

ARCHIFEST: Design for Life

Text by Yann Follain
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Design for People Promotes Better Life & Well-being

Archifest 2018 was a two-weekend long festival curated by WY-TO, which took place from 28 September to 10 October island-wide, planned as an exciting line-up of architectural tours, workshops, symposiums and exhibitions. Archifest has commonly been known to be a festival for Architects, however in recent years it has diversified its events to reach out to many different kinds of people, while still retaining its purpose to celebrate excellence in design and the built environment. It is gaining increasing prominence as a landmark event, positioning Singapore as a rising contender in the field of Architecture.

The biggest change and main success of Archifest 2018 was the theme “Design for Life”, which was sufficiently broad to attract a wide audience of people from all walks of life. The Three subthemes narrowed down the subject matter to “Design for People”, “Design for Time” and “Design for Environment”, which made it relatable and simple to understand for the general public, bringing people together through specialised interest.

Much of the spotlight of architecture has been on award-winning iconic projects by famous architects, rather than everyday architecture for the common people. Designing for the People was something that we saw as a deserving celebration of the non-spectacular. We explored community engagement for end users of all ages, ranging from seniors to young children.

- [KIDsBuild](#), a hands-on workshop and exhibition organised for kids to take part in designing the city of tomorrow.
- [Design for Silver Generation Symposium](#), a full-day event which discussed how to meet the needs of our ageing population through innovative design which promotes healthy ageing.
- [Series of Short Talks by Young Architects](#), a platform which shifted the focus to the younger generation of Architects to share fresh approaches and philosophies on small interventions that can have a deep and lasting impact on the daily lives of people.

1. AFT18-Archifest poster.
 Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA

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2. AFT18 - Opening Party.
Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA

3. Kidsbuild.
Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA



Design for Time Addresses the Lifespan of Building Design

The reality of construction in Singapore is that there is a continual contest on whether the old should make way for the new, in the name of progress. There is also a need for a mind-set shift, from designing buildings which will soon deteriorate and be demolished, to designing for the long haul.

- Conservation Dialogue, a session which involved people from various professional fields to discuss compelling questions about the value of buildings, possible alternatives to demolition, and the dichotomy of conservation and development.
- Parasite Architecture, an exhibition which explored this idea of “Adaptive Reuse” in Architecture, saw creative examples of buildings which were designed from the onset to evolve over time. In other cases of under-utilised spaces, proposals were made to give them a “second-life”, which in turn would rejuvenate the built environment and encourage community cohesion.

4. Alternative construction materials for future resilient cities. Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA

5. Parasite Architecture. Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA

6. Short talks by young architects. Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA



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Design for Environment Enhances the Life of our Planet, Flora and Fauna

In view of pollution and accelerated global warming, architects now have the responsibility to conceive and initiate ways to promote true action by devising smart solutions to reduce our strain on the environment and to use materials prudently. However, it was clear that the sustainability doesn't have to be on a large scale to be valid, but rather it starts with each one of us.

- Alternative Construction Materials for Future Resilient Cities, a series of talks and exhibitions which revealed the potential to reduce the strain on depleting natural resources, through newly developed composite building materials made from bamboo and mushroom, which are rapidly renewable resources.
- Monomer House 1, a prototype which is changing the design industry through pre-fabrication construction methods. These pre-finished micro houses allow for houses to be built quicker and greener.
- Design for Resilience, a talk and exhibition which shares about the issues faced by disaster stricken communities. Micro strategies and architecture interventions were implemented to provide sustainable solutions for these resilient communities.
- Urban Farming, a workshop which shared tips and insights on using left-over spaces of homes and offices to grow mini-farms, and encourage a sustainable lifestyle.

