

Female designers make clean sweep

Ladies bag top three prizes at Malaysian International Furniture Fair competition

By **JADE CHAN**
metro@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Young female designers made a clean sweep of the top three prizes at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) 2018 Furniture Design Competition.

Ong Sze Xian, 22, grabbed the first prize of RM6,000 for *Float*, a free-standing shelf inspired by monkey bars in playgrounds.

"My product is a shelving unit that is

adjustable and easy to assemble. The idea refers to the motion of floating, while the product has an elegant, clean and sleek design," the furniture and product design student at First City University College said.

Ong said the prize money would be handy for her to build a prototype sofa set for her final-year project.

The competition's chief judge, Philip Yap, said: "*Float* takes design a step ahead with aesthetics, functionality and modularity.



Winning design: Ong showing a mock-up of her free-standing shelf, which won her the first prize in the MIFF 2018 Furniture Design Competition.

"This approach is complete with creative thinking, as well as putting a user's experience as priority."

Meanwhile, Sharon Wong Sik Dang, 27, won the second prize of RM3,000 for *Lollipops World*, which comprised a set of two coffee tables and a coat rack with a whimsical lollipop design.

The architecture master's student said her product was designed to appeal to young women.

"They are not only functional, but also create a healing environment with a colour palette that represents energy, happiness and calmness," she said.

Third place winner Tan Sin Yin, 29, said her product *Life* featured movable pieces that could be rearranged or serve as standalone pieces, depending on the user's mood and preference.

Inspired by the Tetris puzzle, her product can be used as a display or storage unit.

The furniture product designer took home RM1,000.

The MIFF 2018, which is dubbed the largest furniture trade fair in South-East Asia, also gave out Best Presentation Award and Furniture Excellence Award to top exhibitors.

Present at the prize-giving ceremony were Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Zurinah Pawanteh, MIFF founder and chairman Datuk Dr Tan Chin Huat, and UBM Asia group managing director of Asean Business M. Gandhi.

Themed "Design Connects People", the 24th edition of MIFF that ends today is being held simultaneously at Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre and Putra World Trade Centre.

The show, covering a floor space of 100,000 sq m, has a total of 622 exhibitors and pre-registered buyers from 135 countries from various regions.