

*Embargoed for release on Monday, 21 Oct, 1200 hours in Texas &
Tuesday, 22 Oct, 0900 hours in Singapore*

Innovations from Design for Death competition reveal funerals and memorial spaces of the future

More than 6500 funeral directors to view winning concepts at the 2013 National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) Expo & Conference

World's first ever competition to re-imagine deathcare is organized by the Lien Foundation, ACM Foundation and the NFDA

Austin, Texas - 21 October 2013 & Singapore – 22 October 2013

1. Defying convention, winners of the Design for Death competition re-drew the boundaries of space, imagination and interaction between the living and the departed. Their futuristic concepts of death care reflected their responses to the demands of growing urbanization, the need for conservation and rapid influence of technology.
2. Unveiling the winning entries in Austin where the world's largest gathering of funeral directors take place, Mr Lee Poh Wah, Chief Executive Officer of the Lien Foundation said, "The designers have interpreted the needs of our generation with sensitivity and empathy. Their innovations and styles give us new ways to relate to death and dying. Their designs not only invite us to reflect on our mortality, they provide what we seem to be yearning for in death and in life - meaning, engagement and fulfillment."
3. The competition attracted more than 1,300 entries from over 90 countries in two phases that took place over January to October 2013. The first phase focused on eco-deathcare and encasements of remains. Winners of the first phase were announced in June 2013. The themes that emerged include biodegradable caskets, home memorials and the use of technology in deathcare. The second and final phase of the competition involved architecture. Designers and architects were asked to redefine how space is used in cemeteries, memorials and places of bereavement. Winners of the second phase were announced today at the NFDA Expo and Conference. All the winners were flown to Austin, Texas to receive their awards at the NFDA Expo and Conference. The first-prize winners received E\$25,000, while second and third-prize winners received E\$10,000 and E\$5,000 respectively.

4. Commenting on the second phase of the competition, ACM Foundation's Founder, Mr Ang Ziqian said, "This phase revealed new ideas and solutions that urban and city planners can adopt to maximize land use. Increasing population densities in urban townships pose challenges for best economic land use. The quality of entries we received clearly shows that current isolated areas for the dead can be used for the living through harmonic designs. These novel design concepts challenge the thinking of our industry and governments to redefine the type of death care we need and deserve for the future."

Breaking down the boundaries of space

5. If the Design for Death winners had their way, columbariums and cemeteries of the future will be located in city squares, public parks and places of recreation for the living. First-prize winners, Rangel Karaivanov and Wiener Neustädter Sparkasse envisioned a "society that is not only defined by our living, but also by our dead". In their entry entitled "Post-Community", they designed a crematory and columbarium that is built on an existing building and located in the heart of city.

Naturalizing death as part of life

6. The second prize winning entry, "My Favorite Place" by the Sériès et Sériès offices in Los Angeles and Marseille, strips away the boundaries between the living and the dead by transforming public spaces into symbols to honor the dead. They imagine their glowing monolith memorial taking prime spot in places like pedestrian walkways, roundabouts and even the beach.
7. This trend to bring together an integration of spaces for the living and the dead naturalizes death as part of life. It also moves the dead from isolated spots into spaces of daily life. "Many of the designers took very traditional concepts in funerals and gave us an entirely new perspective of cemeteries of the future," said Ms Christine Pepper, CEO, NFDA "They have shown that cemetery design can be creative and innovative, and yet still be an important place where families can gather and remember their loved ones. They made cemeteries into comforting spaces that families will want to visit time and time again. I am impressed by how their designs have brought life into the cemetery."

From Death to Life

8. The change of focus from death to life is another recurrent theme in the Design for Death competition. Wanting to free memorial spaces from negative emotions of fear, loss and negativity, third-prize winner Juan Andres Isaza's "Skylight" creates a magical world of pavilions and ponds,

where remains are placed into an urn or 'Sky Star' and hung on a family tree or in a constellation. Elaborating on his idea, Juan explained, "Design and architecture are tools to build a better world. Through better use of the aesthetic and our resources, architecture has a role to play in the future of deathcare. Setting a landscape designed for people as its users, architecture can help mitigate death's emotional burden and assuage the grief and loss."

Re-discoveries of life in death

9. On the influence of architecture, Ben van Berkel, Co-Founder and Principal Architect from UNStudio and a Design for Death judge remarked, "Future deathcare architecture could surprise society. Architects have the ability to develop new expertise within a discipline to create social influence on a particular topic. I think the subject of deathcare can be communicated differently and openly, and this could lead us to new re-discoveries about ourselves and of life."

10. All ten winning concepts are on display at the Design for Death booth (#600) in the NFDA Expo and Conference. The winners will have the chance of turning their ideas into reality as over 6500 funeral directors from as far as Africa, Asia, Europe and North America converge at the global annual trade show to ink deals and discover new possibilities.

11. View the winning Design for Death innovations at www.designfordeath.com

~oOo~

ABOUT THE LIEN FOUNDATION

www.lienfoundation.org

The Lien Foundation is a Singapore philanthropic house noted for its model of radical philanthropy. It breaks new ground by investing in innovative solutions, convening strategic partnerships and catalysing action on social and environmental challenges. The Foundation seeks to foster exemplary early childhood education, excellence in eldercare and effective environmental sustainability in water and sanitation.

In its mission to advance eldercare, the Foundation advocates better care of the dying. One of its flagship programmes, the Life Before Death initiative, was first conceived in 2006 to create greater public awareness about end-of-life issues in Singapore. It sought to de-stigmatise death and dying by spurring various 'die-logues' with the use of social media, art, films and photography and advocacy through research. Creative projects such as the Happy Coffins, the Last Outfit and the Obitcheery got people to confront their own mortality in unconventional ways.

The initiative has since gone beyond Singapore. In 2010, the Foundation commissioned the first-ever global Quality of Death index ranking 40 countries on their provision of end-of-life care. In 2013, the Foundation launched the inaugural international Design for Death competition that presented innovations in deathcare for the future.

ABOUT ACM FOUNDATION**www.acmfoundation.sg**

The ACM Foundation is an independent, non-profit organisation formed by Ang Chin Moh Casket in commemoration of its 100-year heritage. The Foundation aims to enhance the perception of death and bereavement among the public, uplift the deathcare profession with professional training and education, and advance philanthropy in this area. The ACM Foundation will also champion and preserve the heritage of funeral and bereavement services in Singapore.

ABOUT NFDA**www.nfda.org**

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is the world's leading and largest funeral service association, serving 19,700 individual members who represent more than 10,000 funeral homes in the United States and 39 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. A worldwide source of expertise and professional resources for all facets of funeral service, NFDA is dedicated to supporting members in their mission to provide families with meaningful end-of-life services at the highest levels of excellence and integrity.

Media ContactsLien Foundation

In Austin

Genevieve Kuek Qeren Communications gen@qeren.biz +65 9763 3110

In Singapore

Joanne Lee Qeren Communications joanne@qeren.biz +65 9002 7696ACM FoundationNicole Yeo ACM Foundation nicole.yeo@acmfoudation.sg +65 8188 7758Herbert Teo ACM Foundation herbert.teo@acmfoundation.sg +65 96346755NFDAJessica Koth NFDA jkoth@nfda.org +1 262 402 7764