

# Design showcase

At the Venice La Biennale, the Malaysian architectural concept hinges on pet cages. **by Grace Lim**

The Malaysian Pavilion at the La Biennale di Venezia, or Venice Biennale 2014, opens for the third time with this year's theme, "Efficiency", showcasing suspended pet cages affixed to a helix. Curated by the Italian team headed by architect (I)AAI and supported by the Malaysian Design Trust Development Corp (MDDTC), the Malaysian theme is to complement the Biennale's theme, "Intensification".

The architectural component of the world-famous Venice Biennale is being held from June 7 to Nov 24. Established in 1895, the Biennale is the world's oldest and most prestigious exhibition for architecture and art.

The Malaysian curators comprise Dr Tan Loke Min, Dr Lim Teng Ngiam and Jolly Ann Suan. Lim explains in a press statement that efficiency, in its most basic form, is a fundamental concept of architecture. In its general definition, it may refer to a method way of doing. But it can be reduced to the basic element required for survival: ex-

istence. All members of IAAI were invited to submit entries to participate in the Malaysian Pavilion. But only 10 have been chosen to showcase their work to visitors. The shortlisted participants comprise established and emerging architects. They worked alongside artists and multimedia designers to present their interpretations of the concept of "efficiency".

Lim says the concept behind the use of such cages has a sense of familiarity about it, as it relates to pet cages. "By changing the pet cages together and connecting the architectural components, a new form of intensification is created. This manipulation and novel conceptual response to light, we hope, creates the effect of lightness and adequacy as a vessel, in parallel with its architectural models in their own interpretation of efficiency by various architects," he explained.

In the exhibition, a video documents open the participants and their thoughts, ideas and insights is shown.



The Malaysian Pavilion features suspended pet cages.

Right: Alan Kuan's "Black/White" concept.



Left: Wong Meng's "Al, Coeur d'Or, enjeu large".



RAM president Chan Seng Ann pointed out in the same press statement that Malaysian architects must learn to present their ideas on international events in order to remain to grow on a global scale. He added that we developed the world perspective and present them for the opening of the architectural community.

Malacca CEO Hanzy Yung said he commented that participation in the biennale events will raise Malaysian capabilities in architecture, design and art, attended by thousands of visitors, including architects, academics, students and tourists, it is participated by

leading national architectural institutes. It is regarded as the highest exhibition for art and architecture.

Renowned architect Rem Koolhaas is the Biennale curator this year and has chosen "Intensification" as the main theme of the "Architects Biennale 2014" at its 54th theme.

"It is to be done in a fast-moving, the process of the erosion of national characteristics in favor of the almost universal adoption of a single modern language in a single experience of typology," Koolhaas said in a press release in response to the theme.

"The transition to what seems like a universal architectural language is

a more complex process than we typically recognize, involving significant encounters between culture, technical innovations and inoperable ways of remaining 'human' in a sense of dialogue through research and the filtering of cultural memory. It is crucial for the future of architecture to recognize and expose these operations," he added.