

Eco-friendly entry wins trip to Europe

> An initiative to unearth Malaysian interior design talent

THE Dulux Emerging Talent Awards (DETA) 2012 saw UCSI University's final year interior architecture student, Simon Chong, winning the grand prize of an overseas study trip to London and Amsterdam. Chong tasted victory alongside two other participants from different institutions, and the three departed for the fully paid, week-long study tour recently.

Organised by AkzoNobel Decorative Paints Malaysia, a multi-national Fortune 500 company headquartered in Amsterdam, the event was an initiative to unearth Malaysian interior design talent—and bring them to the international level.

Outshining over 400 other students from a total of 17 colleges and universities, Chong managed to win the judge's approval with his eco-friendly design of a dining area.

"My idea stemmed from the notion that eco-friendly initiatives should be encouraged at every level, thus I designed a 'green' cafeteria for factory workers," Chong says.

The students were each given an empty cardboard box, some paint and two hours to come up with their creations on three topics, namely "appreciating the past" (designing a commercial display space), "embracing the present" (for a dining space) and "answering the future (dedicated to an office space).

Chong's idea of a cafeteria for

factory workers resembled a garden with trees on its roof, with its roots running down to the dining area below. Allowing natural sunlight to seep through its ceiling, this also provided a natural shade and a unique display of lights within the dining area.

"This design also looks at how food waste can be recycled into fertiliser to further encourage the growth of trees and vegetation," Chong says.

DETA, an annual design competition now into its third year in Malaysia, not only provides an opportunity for overseas learning and international exposure but also provides a platform to nurture budding talents. It aims to

support them as they grow into innovative, outstanding professionals in the interior design field, which coincides with UCSI University's vision as a praxis university in producing global talents according to industry standards.

"We are definitely proud of the students because it's an

affirmation that the knowledge delivered to them has been applied appropriately, enhancing their abilities to think out of the box," says Rosidah Abdul Ghani, a lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Built Environment that houses the School of Architecture and Built Environment.



Chong with his design that reflects an eco-friendly initiative.