System

Malaysian furniture isn't all hardwood and heritage assembly techniques. Merryfair began manufacturing component parts in 1974 but eventually became a major player in Malaysian office furniture, successfully exporting to the international market. **Juvel** (Swedish for jewel) combines the faces of a jewel with the paper-folding art of origami. Having started with paper models and prototypes, the team turned this into a one-piece stackable chair using injection moulding to cover many applications. **Sofia** is a modular sofa system designed for offices, bars, hotels and waiting areas. The square module and quick linking system encourages users to experiment with layout orientations and multi-colour swatches.



Merry fair Chair System

Chair system for the fair, with the possibility of being used in different configurations. The design is simple and functional, with a focus on the use of materials and the possibility of being used in different configurations. The design is simple and functional, with a focus on the use of materials and the possibility of being used in different configurations.



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