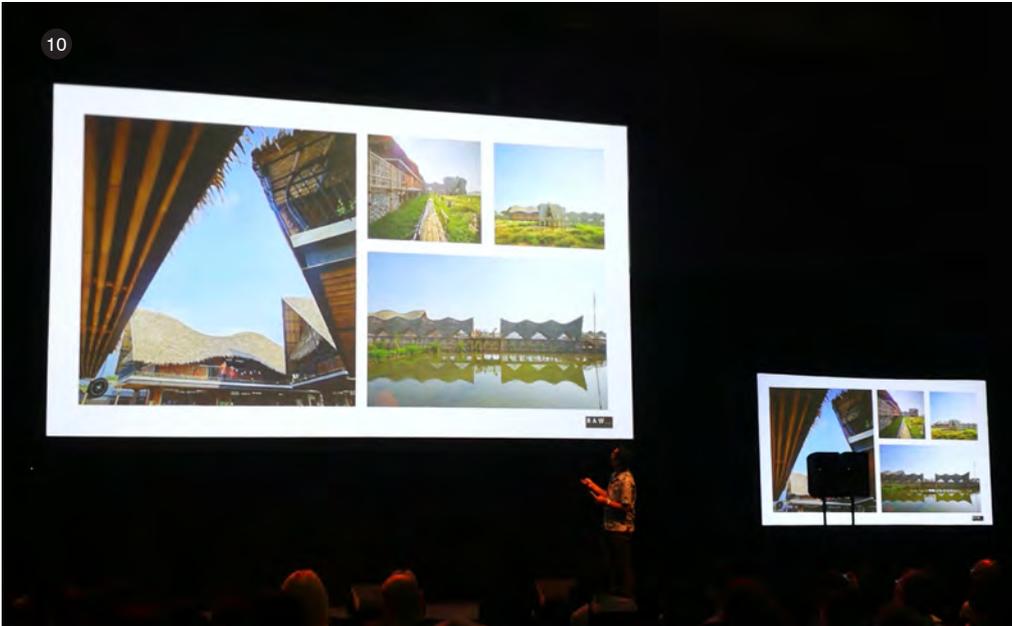
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7. Urban Farming. Photo credit: Althea Chan

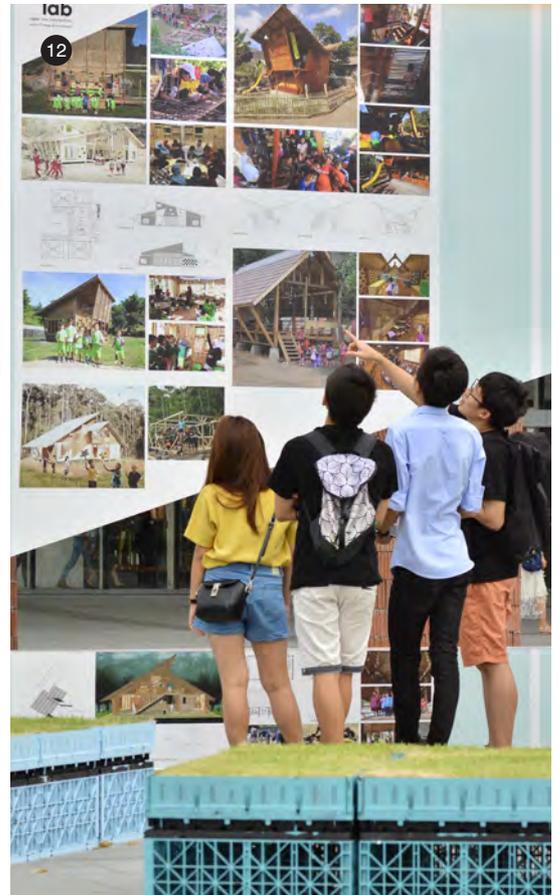
8. Design for Resilience. Photo credit: Darren Soh

