

# PRESTIGE

MALAYSIA  
AUGUST 2014 | RM12

THE BEST  
AND BRIGHTEST FROM  
**BASEL  
2014**

LEADING MAN  
**CHRIS  
PRATT**

FLYING COLOURS  
**NIGEL LAMB**

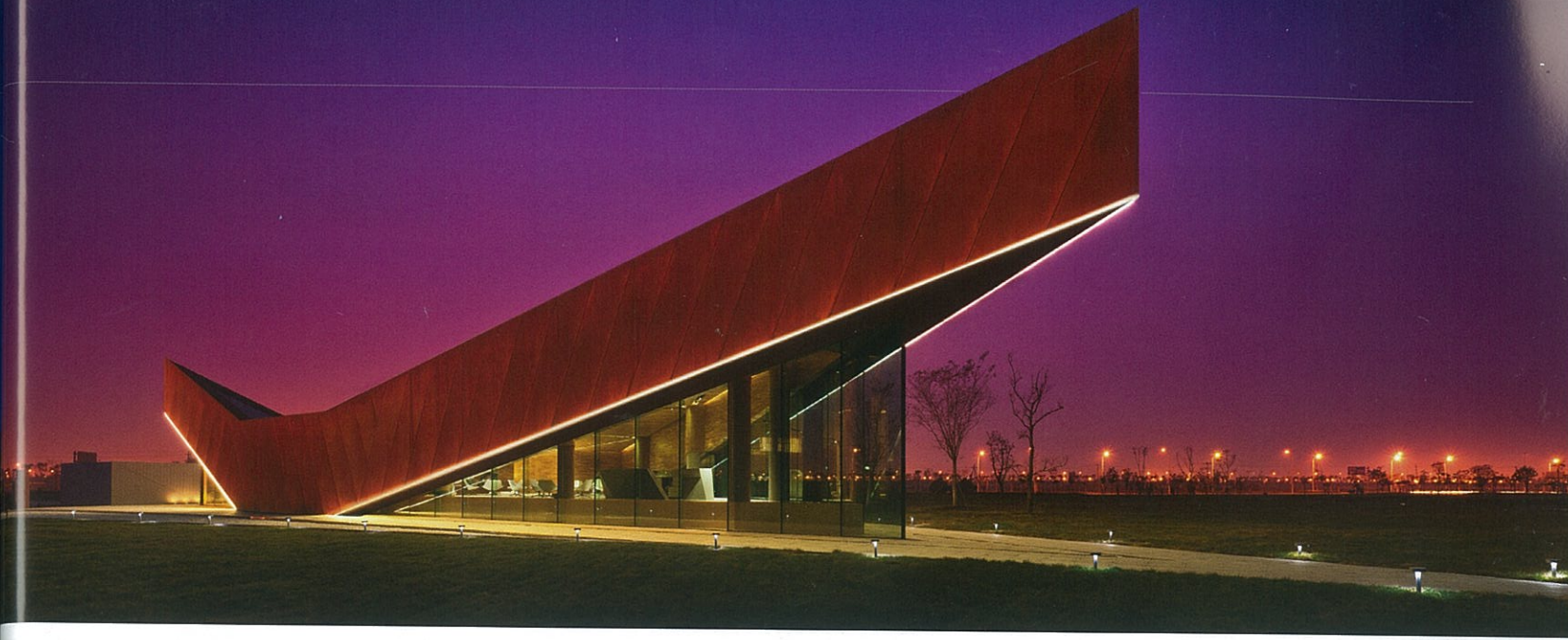
# PRIDE OF THE NATION

THE DYNAMIC MEN AND WOMEN OF EAST MALAYSIA



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with the pressures of urban living.”

A multiple-award winning architect trained in the United States, Seah's edgy and envelope-pushing approach is epitomised in the firm's vast portfolio that included exemplary case studies of rejuvenation from an architectural perspective. For instance, The Mark business park for Maxon Group in Beijing features boomerang-shaped office buildings that look like a fingerprint when viewed from above. He explains, "Conventional offices are so generic looking that you can't tell apart one building from another. We wanted to use a single versatile floor plan to configure

enigmatic and differential spaces, which is essentially rejuvenating the conventional way of thinking."

