

# Singapore DESIGN WEEK

Back for its fourth iteration, Singapore Design Week showcased local and international talents in events engaging C-suite types, creatives and civilians alike.

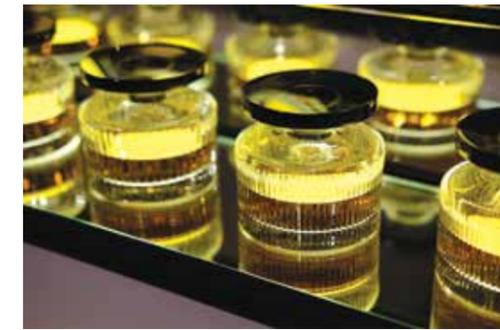
STORY AND PHOTOS BY Christian Razukas

International Furniture Fair Singapore chairman Eddie Koh is a 34-year veteran of the business. "I started when Singapore was a Third-World manufacturer, with no platform to sell to the world: Cheap products, poor quality," Koh said at Singapore Design Week. "The show has evolved from price sensitivity to design sensitivity." What Koh says about furniture goes for the Lion City: UNESCO recognized Singapore as a Creative City of Design in 2015. Meanwhile, the DesignSingapore Council, keen to emphasize design in the economy, as well as in people's everyday, put together more than 100 events and programs for the week, which ran from 3 to 12 March. Here's what I did.



## Meet a Local Designer

Carrie K. Atelier is tucked away in the National Design Centre near the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. Its eponymous designer embodies Singapore's service-to-creative economy trajectory: Once a high-powered ad exec, Carrie opted out to study silver smithing in Florence. Back home, she opened a studio that's caught global attention: Disney commissioned her to make pieces for its recent "Beauty and the Beast" film. Also eye catching in her workshop is the Pollock-inspired "A Beautiful Mess" series of leather chokers (above).



## MultipliCity + Wallpaper

Over at Gillman Barracks, a military base repurposed as a contemporary arts cluster, was the launch of Singapore + Wallpaper\* Handmade Classics: MultipliCITY. The global style-bible magazine gave 16 designers a chance to exit their comfort zones and rethink products ranging from rice cookers to toothbrushes. The theme was contemplation and reflection, to balance the current tempest in global politics. Standouts included Beatrix Ong, formerly of Jimmy Choo, and her modular "Shoe Tree", industrial designer Christian Haas' exquisite Armagnac minibar, with five smoke-grey crystal decanters from Theresienthal, and the Tsatsas' contemporary take on the suitcase.



## Indonesia's Rising Star

For its Design STARS Showcase, the IFFS put the spotlight on 10 international talents, including Yogyakarta-based Teddy Rahadianto. After earning an interior design degree, Teddy focused on furniture, launching his Mandaka brand, which means "adorn" in Sanskrit. On show in Singapore were Teddy's teak-wood Lamela (thin layer)

collection. Functionality has been integrated in the pieces, which are produced in a small Central Javan factory: Brass backrests on chairs and brass arms on tables can be used as hooks.



## Rendezvous with Giulio Cappellini

Also at IFFS was renowned designer Giulio Cappellini, who art directed "The Italian Hospitality", which presented a lounge for the conference re-envisioned as a luxury hotel, complete with a bedroom, bathroom and library. "This is a mix of innovation and heritage," Cappellini said of the products from the 15 brands he curated, such as the glasswork made by centuries-old techniques on the Venetian island of Murano, the sober elegance of lighting from Milan-based Boffetto and Moasico Digitale's three-dimensional printed tiles. "Very good design creates long sellers," Cappellini said, unafraid to mix cutting edge contemporary with heritage design.



## Visit Singaplural

The F1 Pit Building, famous for auto races, was the venue for Singapore Design Week's anchor event: Singaplural 2017, which had the theme "Stories". The "Projects" section matched brands like UNIQLO with local design consultancy ROOTS to craft a humidifier, while furniture fitter Ewins was matched with Italian architect Egidio Panzera to make an overlapping of hundreds of acrylic sheets (right) with holes that allowed for perspective shifts as people peeped through. Singaplural's pop-ups reflected the storytelling theme, such as Supermama's Star Wars x Singapore porcelains, or Scene Shang x Forest&Whale's Chinese chess set, with brass pieces crafted by a local auto fittings manufacturer.

## Encountering the Merlion

Not the Merlion, I said, when taken to Marina Bay on a press junket. What I saw there, however, was unexpected. Touted as Asia's leading sustainable light festival, iLight Marina Bay, running parallel but independently of design week, featured 20 installations, including the bamboo-based "i Light You So Much" by Yogyakarta-based architect Eko Agus Prawoto. Meanwhile, the Lion City's famed pawless icon (*below*) was dazzlingly transmogrified into "The Body of the Sea" by the French artist Danny Rose. Panasonic projectors covered the Merlion in changing undersea imagery and sounds. In the crowd, I watched the endless ebb and flow of colour and smiled.



*The writer attended as a guest of the Singapore Tourism Board*

## Glimpse of the Future

IFFS offered a peak at the future, as Singaporean start-up Dimension 5 Technologies worked with five furniture brands for a virtual reality experience that left me amazed. Setting up your home for the VR takes 30 minutes or so, done from either blueprints or with the aid of an operator, who can even include the pictures on your walls. I tried the offerings from local brand Commune—80 percent of its collection has been uploaded—donned HTC VR goggles and then virtually walked through my "home", courtesy of a click pointer, looking at the sofa I chose from the window's POV, or checking it out through the kitchen opening. Commune even offered me a 360-degree video of the walkthrough. The tech is available at Commune's Singapore stores.

