

Singapore architects and designers fly flag at competitions here

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The home-grown winners at the World Architecture Festival were Spark Beach Hut concept by Spark Architects and Woha's Kampung Admiralty project. PHOTOS: SPARK ARCHITECTS, WOHA

It has been a victorious month for Singapore architects and designers as they picked up awards at two major international competitions.

Four Singapore projects stood out at this year's World Architecture Festival, considered the Oscars of the architecture world.

The eighth edition took place in Berlin, Germany, last week. The annual festival was held in Singapore from 2012 to last year.

Spark Beach Hut by Spark Architects impressed the judges with its pine cone-shaped structure, which is made of plastic waste thrown into the ocean.

The conceptual project was done by a three-person team from the Singapore office of the award-winning studio, and beat eight other entries to clinch best project in the Experimental – Future Projects category.

Their vision is to line the beach with the colourful huts that will replace the makeshift tents that beach campers use now.



Australian-born, Singapore-based designer Emma Maxwell's Flume Lighting Collection, which includes hanging lamps, topped two categories in the Architecture & Design Awards Asia-Pacific. PHOTO: COURTESY OF EMMA MAXWELL

The huts are meant to be naturally ventilated and self-sustainable.

They do not take up much space as they are elevated by a thick stem that uses recycled glass. Campers climb a steel rope ladder to get to the hut.

With a view of the sea, the huts could be Singapore's version of glamorous camping, or glamping.

The home-grown Spark Architects is exploring ways to realise the project, though there are no details yet.

Last year, it won in the same category for Home farm, a conceptual proposal for the next generation of urban retirement housing.

Ms Wenhui Lim, 35, Spark Architects' director and one of the project members, says: "Spark was up against strong international contenders with schemes that were developed to great detail. We're grateful to be recognised by our peers on an international stage."

At the same awards, architecture firm Woha topped the Commercial Mixed-Use - Future Projects category for its Kampung Admiralty project. The firm had won awards at the festival previously.

Kampung Admiralty is pegged as a modern-day village, where an all-in-one complex has two blocks of Housing Board studio apartments; centres for medicine, childcare and eldercare; and shops.

The project is slated for completion next year.

Two other Singapore projects were highly commended by the judges, though they did not take home the top prizes in their categories.

The Future of Us, a pavilion by the Advanced Architecture Laboratory at the Singapore University of Technology and Design, was acknowledged in the Display - Completed Buildings.

And the much-lauded National Gallery Singapore by studioMilou and CPG Consultants was commended in the New and Old - Completed Building category.

At the Architecture & Design Awards Asia-Pacific in Hong Kong earlier this month, Australian-born interior and product designer Emma Maxwell, who has been based in Singapore since 2008, won big with her seven-piece light collection.

She first topped the Best Lighting category before clinching the best of the best in the Professional/Product Design category.

She beat the likes of Hong Kong studio Eravolution and Stellar Works, which has worked on collections with famed design studios such as Neri&Hu and Space Copenhagen.

Her Flume Lighting Collection was inspired by alchemy. The lights are made of metal, marble and glass.

The collection includes ceiling lights and table-top lamps. For example, Radiate is a cluster of spheres that hangs from the ceiling. The lights will be on sale from June next year.

This is her third major international award this year.

Last month, she picked up a silver award at the IDA International Designers Association for the interior design of Florentina, an Italian restaurant in Beijing.

Ms Maxwell, who is in her 30s, says of her latest win: "I was shocked to win, given that I was up against big names, whom I have much admiration for. I didn't have a big company or lots of money behind me to produce this range. I'm the underdog in the competition."