Likewise, the Triple V Gallery in Tianjin features a single-storey building with elevated corners to create a remarkable aesthetic when viewed from ground level. The facade is comprised of weave-like overlapping panels in corten steel to give the impression of rusted metal. Seah notes, "The rationale of the design is to respond to the shape of the site and transform it into an eye-catching building. We followed a hyper-rationalisation method to achieve a hyper-artistic result." This

and design as a tool." The founder and director of design of Singapore-based Ministry of Design illustrated this ethos during his one-hour session at DATUM:KL, where the first-time speaker shared his thoughts on what rejuvenation means to the architecture industry.

"We can either rejuvenate an existing building or we can rejuvenate our way of thinking and how we approach things. I find the latter to be more powerful," he opines. "People and cultures are evolving every day and architecture plays a role on many levels in rejuvenating the way we deal



OPPOSITE PAGE: MACALISTER MANSION, PENANG; THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COLIN SEAH; TRIPLE V GALLERY, TIANJIN; VANKE YANTAI DEVELOPMENT, CHINA





# Fast Forward

AUDREY WONG speaks to three architects who weigh in on the future of architecture

THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL Architecture, Interior Design & Building Exhibition (ARCHIDEX), organised by the Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM) and C.I.S. Network, is a fundamental platform for one of the largest confluences of industry players in the region. Its 15th edition this year was no different.

From June 25 - 28, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre was home to more than 550 exhibitors from Malaysia, Austria, China, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Spain to showcase their latest products and innovations. Held concurrently was ECO-B 2014 (3rd Malaysia Eco Building & Design Exhibition

2014), a satellite exhibition that showcased green architecture and sustainable designs.

At the heart of the trade exhibitions was the 16th Asian Congress of Architects Conference (ACA) organised by the Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA). The biennial conference brought together its regional members for an intellectual exchange of current architectural ideas centred on the theme of rejuvenation. "We need to explore new approaches to rejuvenate the profession in order to stay relevant and to equip ourselves to face challenging tasks ahead," says architect Tan Pei Ing, the current president of ARCASIA.

A series of related events included the Green Building Forum, the Kuala Lumpur Design Forum and DATUM:KL International Architectural Design Conference with notable speakers from all over the world who offered their individual insight, experiences, and ideas. Tan says, "The assembly of emerging architects from different parts of the world offers a great platform to share different design approaches and ideologies that are truly stimulating and inspirational."

#### DEFYING CONVENTIONS

"I'm an 'experience' designer," says Colin Seah. "I create experiences using landscape, architecture





sales gallery by property developer Vanke will be converted into a tourism and cultural centre in the near future.

Seah identifies bespoke spaces as the next big thing, especially in the hospitality and residential sectors. "People look for authenticity and personalised experiences. We will see a variety of products that are less generic with more diversity. Clients come to us when they want to

differentiate themselves and push boundaries."

A case in point is the Macalister Mansion, a 100-year-old colonial mansion transformed into a boutique hotel in George Town, Penang. "The idea stems from a fantasy, pseudo-historical perspective where we imbue it with a storyline and a narrative." Restored to its former grandeur, the property's entrance is flanked by a giant geometrical bust of Norman Macalister, a former

governor of Penang. Apart from helming the architecture and interior design of the mansion, the firm also curated the artworks by artists from Malaysia and Singapore.

Seah is currently helming two new projects in Penang to repurpose heritage buildings into commercial spaces. He says that rejuvenation needs to be approached in a sensitive manner by first understanding the point of view of a particular country, especially in emerging nations within South-East Asia. "Rejuvenation cannot be undertaken too quickly or comprehensively, otherwise we run the risk of eradicating or erasing any traces of the past. We are only the stewards of the buildings and landscapes. We need to leave something for the next generation to build on."

**GREEN HEART**

Mike Boon has carved a niche for himself in architecture with his award-winning residential, institutional and conservation projects, particularly in Sarawak. The Deputy Chairman of PAM Sarawak Chapter as well as the founder of Sarawak Heritage Society is known for devoting his time to promote sustainable design and heritage conservation. With 25 years of experience under his belt, the director of Arkitek JFN Sdn Bhd has much to share at the Green Building Forum this year.

He considers green building in Malaysian climate a relatively easy task as architects do not have to worry about extreme temperatures. "Keep the sun out, let the light in and channel