9. Activation Day Tag. Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA



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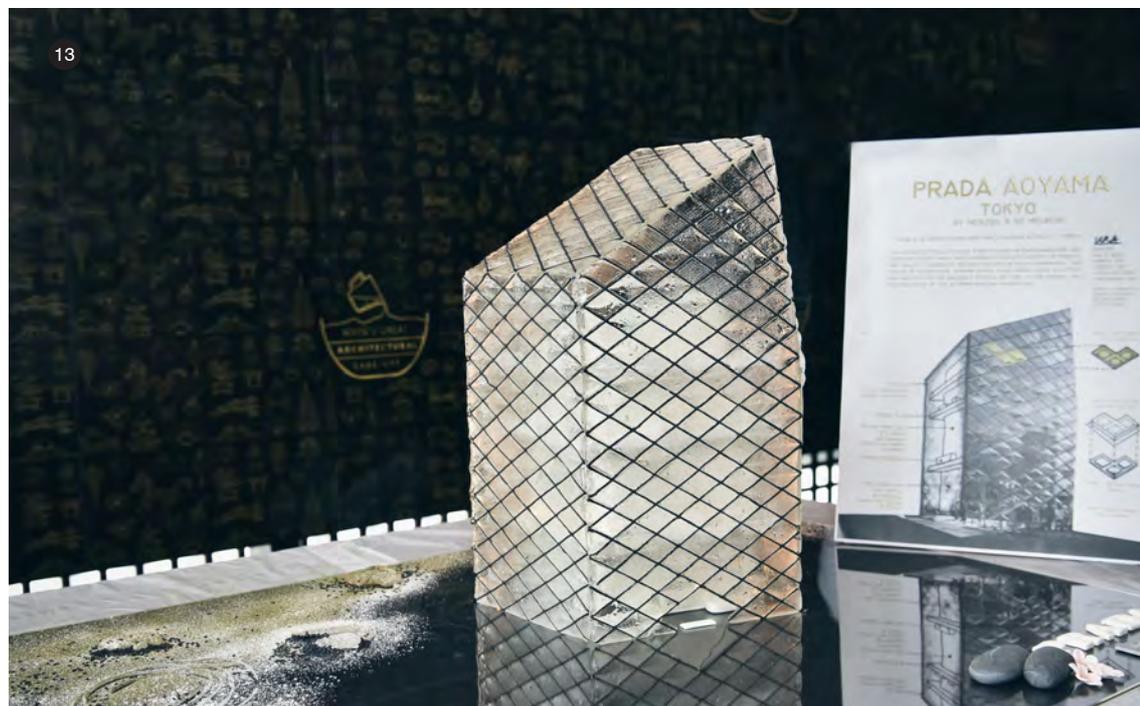
Archifest 2018 generated interest from a wide range of people through its exhibitions, talks & sharing sessions, deliberating both the weighty issues but not forgetting the fun events for kids, bake-offs and parties.



10. SIA Conference. Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA

11. Alternative construction materials for future resilient cities. Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA

12. Design by Resilience by young architects. Photo credit: iBEN Studio, SIA



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The Archifest Pavilion at Marina Bay Sands Event Plaza functioned as the epicenter of activities, representing the philosophy of the festival and encouraging small participatory actions from the community in painting the brick facade. The annual SIA Conference also generated an exchange of ideas and ideologies from the region and worldwide through presentations and panel discussions. Despite the speakers coming from diverse backgrounds, there was high regional relevance for tropical architecture, shared values and similar struggles shared by smaller firms.

All things considered, Archifest 2018 generated interest from a wide range of people through its exhibitions, talks & sharing sessions, deliberating both the weighty issues but not

forgetting the fun events for kids, bake-offs and parties. We are very grateful to the 16 venue partners who hosted us and provided us with event locations all over the island, which helped to greatly increase the reach of the event. These are some of the reasons why the 12-day long festival welcomed more than 150,000 visitors in total!

The author was the Festival Director making of Archifest 2018, and was constantly supported by his team, the Singapore Institute of Architects, as well as other partners and collaborators. It has proven that design, when harnessed in the right way, has great potential to reflect the richness of human values, our history and development, and enhance the world we live in for our future generations. 