

MESSAGE | SFIC/ SINGAPLURAL



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For the local furniture industry, the 2018 figures from Singapore's Department of Statistics presented a 3.3% growth despite a dip in overall domestic retail sales, bearing testament to our resilience. The global furniture industry, meanwhile, is expected to thrive with an expected average growth of 5% per year, to \$766 billion in 2021, with the biggest contribution of growth from Asia.

As a small city state, trade tensions and key geopolitical challenges in Asia will impact us but at the same time, this also spells opportunities in the longer term. With a population of more than 600 million and a nominal GDP of \$2.31 trillion, ASEAN is forecast to become the 4th largest economy by 2030. We can and must leverage our geographical advantage with ASEAN as our hinterland.

SFIC launched our three-year roadmap last year with a vision to become the "Asian Hub influencing Tomorrow's Urban Living". This entails an industry-wide mindset change and hinges upon three key pillars — "Growth Asia", "Urbanite-Centricity" & "Business Agility" to ensure its success.

Acting on these insights, we have revamped our flagship trade fair IFFS 2019 with a new theme of "UrbanAsia – the Future of Urban Living". Held for the first time at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, trade visitors are promised a whole new experience which allows them to spot key trends, understand major challenges as well as identify sustainable solutions for an expanding urban populace.

Our "NEX GEN Urban Living Showcase" at IFFS serves as an embodiment of our goal and illustrates perfectly what it means to be customer-centric. Some of our finest local furniture brands, led by their respective NEX GEN leaders, have banded together to imagine the different lifestyles of urban dwellers. From a bachelor pad to a home office setup that toggles between work and living, visitors get to experience designs that are tailored to fit these urban lifestyles.

In a similar vein, SFIC's flagship annual design platform SingaPlural will return to the National Design Centre from 4-17 March, with exciting installations that draw on evolution in nature to inspire innovation in design. For this eighth edition of our much celebrated design event, the new theme, "Unnatural Phenomena", explores the origins and evolutions of novel new design species, forged by unorthodox collaborations that challenge disciplinary boundaries. To add to the experience, we have a strong line-up of speakers for our master lecture series as well as a complimentary sharing session by some of our exhibitors.

I am confident that visitors will leave our shows enriched and inspired.