

furnitex 2008 + DECORATION + DESIGN MELBOURNE

FURNITEX and DECORATION + DESIGN 08 BEST LOOKING SHOW TO DATE

As a key satellite event of the State of Design Festival, **FURNITEX and DECORATION + DESIGN 2008** was the best looking Fair to date, which resulted in a number of exhibitors having record shows. In the current economic climate a number of exhibitors expected the show to be quieter than previous years but this was far from the case.

Maria McLeod from Colby Furniture believes that this year's Fair exceeded expectations, "We had a fantastic first day and overall the best Show ever", she said.

Over **16,000 buyers** from across the globe came to the four day event held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, Southbank from **Thursday 17 – Sunday 20 July**. Buyers came from all states of Australia as well as countries including: New Zealand, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, United Kingdom, Italy, South Africa, Canada and the USA.

VIVID – VIBRANT VISIONS IN DESIGN

The entries in this year's **VIVID – Vibrant Visions In Design** furniture competition at **FURNITEX** certainly did not disappoint, with over 90 products entered from emerging designers across Australia.

The VIVID awards were announced and presented by the Victorian Premier, John Brumby on Thursday 17 July at the official opening of FURNITEX in the categories of Concept, Commercial and Student. This year also saw the introduction of an exciting new award – the VIVID Green Award.

VIVID curator, Uli Hasel praised the big and bold entries this year with many designs dominated by clean lines and beautiful workmanship. In particular she was pleased with the fact that nearly half of all the products entered were ecologically sustainable.

VIVID 2008 Concept Award winner – COCOON COUCH by Victorian designer Damien Hipwell.

Judges comments for the Cocoon Couch – A visually very exciting piece that has the WOW factor and great potential for further development.

Short-listed for the VIVID 2008 Concept Award were: CHAIR TWO by Justin Vecchio (VIC), the QUUB chest of drawers by Kevin O'Connor (VIC) and the BAMBOO Nesting Tables by Takeshi Iue (SA).

VIVID 2008 Student Award winner – AURA Coffee Table by New South Wales student Kieran Choy.

Judges comments for the AURA coffee table – This piece has beautiful form from all directions, is highly commercially viable and very well made.

Short listed for VIVID 2008 Student Award were: SALT + PEPPER Stools by Jessica Diec (VIC), GUM Children's Table by Oliver Ward (VIC) and A JIG MISTAKE by Oscar Angel (VIC).

VIVID 2008 Commercial Award winner – BARK Chaise by Perth-based designer Michael Shepherd (WA).

Judges comments for the BARK CHAISE – Everything you would want in a product: simplicity, comfort, multi-purpose, visual appeal and perfectly suited for our Australian lifestyle.

Short listed for the VIVID 2008 Commercial Award were: MELEE Pendants by Brad Stebbing (NSW) and CREDENZA by Gareth Brown (SA).

The inaugural VIVID 2008 Green Award winner – BAMBOO Nesting tables by Adelaide-based designer Takeshi Iue (SA).

Judges comments for the BAMBOO Nesting tables – Here is a product where nothing is compromised – a functional, mainstream design, made from one of the most sustainable materials available, making it highly commercially viable.

Short listed for the VIVID 2008 Green Award were: QUUB Chest of Drawers by Kevin O'Connor (VIC), the MESTE Stool by Kin Jung Ly (NSW) and the GUM Children's Table by Oliver Ward (VIC).

MATERIAL INSPIRATIONS & INSPIRED SPACES

Material Inspirations, a new feature to the Fair for 2008 proved to be highly successful. Curated by Barbara Marshall, Material Inspirations incorporated a textile sample bank with the latest in fabrics from Australia's premier fabric houses under the Trend Themes of 'Rock: Paper: Scissors'.

Material Inspirations Awards were presented in four categories:

Best Residential Fabric went to Boyac for Pierre De Lune

Best Commercial Fabric went to Verve Designer Collections for Ejjfinger Wallpapers, Oriental Moon

Best Prototype Fabric went to Bekaert for Quilted Fabrics

Best Interpretation of Theme went to Unique Fabrics for Andrew Martin, Friday Collection

Judges for these awards included Patricia Jones from RMIT and the three international guests at the Fair: Kathryn Ireland from Kathryn Ireland Textiles & Design in the USA, Milou Ket from Milou Ket Styling and Design in The Netherlands and Michelle Lamb from The Trend Curve in the USA.

Inspired Spaces, a new and exciting feature at **DECORATION + DESIGN** and a key attraction in the Material Inspirations Pavilion also attracted significant interest from the industry and media. Six leading interior designers and decorators were asked to showcase their interpretation of the theme 'Rock Paper Scissors' in a creative space, which was then exhibited at the Fair.

The judging panel which included Anna McCooe from Home Beautiful, Janet James from House & Garden, Mark Scruby from Houses and Annemarie Kiely from Vogue Living praised the high quality and unique interpretations of the theme and presented two awards to – **Most Innovative Space**, **Cameron Comer from Comer & King** for his clever use of materials in his take on the combined themes of Rock and Paper and the **Editor's Choice** was won by **Christine Saunders in collaboration with Carlie Logie from Christine Saunders Design** for their 'Poetic Pursuit of Paper'.

INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRY SEMINAR SERIES

In 2008 we had three international guests presenting seminars at the Fair: world renowned fabric expert, Kathryn Ireland from Kathryn Ireland Textiles & Design in USA, trend expert, Milou Ket from Milou Ket Styling & Design in The Netherlands and trend and colour forecaster, Michelle Lamb from The Trend Curve in the USA.

Feedback from those who attended these seminars was that all these presentations were innovative, inspiring, interesting and very professional. Our guests also attracted some valuable media attention whilst in Australia, which resulted in some strong magazine and newspaper publicity for the Fair.

Other seminars presented by Australian industry experts were also well attended including: Design Blogs – A Virtual Phenomenon – by Anna Spiro from Black and Spiro in Brisbane; Sustainable Lighting And Design..Illuminating The Way Forward – by Nic Burnham from Norman, Disney & Young in Melbourne and Sustainability Versus Lifestyle – They're Not Necessarily Incompatible – by Andreas Sederof from award winning consultancy, Sunpower Design.

FURNITEX 2009 and DECORATION+DESIGN Melbourne 09

Plans are already in place for FURNITEX 2009 and DECORATION + DESIGN Melbourne 09 which will be held from Thursday 16 – Sunday 19 July 2009. Application forms are available from Australian Exhibitions and Conferences. For more information call (03) 9654 7773.

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