

SNAPSHOT

FLIP OUT

(PRONOUNCED FLEEP OWHT) A DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE APPLIED TO THE ENTRIES IN THE 5TH FLIP CHALLENGE WHERE PARTICIPANTS ACTUALLY HAD TO DECONSTRUCT AN ENTIRE CHAIR, I.E. THEY FLIPPED OUT THE ERPO, DUDE!

TEXT HUANG NICHIA/TULPHURUS COURTESY OF SFC





THE IFFS 2009 was held on 9 – 12 March and this year was a massive affair, taking up virtually every single hall in the Singapore Expo. There were several very interesting exhibitors and more than a few new-to-Singapore brands that we hadn't yet seen but it was a student-centred event that really caught our eye... again. Readers with elephantine memories will recall perhaps that we featured the 4th *FLIP Challenge* in January last year – and yes, that's what has caught our eye again.

To recap, the FLIP Challenge is a design initiative organised by SFIC to encourage local design and art students to keep pushing the boundaries with furniture design while retaining the basic premise of functionality. There were 69 entries for this, the 5th *FLIP Challenge*, a figure which is close to a 20 per cent increase in the number of participants according to Simon Ong, Chairman of the Design Development Committee of the SFIC.

The challenge this year was to take the *Ergo* dining chair provided by Star Furniture Industries and 'FLIP' it – that is, to come up with a way to turn it into art without sacrificing its basic function. They would need to work within the constraints of the chair by using only the chair as their basic material; it's interesting to note that each FLIP challenge has always had a version of this particular constraint as they feel this offers the participants a taste of the real working world where professional designers have to work within the boundaries set by the materials and the market. Open only to students from local schools, they can choose to participate as individuals or in teams of two.

The six judges on the panel this year were Naoto Fukasawa, an internationally respected Japanese designer; Carsten Ovesen of Carsten Ovesen Design and Chief Judge; (Mr) Khoo Peng Beng, a council member of the Singapore Institute of Architects; Colin Seah, a member of the Interior Design Confederation; and Benny Tan, President of the Designers Association Singapore.

The judging criteria were kept simple: innovation – how the materials were used to construct a lifestyle item; originality of the work; and functionality, including the environmentally friendly aspects, ergonomics and structural comfort of the piece.

A total of six winners were announced – gold, silver, bronze and three merits. The judges commented on the quality and bravery of the designs, and reminded everyone that as the competition matured, the judges' expectations would evolve – the works would need to continuously be better than the previous cycle.

And on that note, we speak to the winners of the 5th *FLIP Challenge*.